

The Real Story:

Why General Clark
Was Retired Early
from his post as NATO Commander



Research and writing by Mike Pridmore
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Unofficial, private volunteer research
not affiliated with the Clark campaign

Although this is an incomplete discussion done hurriedly to respond to a specific questioner, the key facts are nevertheless addressed.

First, it is well-documented that after seeing what happened in Rwanda, General Clark willingly took a risk to see that something was done to stop Milosevic and prevent ethnic slaughter in Kosovo.^[i]

^[i] Secretary of State Madeleine Albright agreed with General Clark and was really also a driving force behind pushing for action in Kosovo.^[ii]

So this wasn't just General Clark out on his own but there was a conflict of interest between the State Department and the Department of Defense and the Pentagon, perhaps not unlike the rumored clashes of Colin Powell and Donald Rumsfeld. There were others also pushing for action who were not at the State or Defense departments.^[iii]

Despite the fact that Clark had worked with the State Department at the Dayton Peace Accords and although General Clark also represented European interests as head of NATO and was not necessarily under Cohen's chain of command there, Cohen and Shelton blocked his access to the White House in an effort to unfairly control him.^[iv]

Others felt differently about Clark's right to talk to the White House. James Steinberg, then the deputy national security adviser, said the White House would not have allowed Clark to conduct an end-run around the Pentagon. "I did not think he was being insubordinate," Steinberg said. But "people who knew him

understood that when he felt strongly, he wanted to let people know ... My perspective was that there was value in his giving his ground-truth."[\[v\]](#)



It was not unusual for CinCs to have to try and work around the Defense Department and the Pentagon to get things done.[\[vi\]](#) Dana Priest discussed this in an interview about her book *The Mission*, saying that they risked having their hands slapped if caught .[\[vii\]](#)

But the difference seems to be in the fact that General Clark was less willing to play the Pentagon/Defense Department games. General Shalikashvili, who appointed General Clark to NATO, has hinted at this without saying it outright.[\[viii\]](#) Said Shalikashvili, "The chiefs "might have felt that Wes pushed them too far."

That Shalikashvili hint, although cryptic, no doubt comes from someone who really knows what was going on. There are other possible specific mentions of actions by General Clark that showed

his refusal to play the game the way the Pentagon and Defense Department wanted, but this hint tells the real story.

It is interesting that one of Clark's harshest critics during the conflict, soldier activist David Hackworth, has since retracted his criticisms of General Clark and confirmed General Clark's thesis in *Waging Modern War* that depicted Shelton and Cohen as timid and overly concerned with domestic politics in the face of a concerted campaign of ethnic cleansing. [\[ix\]](#) Publishing a book that was in part critical of Cohen and Shelton was General Clark's effort at self-vindication after they retired him early even though he won the war, but it no doubt did little to ease the ruffled feathers that had led to the early retirement.

Since his initial comments General Shelton has refused to give specifics of why General Clark's integrity was questioned. This has led some to question Shelton's integrity rather than General Clark's. Dana Priest, who interviewed General Clark for her book *The Mission*, questioned the actions of Cohen and Shelton after General Clark was retired early, pointing out that they admitted they released the news to the press within an hour of telling General Clark to prevent him from being able to undo what they had done. [\[x\]](#)



Sidney Blumenthal confirms that the way they went about it meant that their work could not be undone. Blumenthal also plainly states that President Clinton realized he had been deceived by them and was furious when he realized their early retirement of General Clark could not be undone. [\[xi\]](#) Part of the deception involved the lie that General Clark had to be retired early to make a place for General Ralston. [\[xii\]](#)

After seeing the lies they told and the sneaky way they went about

assuring the early retirement, it seems reasonable to assume that they wanted rid of General Clark but that the reasons for getting rid of him were ones that were not defensible to President Clinton. Incidentally, President Clinton has recently made clear his feelings about General Clark's integrity and Hugh Shelton's smear tactics by sending a fax to the Hague to rebut the Shelton smears when Milosevic tried to use them to impeach General Clark's testimony.

Lying to indefensibly get rid someone and releasing the news quickly so that the act could not be undone does not sound like the actions of someone who would have the unmitigated gall to question the integrity of the mistreated person. But evidently Shelton has no shame. I frequently disagree with William Saletan, but I think he called this one correctly:

A wise friend once told me you can learn more about somebody from what he says about others than from what others say about him. Given what I've heard so far from Clark and Shelton, if I had to vote for one of them based on [\[xiii\]](#) integrity and character, I'd go with Clark.



[i]

Samantha Power, *A problem from Hell:*"

He frantically telephoned around the Pentagon for insight into the ethnic dimension of events in Rwanda. Unfortunately, Rwanda had never been of more than marginal concern to Washington's most influential planners" (p. 330) .He advocated multinational action of some kind to stop the genocide. "Lieutenant General Wesley Clark looked to the White House for leadership. 'The Pentagon is always going to be the last to want to intervene,' he says. 'It is up to the civilians to tell us they want to do something and we'll figure out how to do it.' But with no powerful personalities or high-ranking officials arguing forcefully for meaningful action, midlevel Pentagon officials held sway, vetoing or stalling on hesitant proposals put forward by midlevel State Department and NSC officials" (p. 373).

[ii]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A6340-2003Dec16_2.html

Albright, in an interview, said "it was very clear to me that the Pentagon did not want to move on this issue. . . . Wes and I thought it was worth doing." A former Albright aide said Clark's credentials lent critical ballast to Albright's advocacy, providing cover for Clinton and White House officials who were loath to stand up to unified military opposition on any issue.

<http://slate.msn.com/id/2091194/#ContinueArticle>

In fact, however, Clinton may have been distracted somewhat, but

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was not. Albright was a fiery supporter of military intervention in the Balkans (many have written of the famous meeting where she appalled the reticent chiefs by saying, "What good are all these fine troops you keep telling us about if we can't use them?"). Albright was the prime mover; many observers at the time--supporters and critics alike--called it "Madeleine's war." And her prime collaborator, Richard Holbrooke, Clinton's envoy to Bosnia, also enjoyed direct access to the president.

[iii]

<http://slate.msn.com/id/2091194/#ContinueArticle>

Thousands of Bosnians were dying in a war that U.S. military power could have ended. Hundreds of thousands of Rwandans had recently been massacred in a civil war to which neither the United States nor the United Nations raised a finger, much less a fighter plane, in protest. Many of those pushing for intervention--and they included not just Clark but some of the most liberal, customarily antiwar politicians and columnists--wanted above all to avert another massacre.

[iv]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A6340-2003Dec16_2.html

Cohen did not speak to him until the seventh day of the war, when several U.S. soldiers at Yugoslavia's border were taken hostage. "The relationship had already soured by then," Clark said. He said that his antagonists in Washington blocked him from speaking with President Bill Clinton once during 11 weeks of combat.

[v]

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A6340->

[2003Dec16_2.html](#)□



[vi]

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Retired Marine Gen. Anthony C. Zinni, the top U.S. commander for the Middle East while Clark commanded NATO, said, "There is always a tension between the CINCs [regional commanders in chief] and the service chiefs. The CINCs see the need for intervention, engagement, while the services control the resources and see this as a distraction."

[vii]

<http://www.state.gov/s/p/of/proc/tr/3719.htm>

They each told me stories [about] having to creep around the Pentagon to meet with State Department [officials] and getting their hands slapped when they were discovered. They all felt like they were at the end of a tether line, out on the edges of an empire, and that too often no one at the Pentagon cared about what they were discovering. They each felt disappointed with their chain of command, especially

Secretary Cohen, who seemed to them to want to talk only to coordinate the next upcoming news conference. They believed that the Pentagon had become far too reactive to the day's news reports.

[viii]

http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A6340-2003Dec16_2.html

But Clark's personal style evidently caused the policy dispute to boil over into a personal clash, according to former Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman John M. Shalikashvili, who appointed Clark to the NATO job over the objections of the Army leadership. Clark "is a guy who by temperament is more likely to operate on the edge of the system," Shalikashvili said. The chiefs "might have felt that Wes pushed them too far."

[ix]

http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=34738

Hey, I am one of those: I took a swing at Clark during the Kosovo campaign when I thought he screwed up the operation, and I called him a "Perfumed Prince." Only years later did I discover from his book and other research that I was wrong - the blame should have been worn by British timidity and William Cohen, U.S. SecDef at the time.



[\[x\]](#)

Wednesday, August 4, 1999

Clark's Exit Was Leaked Deliberately, Official Says
by Dana Priest

The Washington Post WASHINGTON

One mystery solved. Why was Gen. Wesley Clark's early removal from his post as NATO's top commander leaked within an hour after Clark himself was informed of Defense Secretary William Cohen's decision last week? Answer: Because Cohen's staff wanted to prevent Clark, who had led the NATO military campaign against Yugoslavia and was known to like his job, from working behind the scenes to undo the decision, according to a senior Pentagon official.

