1 INTRODUCTION

"The thesis, then, must be repeated: war is an act of force, and there is no logical limit to the application of that force."[1]

Major General Carl von Clausewitz, Prussian Army

"[The use of force] doesn't have to be all or nothing. We should be able to use limited force in limited areas."[2]

Madeline Albright, U.S. Secretary of State

"As soon as they tell me it is limited, it means they do not care whether you achieve a result or not. As soon as they me tell me 'surgical,' I head for the bunker."[3]

General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

WHEN CONFRONTED with a persistent foreign policy problem that threatens U.S. interests, one that cannot be adequately addressed through economic or political pressure, American policymakers routinely resort to using limited military force. Current and former government officials, foreign policy analysts, and citizens call for the limited use of force with the belief that it potentially can resolve the problem expediently and without resulting in unwanted U.S. military or local civilian casualties. Proponents of such operations are found across the entire political spectrum, and their proposals range from the practical to the satirical: from centrist former senior Pentagon and State Department officials proposing to bomb North Korean ballistic missiles poised to launch; to a liberal *Washington Post* columnist calling for a Predator missile strike to kill Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe—a scheme that was one-upped by a former diplomat and human rights advocate who suggested a "messy in the short run" invasion to oust Mugabe; to a White House spokesperson advocating the assassination of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein because "the cost of one bullet . . . is substantially less" than the cost

of war—a scheme echoed by a conservative pastor who himself encouraged the assassination of Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez because "it's a whole lot cheaper than starting a war."[4] Out of anger, empathy, or impatience with an ongoing foreign policy dilemma, advocates in and out of the U.S. government continually propose the subject of this book—Discrete Military Operations (DMOs).

America's use of limited military force and DMOs since the end of the Cold War is important because the United States continues to be the dominant international actor and because U.S. decisionmakers have increasingly turned to the use of limited force against other states or non-state actors to achieve their policy goals. In addition, rapid technological advances in the U.S. military's capacity to conduct precise strikes from a safe distance, and an international setting in which the United States faces a potentially open-ended threat from non-state terrorist networks, make it likely that the reliance on limited force will remain a persistent feature of U.S. foreign policy. Despite the rising significance of DMOs, however, it is unclear and understudied whether limited uses of force have succeeded at achieving their intended military and political objectives.

To clarify and illuminate recent U.S. limited uses of force, this book presents a new concept: "Discrete Military Operations." Here, DMOs are defined as a single or serial physical use of kinetic military force to achieve a defined military and political goal by inflicting casualties or causing destruction, without seeking to conquer an opposing army or to capture or control territory. DMOs usually consist of a single attack or series of sortie strikes, lasting just minutes, hours, or a few days. DMOs usually involve only one combat arm and one mode of attack directed against an adversary's military capabilities or infrastructure, regime or organizational assets, or key leadership. DMOs are also proscribed by strict rules of engagement to ensure that the intensity and scope of the strike does not exceed levels necessary to attempt to achieve the political objectives.[5]

In investigating U.S. DMOs from 1991 through June 1, 2009, thirty-six in all,[6] this book answers three basic questions: "Why were they used?" "Did they achieve their intended military and political objectives?" and "What variables determined their success or failure?" By broadly addressing these questions, the book evaluates the policy choices of U.S. officials over the past two decades and offers recommendations for how limited military force can be better used in the future. In addition, because U.S. uses of DMOs have now been a reality for four successive administrations, the insights and recom-

mendations from this book are increasingly relevant to making predictions about the development of American grand strategy and military policy.[7]

The available evidence demonstrates that U.S. DMOs achieved all of their military objectives just over half of the time, and all political objectives less than 6 percent of the time. However, this large gap between political goals and military outcomes is predictable: identifying and destroying a target is a far easier task than affecting the behavior of an adversary, or potential future adversaries, through the use of force. The primary political objectives can be summarized as any one, or a combination, of the following goals: *punishment*, or revenge, for an adversary's past behavior with no intention of altering future behavior; *deterrence*, to attempt to maintain the status quo by discouraging an adversary from initiating a specific action; and *coercion*, to attempt to compel a change in an adversary's future behavior. For punishment to succeed, the military objective of a DMO must be met: if you miss the target, your adversary experiences little or no cost and may even be emboldened. For deterrence or coercion to succeed, the adversary must either maintain the status quo or change its own desired course of action because it was targeted by a limited strike. Determining whether political objectives have been met as a consequence of a DMO is a difficult analytical undertaking, but possible after careful reconstruction of the intended and actual outcomes of each case.

If DMOs have been so unsuccessful at achieving their political objectives, why do they continue to be so enthusiastically proposed and utilized by U.S. decisionmakers? The key explanation lies in divergent opinions between senior civilian and military officials over the utility of limited force. In the United States, the military is responsible for planning and executing DMOs, but only at the explicit authorization of the president of the United States and the secretary of defense (collectively, formally known as the National Command Authority). As a general proposition—supported by recent history and interviews with dozens of national security officials—senior civilian officials support the use of DMOs, while senior military officials do not. An explanation for this split, detailed in Chapter 2, is that those authorizing the use of DMOs believe that they will achieve some set of primary political objectives. In practice, however, they overwhelmingly do not.

In addition, policymakers and the general public, conditioned by round-the-clock television news coverage repeatedly showing video clips of America's armed forces surgically destroying cross-haired targets from afar, would be surprised to discover that only five in ten DMOs achieve all of their military

objectives. Despite military and intelligence budgets of over $700 billion and unparalleled air, sea, and space capabilities, human error, weapon malfunctions, and poor intelligence hamper DMOs just like they do many other U.S. military operations.[8] Even DMOs that attempt to destroy an easily observable, fixed target can encounter a range of problems: planes carrying out the operation can be damaged or shot down before they release their ordnance; guidance data can be incorrectly programmed; unsuitable weapons systems can be selected; precision