[xi]

From *The Clinton Wars* by Sidney Blumenthal, senior adviser to President Clinton:

(page 651): "...At the Pentagon, a graceless note was struck in July, however, when General Clark was summarily retired early as SACEUR. But if it was held against Clark that he was a political general, it was a mistaken impression. Clark had in fact put his strategic concerns above politics and above his career. Clark was called at night and informed of the Pentagon's decision without being given any recourse. He instantly received a call from a Washington Post reporter, who had been tipped off by the Secretary of Defense's office, to confirm the story. When the President learned what had happened, he was furious -- "I'd like to kill somebody," he told me -- but there was nothing to be done. Clark's enforced early retirement from the European post was a *fait accompli*. Secretary Cohen and General Shelton had considered Clark insubordinate. Clinton awarded Clark the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and the British gave him an honorary knighthood. But the Pentagon's treatment of Clark left a sour taste amid the triumph..."



[\[xii\]](#)

Why Wesley Clark Got the Ax at NATO

The general exposed the gap between pretended "combat readiness" and refusal to accept war's risks

By: EDWARD N. LUTTWAK

Published in the LA Times August 6, 1999

So why was Clark fired? The official answer is that he wasn't fired at all, but merely asked to accommodate his successor at NATO, Gen. Joseph W. Ralston, by stepping aside a bit early. That is all very plausible except that any four-star general can be parked in a special assignment while awaiting a new command. Because Ralston is especially well-liked, nobody would have objected to the exception.

[\[xiii\]](#) ☐

<http://slate.msn.com/id/2089014/> ☐

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HTML document at: <http://www.mediasense.com/wesleyclark/Why-Clark-Retired-Early.htm>

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Other Useful Sources □

Cited by independent researchers from the Wesley Clark volunteer communities online, which center around the website <http://www.forclark.com>

[Voice of America Interview](#) □

Including comments by Colonel David Hackworth, Colonel Dan Smith, Paul Beaver (Jane's Weekly) – Aug. 1999

[TIME Magazine Feature](#) □

Brass Ambition – Sept. 2003

[Original Department of Defense News Briefing](#)

May, 2000 - by Secretary of Defense William Cohen
Including comments on ongoing operations, and the retirement of General Clark

[European Command Change of Command](#) □

Ceremony Remarks as Delivered by Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen, European Command Headquarters, Vaihingen, Germany, Tuesday May 2, 2000

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Page 2 of 4 < [Back](#) [Next](#) >

Clark's Role in Kosovo Exemplifies His Traits □

A Second Role

Clark explains that he wore a second hat, little understood in Washington, as the top NATO officer as well as the top U.S. officer in Europe. In that role, he says, he had a responsibility to meet with members of Congress and senior officials outside the Pentagon to inform them about "dangers looming in the Balkans," including the risk of genocide such as that seen in Bosnia.



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Retired U.S. general and Democratic presidential candidate Wesley Clark, in front of the War Crimes Tribunal in the Hague, Tuesday. (Michael Kooren - Reuters)

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Clark on Kosovo

"President Milosevic has to be persuaded that he is not going to be allowed to continue to seek a military solution to this problem. He has it in his mind and his advisers have it in their mind, I believe, that they can stall the international community, put us off balance, divide us, confuse us, befuddle us and somehow continue to conduct military and police operations with heavy weapons against these people in Kosovo. And that idea has to be taken out of their heads."

— "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer,"
Jan. 26, 1999

"I believe the purpose of the United States in Europe was to follow through on our commitments to bring peace to Bosnia and prevent another round of ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, in Kosovo Some people in the Pentagon disagreed with me. I went through the Pentagon and recommended we use diplomacy backed by the threat of force. I had the permission of the Pentagon to do that. I worked, I warned, I struggled to prevent a war. And when it finally came down to it, I had to fight it, lead it, and we won it."

— Democratic presidential debate,
Oct. 26, 2003

THE WASHINGTON POST

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"Maybe the flaws of excess, intensity and single-mindedness left him tone-deaf about how he

might be received" by superiors, said a NATO colleague and friend during this period. The friend added that nonetheless, Clark had commendably forced the Pentagon to "face up" to the Kosovo crisis at a point when its doctrine and traditions favored avoidance.

The continuing discussion of Clark's role is relevant to the debate over the merits of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, an issue that Clark admits he "bobbled" at the outset of his campaign by expressing weak support. Lately, Clark has been unrelentingly critical of the timing of the war and the planning that preceded it. Those are the same issues on which Clark's Kosovo efforts drew criticism from the Pentagon.

Clark's independent streak at NATO was foreshadowed during his first tour of duty at its headquarters, in 1978. "Not a yes man," Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., then the supreme allied commander, said in Clark's performance rating that year, praising him as a "soldier-scholar" with qualities that set "him apart from his contemporaries."

Clark first involved himself in Balkan policymaking as a military envoy to Holbrooke during negotiations to end the Bosnian war in 1995. But Clark says his passion for intervening militarily in Kosovo grew out of watching the Clinton administration fumble during the slaughter of half a million people in Rwanda during 1994, when Clark was the director of strategic plans and policy for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"I was not going to stand by after Rwanda and let [expulsions occur in Kosovo] . . . without raising the alarm in Washington," Clark recalled recently. "That was my duty." An official who worked closely with him at the time of the Kosovo crisis said, however, that he did not recall Clark mentioning Rwanda.

Clark also said he had a "professional gap" on the issue with Army Gen. Henry H. "Hugh" Shelton, then the Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman, because Shelton -- a special forces veteran -- was a "conventional military officer" and planner. Shelton and his Pentagon colleagues worried acutely about the absence of widespread public and congressional support for a Kosovo war, and told Clark that Washington had no vital interests at stake there.

'Do You Want to Fight?'

Not shying from confrontation, Clark said he pressed Army Chief of Staff Dennis J. Reimer, asking, "Do you want to fight a war anywhere?" There was a problem in Europe, he said later, "and it did not fit their model," which envisioned major U.S. wars only in North Korea and the Persian Gulf area.

Albright, in an interview, said "it was very clear to me that the Pentagon did not want to move on this issue. . . . Wes and I thought it was worth doing." A former Albright aide said Clark's credentials lent critical ballast to Albright's advocacy, providing cover for Clinton and White House officials who were loath to stand up to unified military opposition on any issue.

Retired Marine Gen. Anthony C. Zinni, the top U.S. commander for the Middle East while Clark commanded NATO, said, "There is always a tension between the CINCs [regional commanders in chief] and the service chiefs. The CINCs see the need for intervention, engagement, while the services control the resources and see this as a distraction."

But Clark's personal style evidently caused the policy dispute to boil over into a personal clash, according to former Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman John M. Shalikashvili, who appointed Clark to the NATO job over the objections of the Army leadership. Clark "is a guy who by temperament is more likely to operate on the edge of the system," Shalikashvili said. The chiefs "might have felt that Wes pushed them too far."

A former senior military official confirmed the account. "If Wes did not agree, then he thought it was okay to call . . . anyone else who would help," the official said. "We don't do that in the military." Shelton was provoked, largely by Clark, to demand in a classified 1999 memo that all the regional CINCs inform him in advance of all their meetings in Washington.

James Steinberg, then the deputy national security adviser, said the White House would not have allowed Clark to conduct an end-run around the Pentagon. "I did not think he was being

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insubordinate," Steinberg said. But "people who knew him understood that when he felt strongly, he wanted to let people know. . . . My perspective was that there was value in his giving his ground-truth."

By the spring of 1999, the administration reached a consensus that a NATO bombing campaign was inevitable, partly because of the indiscriminate use of force by Yugoslav troops against suspected rebels in Kosovo. But tensions persisted between Clark and Washington, even after the war began on March 24. On the second day, Clark announced that NATO bombers would "ultimately destroy" Yugoslav military forces if Milosevic did not concede.

< [Back](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [Next](#) >

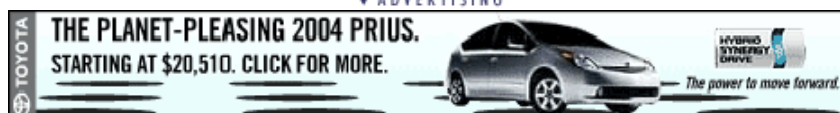
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Defending the General

The New Yorker's unfair slam on Wes Clark and his role in the Kosovo war.

By Fred Kaplan

Posted Thursday, Nov. 13, 2003, at 4:13 PM PT



What's so bad about winning a war?

I don't know whether Gen. Wesley Clark is qualified to be president, but Peter J. Boyer's [profile](#) in this week's *New Yorker*—which paints him as scarily unqualified—is an unfair portrait as well as a misleading, occasionally inaccurate *précis* of the 1999 Kosovo war and Clark's role in commanding it.

Boyer relies heavily on some of Clark's fellow retired Army generals who clearly despise him. The gist of their critique, as Boyer summarizes, is that Clark, while a brilliant analyst, "had a certainty about the rightness of his views which led to conflicts with his colleagues and, sometimes, his superiors."

I have met a fair number of generals, and I can't think of a single one who did not have "a certainty about the rightness of his views." There may have been a couple of one-star generals who expressed this certainty in a modest tone, but above that rank—and Clark retired as a four-star general—their confidence easily became belligerent if their opinions were challenged.

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Boyer acknowledges that Clark alienated some generals simply because he rubbed them the wrong way. First in his class at West Point, a Rhodes Scholar, an officer who felt at ease as a White House fellow and as a high-level Pentagon planning analyst—Clark's résumé did not fit many traditionalist officers' view of a warrior. However, Clark's most outspoken critics disliked him because of his views and actions during Kosovo, and that is where Boyer misreads both content and context.

Kosovo was the United States' first post-Cold War experiment in "humanitarian intervention." Clark, who was

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the U.S. Supreme Allied Commander in Europe (and who, before that, had been a military aide in the Dayton negotiations over Bosnia), supported going to war in order to protect the Kosovars from the savagery of Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic. Secretary of Defense William Cohen and the entire Joint Chiefs of Staff, who had no taste for interventions of practically any sort, opposed it.

That much, Boyer has right. But much else, he does not.

For instance, he portrays Clark as not only maneuvering around the chiefs in his advocacy, but also as drawing a lackadaisical Clinton White House—distracted by domestic troubles over Monica Lewinsky—into war. In fact, however, Clinton may have been distracted somewhat, but Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was not. Albright was a fiery supporter of military intervention in the Balkans (many have written of the famous meeting where she appalled the reticent chiefs by saying, "What good are all these fine troops you keep telling us about if we can't use them?"). Albright was the prime mover; many observers at the time—supporters and critics alike—called it "Madeleine's war." And her prime collaborator, Richard Holbrooke, Clinton's envoy to Bosnia, also enjoyed direct access to the president.

So it is more than a bit startling to read, in Boyer's article, the following sentence: "Clark's view, which had the support of Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Holbrooke, prevailed." It would be more apt to say, "Albright's view, which had the support of Holbrooke and Clark, prevailed." She welcomed Clark's endorsement, but she didn't need it to make her argument or to win it.

Boyer also distorts the war itself, mischaracterizing it as a senseless adventure. He tacitly takes the chiefs' position on this, without noting that many others besides Clark (and, for that matter, Albright and Holbrooke) held otherwise. Thousands of Bosnians were dying in a war that U.S. military power could have ended. Hundreds of thousands of Rwandans had recently been massacred in a civil war to which neither the United States nor the United Nations raised a finger, much less a fighter plane, in protest. Many of those pushing for intervention—and they included not just Clark but some of the most liberal, customarily antiwar politicians and columnists—wanted above all to avert another massacre. A case could be made—and the chiefs made it—that the United States shouldn't get involved in such messes where our own national security wasn't threatened. But it is false to attribute Clark's passionate lobbying, as Boyer pretty much does, to mere stubbornness.

Boyer is also off base when he likens the Kosovo conflict to George W. Bush's war in Iraq. He notes that Clark recently criticized Bush for invading Iraq without U.N. approval, yet observes that the Kosovo war was also initiated without the Security Council's permission. The bypassing of the United Nations that marked the onset of Kosovo, he writes, "did not seem entirely dissimilar from the prewar maneuverings regarding Iraq," when Bush bypassed the U.N. and resorted to a "coalition of the willing."

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In fact, the two wars—both their beginnings and their conduct—were *extremely* dissimilar. True, when Clinton realized Russia and China would veto a resolution calling for intervention, he backed away from the Security Council. However, he did not subsequently piece together a paltry, handpicked caricature of a coalition, as Bush did for the war in Iraq. Instead, he went through another established international organization—NATO.

From that point on, the aim of the war was not only to beat back Milosevic, but also to hold together the Atlantic Alliance, which was, after all, fighting the first war of its 50-year history. Compromises had to be made in military tactics in order to achieve this political objective—and that, too, was anathema to U.S. officers.

Air Force Gen. Michael Short, who presented Clark with a plan involving a classically massive set of opening-day airstrikes, was "dismayed," Boyer writes, when Clark didn't approve the plan on the grounds that NATO's member nations would never approve it.

Boyer, on balance, takes Short's side on this tale. Under Clark's command, Boyer laments, the United States "could only wage war by committee; the process was so unwieldy that it became, to future American Defense officials, an object lesson in how not to fight a war."

Maybe. But is there much doubt today that Clark was correct in this choice? Does anyone care to argue that intervening in Kosovo was a bad idea, that the Western alliance wasn't (at least for a brief spell) strengthened as a result, or that the war was unsuccessful? Milosevic surrendered, was captured, and is standing trial for war crimes in a court of international law—which is more than can be said of Saddam Hussein. The Serbian defeat was total, unchallenged, and internationally imposed, which may explain why the (truly multinational) postwar peacekeeping forces have suffered minimal casualties in the intervening years.

Clark was fired by Secretary of Defense William Cohen shortly after the war ended—and, just to make sure Clark didn't try to make an end-run, the chiefs leaked the firing to the *Washington Post*. The reasons for his dismissal seem clear: Clark had pushed a policy that Cohen and the chiefs had opposed (and, even after the war, continued to oppose); he went around them in his advocacy; he was too close, for the chiefs' taste, to Clinton (in signing Clark's release papers, Clinton was led to believe the move was a normal succession, not a dismissal); and, toward the end of the war, he pushed for a [ground-invasion option](#) that none of the Pentagon's top officials supported in the slightest.

Clearly, Clark made mistakes. Like many, he thought that merely threatening Milosevic with airstrikes would make him back down; after that didn't work, he thought three nights of bombing would crack his resistance. (The bombing campaign lasted 11 weeks.) But Clark was far from alone in this miscalculation; Clinton and Albright shared it. Clark also delivered a disastrous press briefing in the middle of the war (prompting Cohen to order him, "Get your f***ing face off

the TV, no more briefings, period"). But the briefing (which I remember well and reported on at the time) was a disaster because Clark committed truth: He admitted, in a roundabout way, that the air war wasn't going well; he was impolitic, but he was right.

The fact that Cohen hated Clark, shuddered at the sight of him according to Boyer's article, should cause no discomfort to any prospective voter today. Cohen posted the least distinctive record of any secretary of defense in modern memory; he was widely seen as a milquetoast at the time and left no legacy to speak of.

Gen. Hugh Shelton, then the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, is another matter. Shelton has recently and famously said, in a public forum, that Clark's firing "had to do with integrity and character issues," adding that, for that reason, "Wes won't get my vote." Shelton has since refused to elaborate. If there's a story behind his claim, he should tell it, in the interests of the country. If there isn't, he should apologize. Boyer obviously talked with him in the course of researching the story, but the case against Clark—while there very well may be one—remains unmade.

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Remarks from the Fray:

...Kaplan writes : "Boyer (The *New Yorker* writer) relies heavily on some of Clark's fellow retired Army generals who clearly despise him. The gist of their critique, as Boyer summarizes, is that Clark, while a brilliant analyst, "had a certainty about the rightness of his views which led to conflicts with his colleagues and, sometimes, his superiors."

Question 1: Where else should have Boyer gone to for in depth peeks into a man's personality and habits other than those most directly reporting to him or those to whom he reports in the said function?? There is concern, and then there is DESPISE.

Question 2: Why the despise? I doubt it is all raw personality conflict. You can't function in the military like this and have men respect you and trust your judgments, brilliantly conceived or otherwise. (and there is apparently some "otherwise" in there peppered throughout). The officers in question, the MANY of them, are not the only ones to make this judgment. Others have as well.

It may be that *some* officers simply do not get along with Wesley Clark. OK. Many people don't like me either. But I don't have the power or the blotch on my resume of bombing innocent people back into the Stone Age. And many have said in confidence that the man is rash in his decisions and has a difficult time seeing eye to eye with superiors, much less subordinates. In a presidency he will have no "superiors" to thumb off, but the principle is the same. Being "sure" of oneself is not quite the same as a compulsive snap judger who does things by whim, as when he threatened to open fire on Russian positions during one close call in the NATO campaign over Kosovo. Others wonder aloud if Clark's [entirely less than stellar career](#) [www.frontpagemag.com] has been anything more than a *compulsive* push for political power wherein he feels it better to step on heads and toes rather than shake hands along the way up the ladder of success...

--Lord_Wakefield

(To reply, click [here](#))

...Boyer was eager to offer hearsay and gossip, but he didn't have much to say about the tragic accident on Mount Igman near Sarajevo in 1995, in which members of then Ambassador Richard Holbrooke's negotiating team were killed when their armored personnel carrier went off the road. Despite the explosion, the mines and the gunfire, Clark rappelled down that hillside, and stayed with the burning APC to assist with the extraction of the bodies. Holbrooke, and not Clark, described Clark's efforts in his memoirs.

Boyer also didn't mention the very young Clark in Vietnam, who after being shot several times, commended his troops to a successful counter-attack. After recovering from his injuries and receiving his medals for bravery, Clark went back into the Army. But Boyer wouldn't write about that either because it would spoil the ugly picture he was determined to paint...

--RapidResponder

(To reply, click [here](#))

(11/14)

The Changing Roles of the Regional Commanders In Chief - Dana Priest

Dana Priest, Military Affairs Correspondent, The Washington Post; and Guest Scholar, U.S. Institute for Peace

Washington, DC
March 23, 2001

[Opening Remarks and Introduction by Alan Lang, Chairman of the Open Forum](#)



Thank you, I am pleased to be here. I've asked Ambassador Oakley to speak after me so I can say everything obvious and he can swoop in with his much broader wisdom and experience and open the aperture up a little bit.

I'm here to talk about the regional commanders in chief (CINCs) who I've renamed the proconsuls using the poetic license that I hang up on my wall at *The Washington Post*. The day that my series on the CINCs ran, I was driving to work, and my cell phone rang. It was an Assistant Secretary of Defense, and he was a little bit agitated. He was actually yelling. I thought, "Oh, what have I done?" He started out on a rift that went something like this: "I went to graduate school and earned a doctorate in international relations. I worked in government for 10 years, and no one mentioned these guys to me. I get over here and they are the elephant in the living room! You have to deal with them." And it was a complete surprise. The next call came from one of the CINCs now in retirement. By the time the series ran, three of the four had already retired. And he said to me, "I can't believe I said that. Did I do that? It's a wonder they didn't fire me long ago for insubordination."

I started looking at the regional CINCs during the annual CINC conference of 2000. The entire program, including the agenda for the conference, was classified. Nevertheless, I learned that peacetime engagement, the mission that the CINCs spend most of their time on these days, was the subject of one of the 2 days of their meetings. The meetings had immediately become contentious mainly because the two Marines, General Zinni from CENCOM and General Wilhelm from SOUTHCOM had planned an attack beforehand. They brought charts and graphs to bolster their complaint that they were being asked to do so much with so little. Both generals with no assigned troops were tired of wrestling with the military services -- the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines -- for personnel to send on exercises and exchanges. The Service Chiefs, they complained, didn't understand what life was like for them "OUT THERE."

And they were right. Not only didn't the Service Chiefs realize how much the job of the CINCs had evolved since the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act in 1986, but also the Joint Staff was just beginning to see the larger picture. The White House had snapshots from the *crisis du jour*. And Congress, I think, really still doesn't understand. The Goldwaters-Nichols Act was meant to push the notion of joint military operations, to empower one person to order the services to work together. Each and every service chief opposed its passage. It grew directly out of the aborted attempt to rescue American hostages in Tehran, which failed, in part, because the Air Force and the Navy didn't cooperate. Someone had to be given the power to make the services work together. They were not going to do it on their own. The position of CINC was the logical choice. It made so much sense militarily, and the CINCs' staffs began to grow to accommodate the shift in authority. But since war is rare -- knock on wood -- the CINCs also got tasked in the post-Cold War with this shaping mission. In fact, that takes up a vast amount of their resources and the majority of a CINC's time. But [this role] has evolved without a grand strategy or a centralized look and without much of a systematic lash up between other obvious parts of the U.S. Government namely State, Commerce, and Justice. To get a better grip on what was happening with the four CINCDoms, the National Security Council (NSC) and General Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, a few years ago asked the CINCs for an accounting of what they were doing in the world. The documents they produced were called the Theater Engagement Plans or TEPs. They were four inches thick and most of them looked like accounting ledgers. These documents are also classified. To varying degrees, their programs are linked to national strategic goals, but much of it is a smorgasbord of training exercises, exchanges, port visits, and conferences. Deeply embedded, too, is a form of chronic military tourism--a staff term I learned during my travels with the four CINCs. It involves trips abroad by dozens of general officers each year, many of them from the service components in a given theater.

At the CINC conference of 2000, Zinni and Wilhelm insisted that congressional committees vet the TEPs. "Get their buy in," Wilhelm told them, "and they might realize how important it is for the U.S. military to be engaged in Latin America at a time when democratic governments across the continent are in trouble."

Zinni thought that if [one] could get Congress to buy into a strategic rationale for becoming a diplomatic power in Central Asia, maybe he could get more started there. But their notions were considered near blasphemous, and the debate illustrated the Pentagon's reluctance, I think, to show Congress just how involved its generals and admirals had become in the world as soldier-diplomats. Does the U.S. military impact foreign policy? You bet. Did they want Congress mucking around in their programs? Not many of them did. When you look at the parochialism that informs congressional decisionmaking on foreign policy these days, its partisanship and earmarking of foreign aid, you can't entirely blame them. And yet, U.S. foreign policy carried out by whomever should be the product of open debate and must stand up to public scrutiny.

The conventional wisdom is that President Clinton and the military never got along. The reality is, under Clinton's watch, the military came to outrank its civilian chain of command in influence, authority, and resources in many parts of the world. How did this come about? The Clinton administration's poor relations with congressional Republicans, especially in the area of foreign policy, led the White House to drop contentious fights over State Department funding and international diplomatic initiatives. They knew that they would get little resistance, however, from Defense committees. Secondly, I think, the management of the State Department under Secretary Albright fed this imbalance. Whatever her legacy abroad, she was unable to make the case for America's diplomatic corps at home. Its resources, esprit, and innovation continued to plummet. As a footnote, I'd like to say that if Ambassador Larry Pope, the political adviser to General Zinni, had been a three-star general in line for a fourth star, his derailment for his next ambassadorship by one Senator, would have brought the wrath of the Defense establishment and the administration. Instead, he was left to fight nearly on his own. And he chose to leave government in the prime of his career.

As an institution, the military remains conflicted about such quasi-diplomatic missions as peacekeeping and nation-building. But it has tried to adapt despite itself. Some examples: the CINCs created regional study institutes, joint assignments became prerequisite for promotion, and the Joint Staff grew in skill and numbers, as did the number of military assignments on Capitol Hill, the State Department, and the NSC. The military, as I see it, has been the one to step into a growing gulf between America's unprecedented new leadership role in the world and what America's diplomatic and economic institutions are able to do to fill it. I realized this after traveling the world with all four of the CINCs and after listening to Ambassadors in every one of the 24 countries that I visited with them.

"Do you know how hard it is to get someone of a CINC's stature out here from the State Department?" one ambassador lamented. "Thank God he comes here as much as he does. At least they know that the United States cares," another ambassador told me. And another one said, "We're firefighters, we don't have time to think about big issues."

Let's face it: a crucial factor at work here is money. A CINC can think strategically because he's got a cadre of special assistants, an entire J-5 staff, and the most up-to-date information from his J-2 staff, the round-the-clock intelligence centers under his command, and a growing number of CIA employees seconded to him.

For a CINC it's routine to order up an entourage of 35 and visit nearly every country in his theater twice a year. His closest counterparts at the State Department fly commercial and they carry their own bags, and foreign hosts may or may not be aware of the honors they should accord. When a four-star shows up, there is no doubt.

I was not always impressed by what I saw the CINCs' resources spent on. While there may be a value in having every U.S. and Persian Gulf state flag officer together at the same conference, the quality of the conference I sat through in Bahrain was pretty poor. It was so elemental, and it cost CENCOM \$450,000.

That's how I see their world. How did the regional CINCs see it?

The most surprising thing to me was that the questions that bothered the four of them were pretty much the same. They were not military questions. As General Zinni told me once, "War is the easy part." One of the things that worried them the most -- what is the U.S. strategy for the post-Cold War era? Admiral Blair of the Pacific Command was obsessed with finding a phrase for the post-Cold War era that would capture the present and look forward instead of backward. "If you could name it," he thought, "somehow the concept would become more concrete." All the CINCs wanted Washington to take a more regional approach to solving problems and for Washington to offer greater support to regional coalitions. I wanted to talk about their lives and travels. They wanted to talk about fixing the interagency process so that they would be smarter about what they were doing and more effective. They each told me stories [about] having to creep around the Pentagon to meet with State Department [officials] and getting their hands slapped when they were discovered. They all felt like they were at the end of a tether line, out on the edges of

an empire, and that too often no one at the Pentagon cared about what they were discovering. They each felt disappointed with their chain of command, especially Secretary Cohen, who seemed to them to want to talk only to coordinate the next upcoming news conference. They believed that the Pentagon had become far too reactive to the day's news reports. They were each also highly critical of persistent service parochialism and urgent about the need for genuine jointness [among] the services. And each was curious about how the other CINCs operated. "Well, how big is his plane?" they asked.

How do others view the CINCs? I got my editors initially interested and willing to spend thousands of dollars to send me around the world with the simplest of pitches: There are these four men, you've probably never heard of them, the regional CINCs, they:

- Have their own planes with big entourages;
- Travel the world;
- Are treated like royalty; and
- Wield increasing power and influence out there; many people in the Pentagon don't even know what they do.

As for the State Department, well, the ambassadors and country teams understand what [CINCs] do. But there is great frustration that their mother bureaucracy in Washington has no easy and logical way to plug into the CINCDoms.

Like the civilian side of the Department of Defense, none of the regional bureaus at State even line up with the CINC's theaters. The State Department POLADS (political advisers to the CINCs) give mixed reports on their access and influence in Foggy Bottom. But generally, I believe, they are underutilized and undervalued.

I was very lucky that I caught the CINC class of 2000 when I did. Three of the four were on the verge of retirement, and I think their frustrations drove them to let me follow them around. They answered hours of questions, and they figured out ways to get me into most of their meetings with foreign dignitaries. But I don't assume that the openness will continue. As one of their replacements recently told me, "Well, I'm not like so and so. What I do is secret." This is not a good thing. It's hard enough these days for national security reporters to get their stories on the front page -- today's *Washington Post* might be an aberration -- but making access more difficult only decreases the chance that a reporter will go beyond the surface of daily events. In this regard, though, the State Department could take a page from the Pentagon, believe it or not. The Pentagon learned years ago that to earn public support you have to sell yourself to the public, and to do that you have to deal with reporters, like it or not. This is a lesson, I think, that the State Department is still learning. After the series ran, I was speaking to a senior diplomat who was complimenting me on my access. I said, "The next thing I'd like to do is to spend some time with ambassadors in the field -- see what really goes on in an embassy, and try to describe what makes a diplomat." "No can do," he told me without even rolling his eyes. All information needs to be cleared through Washington." Please note that Robert Gelbard is the only ambassador quoted by name in the entire three-part series. That's because Washington said "No," even when ambassadors said "Yes." Is it any wonder that the public doesn't know what diplomats do, that the image they carry around about foreign aid is the last scandal they read about? Is it any wonder that the public is willing to fund a new generation of precision guided missiles -- things that can fly through clouds, enter a building through a chimney, speed down three floors and not explode until it reaches the basement -- but that no one is clamoring for a new generation of precision guided diplomacy, something to replace antiquated economic sanctions which have done little to effect regime changes in Yugoslavia, Haiti, Iraq, Cuba, Afghanistan, and North Korea, but are just as certain to cause civilian casualties as the use of cluster bombs in a market square, which no one would approve of?

The public view of the CINCs, I think, falls into three camps:

In some liberal quarters, where there is great distrust of the military; there is a call to rein them in.

Within a chunk of the military and conservative circles, there is also a call to rein them in, because these folks believe these fuzzy non-war missions divert resources from [fighting war].

A middle-ground approach might be this: since there is little hope that the national security apparatus will be overhauled to meet the demands of the new world, which is my working assumption, we should be prepared to make do with what's there, insist on greater coordination between DoD, the CINCs, and the State Department, and allow some degree of consultation on these issues with Congress and the public.

Profound questions remain unanswered about the military. We are still waiting to get a sense as to how the new

Administration will respond. The questions include:□

What is the proper role of the U.S. Armed Forces, short of war?□

Does the U.S. have a moral obligation to intervene in humanitarian crises? If so, which ones?□

Does the military have a duty to scout the globe like the armies of 19th-century Britain once did, patrolling for new □ friends and watching old enemies?□

Finally, if the U.S. military is used to bring security to areas of instability like Kosovo, can it and should it go beyond □ that to bring democracy and justice where it may not exist.□

Those are among the questions that Ambassador Oakley will answer for you (Laughter and applause.)□

Mr. Lang: Ms. Priest, thank you so much for that superb presentation.□

[End]□

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COL. DAVID HACKWORTH
DEFENDING AMERICA



WORLDNETDAILY EXCLUSIVE COMMENTARY

Reporting for duty: Wesley Clark

Posted: September 23, 2003
1:00 a.m. Eastern

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With Wesley Clark joining the Democratic presidential candidates, there are enough eager bodies pointed toward the White House to make up a rifle squad. This bunch of wannabes could make things increasingly hot for Dubya – as long as they don't blow each other away with friendly fire.

Since Clark tossed his steel pot into the inferno, I've been constantly asked, "Hack, what do you think of the general?"

For the record, I never served with Clark. But after spending three hours interviewing the man for Maxim's November issue, I'm impressed. He is insightful, he has his act together, he understands what makes national security tick – and he thinks on his feet somewhere around Mach 3. No big surprise, since he graduated first in his class from West Point, which puts him in the supersmart set with Robert E. Lee, Douglas MacArthur and Maxwell Taylor.

Clark was so brilliant, he was whisked off to Oxford as a Rhodes scholar and didn't get his boots into the Vietnam mud until well after his 1966 West Point class came close to achieving the academy record for

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the most Purple Hearts in any one war. When he finally got there, he took over a 1st Infantry Division rifle company and was badly wounded.

Lt. Gen. James Hollingsworth, one of our Army's most distinguished war heroes, says: "Clark took a burst of AK fire, but didn't stop fighting. He stayed on the field 'til his mission was accomplished and his boys were safe. He was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart. And he earned 'em."

It took months for Clark to get back in shape. He had the perfect excuse, but he didn't quit the Army to scale the corporate peaks as so many of our best and brightest did back then. Instead, he took a demoralized company of short-timers at Fort Knox who were suffering from a Vietnam hangover and made them the best on post – a major challenge in 1970 when our Army was teetering on the edge of anarchy. Then he stuck around to become one of the young Turks who forged the Green Machine into the magnificent sword Norman Schwarzkopf swung so skillfully during Round One of the Gulf War.

I asked Clark why he didn't turn in his bloody soldier suit for Armani and the big civvy dough that was definitely his for the asking.

His response: "I wanted to serve my country."

He says he now wants to lead America out of the darkness, shorten what promises to be the longest and nastiest war in our history and restore our eroding prestige around the world.

For sure, he'll be strong on defense. But with his high moral standards and because he knows where and how the game's played, there will probably be zero tolerance for either Pentagon porking or two-bit shenanigans.

No doubt he's made his share of enemies. He doesn't suffer fools easily and wouldn't have allowed the dilettantes who convinced Dubya to do Iraq to even cut the White House lawn. So he should prepare for a fair amount of dart-throwing from detractors he's ripped into during the past three decades.

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Hey, I am one of those: I took a swing at Clark during the Kosovo campaign when I thought he screwed up the operation, and I called him a "Perfumed Prince." Only years later did I discover from his book and other research that I was wrong – the blame should have been worn by British timidity and William Cohen, U.S. SecDef at the time.

At the interview, Clark came along without the standard platoon of handlers and treated the little folks who poured the coffee and served the bacon and eggs with exactly the same respect and consideration he gave the biggies in the dining room like my colleague Larry King and Bob Tisch, the Regency Hotel's owner. An appealing common touch.

But if he wins the election, don't expect an Andrew Jackson field-soldier type. Clark's an intellectual, and his military career is more like Ike's – that of a staff guy and a brilliant high-level commander. Can he make tough decisions? Bet on it. Just like Ike did during his eight hard but prosperous years as president.

Col. David H. Hackworth, author of his new best-selling "Steel My Soldiers' Hearts," "Price of Honor" and "About Face," has seen duty or reported as a sailor, soldier and military correspondent in nearly a dozen wars and conflicts – from the end of World War II to the recent fights against international terrorism.



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Frag Officer

Hugh Shelton smears Wes Clark.

By William Saletan

Posted Monday, Sept. 29, 2003, at 3:20 PM PT

I have a problem with Wesley Clark's former boss and current bad-mouther, Gen. Hugh Shelton. The problem has to do with Shelton's integrity and character. Let's just say that if Shelton runs for office, he won't get my vote.

A couple of weeks ago, Shelton, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was asked at a forum in California, "What do you think of Gen. Wesley Clark, and would you support him as a presidential candidate?" Shelton [replied](#), "I've known Wes for a long time. I will tell you the reason he came out of Europe early [i.e., was forced to step down as commander of U.S. forces in Europe] had to do with integrity and character issues, things that are very near and dear to my heart. I'm not going to say whether I'm a Republican or a Democrat. I'll just say Wes won't get my vote."

Shelton's remarks appeared in the *Los Altos Town Crier* on Sept. 23. On Sept. 24, the Republican National Committee [disseminated them](#) in an e-mail alert. The *New York Times* sought clarification from Shelton but [reported](#) that he "could not be reached for comment." Since then, the remarks have reappeared in numerous wire stories, TV broadcasts, and newspaper articles. The *New York Post* trumpeted "the revelation that [Shelton] says Clark lacks the character to be president" and suggested it was one of several "hints that maybe Clark isn't all that." A *Post* op-ed added, "It makes you suspect that [Shelton] knows whereof he speaks when he says Clark's forced early retirement as head of NATO 'had to do with integrity and character issues.' " On CNBC, former Rep. Susan Molinari, R-N.Y., asked, "What do we know about [Clark]? He supported Bush. He said nice things about Condi Rice. Gen. Shelton says that there's issues of character and integrity that need to be discussed." On Fox News, Tony Snow said Clark "didn't run the military. He was run out of the military. ... [Shelton] says Clark was, in effect, fired as the supreme allied commander for reasons of integrity and character."

I've searched news databases and found only one person who's pointed out that Shelton has a duty to clarify his accusation. Last Friday, my colleague, Chris Suellentrop, appeared on the Fox News show *The Big Story With John*

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Gibson. Gibson recited Shelton's quotes, posited that Shelton "had to have a good reason" to fire Clark, and concluded, "Integrity—that means, does the guy lie? Does he tell the truth to his bosses?" Suellentrop argued that Shelton "should say more of what he means by that. What character issues? What integrity issues?" But Gibson persisted:

Why do you think it is that none of the other nine candidates in this debate yesterday didn't turn around and say, Gen. Clark, what integrity issues, what character issues, why were you fired? No one said a word about this. Is somebody covering something up or are they just ... Is there a khaki wall that is going to close around Clark and we are not going to find out what it was that Hugh Shelton and evidently more people at that level felt about him? ... Could it be because these issues, the words "integrity and character," are so large that if [Democratic rivals] fired Clark now they may not have somebody that they want to run with [on the ticket]? The Democrats cannot attack this guy or find out what these issues were because it's too bad, they may need him?

Whoa. We don't know that Clark lied. We don't know that the grounds on which Shelton got rid of him were valid. We don't know that when Shelton challenges Clark's integrity, Shelton knows whereof he speaks. We don't know that "more people" at Shelton's level doubted Clark's integrity. All we know is that some military honchos have criticized Clark's style anonymously and that Shelton has challenged Clark's integrity. We don't know whether these two sets of allegations are related, or whether other military leaders who have issues with Clark would characterize them as issues of integrity.

What we do know from widespread reporting is that Shelton resented Clark for going over his head to the Clinton White House, the State Department, and the media. That's the closest thing to a Clark-Shelton "integrity" issue I can find in the public record. If that's Shelton's beef, he ought to say so and let others judge whether it calls into question Clark's integrity.

While he's at it, Shelton ought to explain why, if sneaking around your boss to go to the media is a grave character issue, sneaking around your former subordinate to go to the media with an unfalsifiable insinuation about him isn't. Clark [says](#) Shelton never came to him directly: "I have never heard anything about these integrity and character issues." Clark also says he has "[no idea](#)" what they are. Until Shelton clarifies the charge, Clark can't rebut it. He's presumed guilty of something serious. That's why Gibson's complaint is upside-down. If somebody is covering up what Shelton is talking about, that somebody is Shelton. And the cover-up isn't helping Clark; it's hurting him.

A wise friend once told me you can learn more about somebody from what he says about others than from what others say about him. Given what I've heard so far from Clark and Shelton, if I had to vote for one of them based on

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integrity and character, I'd go with Clark.

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VOICED AT:

INTRO: Near the end of last month, the Pentagon forced U-S General Wesley Clark to retire from his post as NATO supreme allied commander in Europe in April of next year, three months before the end of his official tour of duty. In this report from Washington, National Security Correspondent Andre de Nesnera looks at General Clark's contributions in the Kosovo air campaign and discusses some of the reasons why the Pentagon may have decided to remove him from his senior NATO post.

TEXT: General Wesley Clark has been NATO's Supreme Allied Commander in Europe since July 1997. In that capacity, he was responsible for conducting the western alliance's successful 78-day air campaign against Serb forces in Kosovo - NATO's only offensive military endeavor in its 50-year history.

Retired Colonel David Hackworth - a decorated U-S veteran from the Korean and Vietnam wars - says General Clark has not received the necessary accolades for his Kosovo campaign.

/// HACKWORTH ACT ///

He is a winner. He is the first General in U-S military history who fought a war, sustained - as we know - no friendly casualties and at the end of the war didn't get a bunch of medals, didn't get a victory parade down (New York's) Fifth Avenue and ended up getting the sack. (getting fired)

/// END ACT ///

Colonel Hackworth - now a military analyst - is referring to U-S Defense Secretary William Cohen's decision to replace General Clark as Supreme NATO Commander in April of next year - three months before his three-year term expires.

Colonel Hackworth says Mr. Cohen's decision to replace General Clark can only be interpreted as a slap at him.

/// SECOND HACKWORTH ACT ///

From my experience, looking over the past NATO Commanders, the average time that people like (General) Bernard Rogers, General (Lyman) Lemnitzer, General (Lauris) Norstad, was a five-year tour of duty - General (Alexander) Haig. So it wasn't - as it is being put out now by the Pentagon - (seen) as a three-year tour. This guy envisaged staying there until he could move back to the U-S-A and become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

/// END ACT ///

Many analysts and military experts agree with Colonel Hackworth's assessment. And the question they are asking is why was General Clark fired?

One interpretation is that General Clark advocated a much more vigorous military campaign against Serb forces in Kosovo including the introduction of ground forces.

Retired Colonel Dan Smith - a West Point classmate of General Clark - says the NATO Commander believes the only way you can achieve success militarily, is to have troops on the ground.

/// CLARK ACT ///

He is of the school which in the United States is generally attributed to General Colin Powell: if you are going to fight, you go in with both feet and you go in fast and you go in hard with overwhelming force - and I think that was what Wes was trying to push NATO into.

/// END ACT ///

During the 11-week air campaign, there were signs of friction between General Clark and senior Pentagon officials - especially over the use of ground forces. That option was essentially rejected by the Clinton administration, putting General Clark in direct opposition to current US policy.

Paul Beaver - senior analyst with the British publication "Jane's Defense Weekly" - says General Clark disagreed with another senior NATO officer about the use of ground troops in the Kosovo campaign.

/// BEAVER ACT ///

Certainly he wanted to be more robust in the Kosovo landing operation. He wanted to go and confront the Russians at Pristina airfield. And that was actually a matter of some debate between him and the ground force commander

(British General) Sir Mike Jackson in which Sir □
Mike Jackson won, because in his words it would □
have started World War Three and we weren't □
quite ready for that.□

/// END ACT ///□

Sources in the U-S and British military say the □
confrontation between General Clark and British □
General Mike Jackson happened June 24th - 12 days after □
Russian troops occupied Kosovo's Pristina airfield, □
surprising NATO officials. According to the sources, □
British Prime Minister Tony Blair backed General □
Jackson, while General Clark did not receive the □
support from senior Pentagon and White House officials □
- another sign of their eroding confidence in the □
senior NATO Commander. □

But U-S officials have dismissed any notion that □
disagreements with General Clark led to the decision □
to retire him early.□

Analysts say another explanation for General Clark's □
early departure was US Defense Secretary Cohen's □
desire to place a trusted colleague - Air Force □
General Joseph Ralston, vice-chairman of the Joint □
Chiefs of Staff - into a senior NATO post. □

Retired Colonel Dan Smith (from the Washington-based □
Center for Defense Intelligence), says General Ralston □
could not be re-appointed as vice-Chairman of the □
Joint Chiefs of Staff since he has held that post for □
two consecutive terms. So the Pentagon had to find him □
another posting to keep him on active duty - and □
Colonel Smith says General Clark's European Command □
was the logical choice.□

/// SECOND SMITH ACT // □

The European Command, which has been (reserved □
for the) army for many, many, many years. I □
think you have to go back to the early 1950's to □
find an Air Force officer (there) (General □
Lauris Norstad, 56-62). But that is one in which □
an Air Force officer could logically serve in □
and I think it came to - well, if we are going □
to keep General Ralston, the only place he could □
go to was the European Command - and that means □
that General Clark was going to have to leave □
three months before his basic term is up. Of □
course most EUCOM Commanders are extended into □
their fourth year. So it looks a little strange.□

/// END ACT ///□

In the final analysis, according to sources, General □
Clark's premature departure from his senior NATO post □
was due to a combination of factors: first, the □
Pentagon's displeasure with his - as one analyst said □

- more bellicose views. And the need to find a □
suitable position for a well-liked, senior US officer □
who otherwise would have to leave active duty. □

So as one analyst put it: "General Clark had to □
go." (Signed) □

NEB/ADEN/KL □

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TIME

Monday, Sep. 22, 2003

Brass Ambition

Wesley Clark climbed fast up the ranks of the Pentagon — charming some, alienating others. How good a general was he?

By MARK THOMPSON/WASHINGTON

While the politicians call him General, the generals call him a politician. He once boasted of knowing the cholesterol level of all the officers vying with him for a promotion. The view of Wesley Clark as a hyperambitious, political general is widespread within the military, and though some officers decry those qualities, such traits might be just the thing for a presidential candidate. Right now, Clark's resume is his platform, and he wins high marks from former colleagues for his intelligence and innovation, though not for his warmth or generosity to fellow officers. They praise him for improving the way the Army trains its commanders and for settling age-old hatreds in the Balkans by diplomacy when possible, by force when necessary.

Clark's new book, *Winning Modern Wars: Iraq, Terrorism and the American Empire*, casts his trained eye on the Bush Administration's policy of nearly unilateral pre-emption and makes a cogent case for multilateralism. The book and Clark's military record offer insights into how good a general he was — and what kind of President he might be.

The Strategist

Generals, even those with four stars, get to influence policy only at the margins. They take an oath to follow the orders of their civilian leaders. Their power comes from influencing those leaders before final decisions are made. By that standard, Clark didn't get what he wanted in the 1999 Kosovo war. He fought to have ground troops to force Slobodan Milosevic to halt the killing of thousands of Albanian Kosovars in the province of Kosovo, which might have made military sense but would have shattered NATO unity. But the Clinton Administration took ground troops off the table early, as a way to preserve the alliance (some NATO members didn't want to attack at all) and paint the war as all of Europe, and the U.S., against Yugoslavia. Clark made the best of it, eventually persuading his bosses to at least begin planning to deploy ground units. and after 78 days of increasingly heavy bombing, the strategy worked — though it took the Russians to persuade Milosevic to surrender.

In the mid-1990s, Clark was serving as the director of policy and planning for the Joint Chiefs, a position in which his deft political touch and a capacity for poor judgment were on display. He played a key role in stopping an early round of bloodshed in the Balkans, helping to draft the

Dayton accords that halted the killing in Bosnia. But he stumbled when he met and swapped military hats with Ratko Mladic, a Bosnian Serb general the U.S. had branded a war criminal for the indiscriminate killing of Bosnian Muslims. The meeting infuriated the State Department. Clark later apologized, saying his gesture had given Mladic "a recognition and an acceptance into the brotherhood of arms which I don't feel his record substantiates."

The Careerist

Clark had a charmed career in the military, but, associates say, it began stalling out after he won his second star with his promotion to major general in September 1992. Bill Clinton gave him a third star in 1994. Two years later, then Lieut. General Marc Cisneros recalls hearing that Clark was seeking to win the four-star billet as head of the U.S. Southern Command — after the service had nominated Cisneros for the post. Cisneros would have seemed the ideal candidate: a Spanish speaker who had taken Manuel Noriega into custody in 1990 when the Panamanian leader surrendered to U.S. troops. Clark, in contrast, speaks Russian and had never held a Latin American post.

"When I was told by the Army that he was maneuvering to politically usurp my nomination, I visited with Clark," Cisneros says. "I said, 'I hear you're competing for the Southcom position also'--but he denied it. He told me, 'You're the nominee, and you're the one who's going to be selected, and I'm not trying to get that job.'" But within weeks, Clinton had nominated Clark. "I could have taken a 'Yes, I'm applying for the job,'" Cisneros says. "But when I confronted him, he was dishonest to me."

While Clark declined to respond directly to Cisneros, he told TIME, "People are entitled to their own opinions. The Army and the armed forces are very competitive institutions." An erstwhile colleague comments, "It doesn't mean a lot to be a Rhodes scholar in the Army, but it helps your career when the President is one." In fact, after Clark had run the Southern Command for only 12 months, Clinton nominated him to be NATO commander. That too raised Pentagon eyebrows, given that Clark had no significant command experience in that theater either.

Clark got crosswise with Defense Secretary William Cohen during the Kosovo campaign. Among other things, Cohen didn't like Clark's conducting press conferences from NATO headquarters in Brussels that might step on the Pentagon's preferred message. So Cohen had Army General Hugh Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, telephone Clark with a tart midwar message: "The Secretary of Defense asked me to give you some verbatim guidance, so here it is: 'Get your f_____ face off the TV,'" Clark wrote in his 2001 memoir. (Cohen declined to discuss Clark.)

Only a month after the Kosovo war, Clark learned that the Pentagon would be relieving him of his NATO post in early 2000, three months before his European tour was to end. According to Samuel Berger, Clinton's National Security Adviser, the Pentagon had told Clinton that the military career of Air Force General Joseph Ralston was winding up. Ralston was then serving as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and Clinton felt he owed him. Ralston, after all, had lost his bid to become the chairman in 1997, when a

controversy erupted over an extramarital affair.

Clinton approved Ralston as a replacement for Clark, Berger says, thinking it would happen only when Clark's term ended, not three months early. But the news of Clinton's choice of Ralston quickly leaked, along with an explanation that Clark would have to leave the post early to accommodate the Pentagon's arcane promotion timetable. "We approved a succession, not an execution," Berger recalls. Clark has described that day as one of the two worst of his life, the other being the day he was wounded in Vietnam.

The Soldier

After West Point, Clark volunteered for duty in Vietnam, where he was wounded in the hand, shoulder, leg and hip by an AK-47 and won a Silver Star for bravery along with his Purple Heart. He then won a White House fellowship under President Ford, and he became one of a few tradition-busting Army officers — Colin Powell was another — willing to step off the Army treadmill to serve in political assignments. "Many of us saw him as too self-serving," says a fellow Army officer. "A key measurement of an officer is how many people who serve under him get promoted to higher ranks because their commander pushed for them. You didn't see that as much with Clark as with other officers." Clark sees ambition as an engine to make things better. "Are you ambitious for the unit?" he asks. "I took a lot of units and made them better." Clark won high marks, even from foes, for his role in creating the Army's Battle Command Training Program, which made war games more realistic, and valuable, for commanders.

Clark was too in-your-face ambitious to fit into the Army's insular bureaucracy, which tends to dismiss anyone willing to challenge it. "Wes just wasn't a good ole boy," says Barry McCaffrey, a retired Army four-star who has known Clark for 30 years. "He didn't fit the 'I come from West Virginia, and my mom cooked me corn pone' that many combat leaders cultivate." Others saw a certain coldness. "He tended to have a blind spot on the human dimension," says a colonel who worked for him when Clark commanded the 1st Cavalry Division at Fort Hood, Texas, from 1992 to '94. "And it hurt morale: soldiers respected him, but they didn't love him."

But Clark's persistence rarely fails, and it may help him in politics. Back in 1961, as a 16-year-old high school senior, Clark needed a congressional nomination to get into West Point. When Arkansas Senator William Fulbright didn't answer his letter, he moved on to his state's other Senator, John McClellan. "You're not old enough, you're not big enough, and you're not smart enough to go to West Point," McClellan told Clark. "Come back and maybe talk to me next year." Refusing to take "later" for an answer, Clark turned to his Congressman, Dale Alford. The lawmaker required constituents seeking a West Point nod to take a civil service test. Clark beat out all his fellow test takers and won the appointment.

**NEWS
BRIEFING****Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Public Affairs)**

DoD News Briefing

Monday, May 1, 2000**Presenter:** Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen

(Also participating in the Joint Press Conference was Gen. Henry H. Shelton, Chairman, Joint Chief of Staff in ☐ Camp Bondsteel, Kosovo) ☐

SecDef Cohen: We will now take questions. You have heard the Chairman himself indicate that this mission was certainly a very difficult one; that it was successfully completed as far as driving Milosevic's forces out of Kosovo and helping to return a million refugees as well as helping to bring peace and stability. We understand that there are still some flashpoints that we have to contend with. We are strengthening our capability of interrupting the flow of weapons that may be transported illegally. We are looking forward to UNMIK [United Nations Interim Mission in Kosovo] producing more police so that our troops don't have to engage in as many police enforcement activities. But over all we believe that the mission is being successfully carried out.

Q: How concerned are you about the Presevo Valley?

Sec Def: That is something that we are following very closely and we are taking other measures. We have another ☐ surveillance company that will join our forces to help make sure that we can look very closely at what is taking ☐ place in Presevo Valley. ☐

Q: Are there any chances of the military technical agreement being changed by North Atlantic Council, with regard to Presevo Valley?

Sec Def: I have not heard of any proposals that have been presented that would result in that kind of a change.

Q: What is Mr. Milosevic doing to stir up trouble in Mitrovica; Is he behind of what is going on in Mitrovica?

Sec Def: I think Milosevic certainly will take advantage of any potential conflicts in the region. We have extremism on both sides. That is something that we are trying very hard to discourage as far as the ethnic Albanians, and at the same time not give Milosevic any kind of excuse to respond to that. So, that is the reason why we are working hard as we can to make sure that doesn't take place.

Q: Are weapons and people being smuggled in from the rest of Serbia into Kosovo?

Sec Def: There was an interruption of weapons and a significant cache of weaponry that was discovered about two weeks ago on April 14th. Prior to that time, of course, we have seen some insurgencies trying to take root. In both cases, KFOR was able to intercept the weapons and put down insurgencies without any significant casualties at all.

Q: Would you send troops into ground security zone if violence erupted in the Presevo Valley?

Sec Def.: I'm not going to say what we will do in the future. We believe we have sufficient forces in our sector. The Chairman can perhaps comment in terms of what more might be needed in the way of a request coming from SACEUR. But I think we have sufficient forces here in our sector.

Q: But you wouldn't rule it out?

Sec Def.: We don't discuss whatever options we have. We will take whatever measures are necessary to maintain peace and stability in our sector.

Shelton: The authority exists, if necessary, to use the authority -- the SACEUR has that authority already if he needs to do that to enforce the agreement under the MTA.

Q: Are there any indications about the case for reinforcement in the American sector in recent times?

Shelton: That is a decision that is made by the Commander of KFOR. Of course, there are currently additional forces in the American sector operating today, helping to secure some of the sites as well as being available for other missions that might be directed by our Commander here in the NMD East.

Q: (inaudible)

Sec Def.: We are hoping that we will provide the basis for the people of Kosovo to establish institutions that will make them self-governing. That there will be local elections held this fall. We want to see institutions built that will allow the people in Kosovo to function. That is our hope and that is why KFOR is here. We are hoping that as things stabilize more and more, that the UN and its mission can take over the major responsibilities in Kosovo. We cannot put a time table on that.

Q: This is General Clarke's last visit to Kosovo today. Any word on how he has performed his job?

Sec Def.: He has done an extraordinary job. General Clarke is one of our most brilliant officers. He undertook a mission that is perhaps one the most complicated and complex and carried it out successfully. As I mentioned in my remarks, this air campaign was the most successful in the history of warfare. We had over 38,000 sorties that were flown. We had only two planes that were shot down and no pilots lost. That is a record that is unparalleled in the history of warfare. So, General Clarke and his entire staff and subordinates and all who participated deserve great credit.

Q: Why is he leaving office, then?

Sec Def.: He is leaving because we have General Ralston who will become the new SACEUR. We are now replacing many of our CINCs throughout the world.

Q: It is not a reflection on his performance?

Sec Def: No reflection at all. He has done an outstanding job as the Commander-in-Chief of U.S. Southern Command, and he did an outstanding job here as EUCOM Commander and also as SACEUR.

http://www.defenselink.mil/news/May2000/t05022000_t501koso.html



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European Command Change of Command Ceremony

Remarks as Delivered by Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen, European Command Headquarters, Stuttgart-Vaihingen, Germany, Tuesday May 2, 2000

[Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] General [Hugh Shelton] and Carolyn Shelton; [Outgoing Commander in Chief, European Command] General [Wes Clark] and Gert Clark; [Incoming Commander in Chief, European Command] General [Joe Ralston] and Dede Ralston; [Deputy Commander in Chief, European Command] Admiral [Steve Abbott] and Marjorie Abbot; [Commandant, U.S. Marine Corps] General [Jim Jones] and Diane Jones; [Commander in Chief, Transportation Command] General [Charles] Robertson; leaders and men and women of U.S. European Command; distinguished guests, including [Baden-Wurttemberg] State Parliament President [Peter] Straub; [Baden-Wurttemberg Interior] Minister [Thomas] Schauble; and all our German allies and friends; Janet [Cohen]; ladies and gentlemen. □

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to join you on this day of celebration and transition. I should confess to you up front □ that during the briefing by Sergeant Major Young I indicated that it looked as if the ceremony were going to last at least □ two hours. He said that that depended on how long the speeches are. With that, let me try to be as brief as possible. □

I'd like to begin by sharing the following passage: "Mankind has progressed in enlightenment and in humanity to a point where the old might peacefully be preserved and absorbed into the new. There is hope for perpetual peace and progress. Modern ideas are triumphing everywhere. There is no doubt that a new world is being made."

These sentiments might well describe the dawn of the 21st Century. In fact, it was how one scholar described the dawn □ of the twentieth, a century in which two world wars reminded us that the future we want will come to us only when we □ embrace the cause of peace, progress and freedom. □

One month from now, America and her allies will pause to remember a defining moment in that enduring cause. The □ dedication of the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans will recall that day when young soldiers plunged into the □ crashing surf at Normandy and braved a hail of hot steel to free this continent. Leaders and men and women of □ European Command, you are the heirs of those who braved those beaches. And for a half century since, through a bitter □ Cold War, you stood strong. For the half century since, from the Berlin airlift to the Bosnian airlift, you risked all to □ preserve freedom and to bring its blessings to others. □

To help preserve that freedom at the end of the century, America turned to the leader that we honor today. In General □ Wes Clark, America found a scholar, a soldier and a statesman: a scholar who understands the forces of history on our □ time; a soldier of unquestioned courage – a Bronze and Silver Star hero – who, despite grievous wounds, inspired his □ unit to survival in the jungles of Vietnam, and as soldier of insight who returned home to train those who prevailed in □ Desert Storm. He is a statesman, whose influence has been felt from the Americas, where he helped to guide the fight □ against drug barons, to Dayton, where his counsel helped end the bloodletting of Bosnia. □

Now, it has been said that, "without passion, man is a mere latent force and possibility, like the flint which awaits the □ shock of the iron before it can give forth its spark." Future historians will recount how the passionate leadership of Wes □ Clark and the dedicated men and women of this command combined to spark new possibilities across this continent, □

forging new bonds in a great Partnership for Peace and serving alongside soldiers from some 38 nations to bring peace to Bosnia and Kosovo.

And I would add that the service of General Clark in Bosnia has actually come full circle. He was there on that muddy mountain road five summers ago when three of America's best gave their lives trying to end that war. And he has been there so many times since, turning the plan he helped to craft at Dayton into what we hope will be a durable peace.

General Shelton has reminded us of the historic accomplishments further to the south. Indeed, while it may be tempting to view darkly the challenges of the moment in Kosovo, I would say to all who are here today that no one, no one, should ever doubt either your service or your success. Faced with an adversary who manufactured a vicious humanitarian nightmare, you responded with compassion and speed to relieve human suffering. Faced with an adversary who tried to maximize civilian death and misery, you responded by minimizing the suffering of the innocent.

Just a year ago today, Serbian forces were on a rampage and nearly a million Kosovar Albanians had fled, threatening to overwhelm their neighbors. But you responded, and today, Milosevic's thugs are out of Kosovo, the vast majority of refugees have returned, and neighboring nations are joining in the effort to rebuild that ravaged land.

So, General Clark, men and women of EUCOM, we thank you again for your outstanding leadership and for reminding us that behind the greatest alliance in history stands the finest military in history. And it is for this and other reasons that I am recommending the creation of the Kosovo Campaign Medal, which I hope will be awarded to all who participated in that great effort.

Of course, as we just heard a moment ago, behind the military leader to whom we pay tribute today, stands a pillar of strength in her own right. Gert, through some 33 years of marriage, and, I think, almost as many moves, you too have served this country with great distinction, raising your voice on behalf of our forces and their families. Gert, thank you for your service to America and to this alliance. [Applause.]

The same warrior strength, the same diplomatic skill, that we see in General Wes Clark, we also see in General Joe Ralston. As Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, he helped guide America's forces in the sunset of the 20th Century. As Commander in Chief, European Command and Supreme Allied Commander, he is going to guide America's forces on this continent in the dawn of the 21st. So Joe and Dede, we congratulate and we welcome you both to this great command. [Applause.]

Several months after Operation Allied Force, I attended a celebration of that mission, and the men and women behind it, at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland. And I recalled the words of the Civil War hero Joshua Chamberlain when he returned to Gettysburg. Chamberlain said, "A great and free country is not merely defense and protection. For every earnest spirit, it is opportunity and inspiration. The inspiration of a noble cause involving human interests wide and far enables men to do things they did not dream possible they were capable of doing. This consciousness of belonging greatens the heart to the limits of the soul's ideal and it builds out the supreme of character."

General Clark, thank you for your service in a most noble cause, and thank you for your courage, your character and your commitment, which has greatened the hearts of American people and the people of Europe. We are truly indebted to you, forever in your debt. [Applause.]

<http://www.dod.gov/speeches/2000/s20000502-secdef.html>

Reading List

A selected reading list to provide context for this discussion, and other aspects of General Clark's career and qualifications. With direct links to details about the books, reviews, reader commentary. Selected by Michael Pridmore.

[Albright Madeleine, Madam Secretary: A Memoir.](#)

[Blumenthal, Sidney. The Clinton Wars.](#)

[Clark, Wesley K. Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Future of Combat.](#)

[Halberstam, David. War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals.](#)

[Holbrooke, Richard. To End a War](#)

[Power, Samantha. "A Problem from Hell" : America and the Age of Genocide](#)

[Priest, Dana. The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military](#)

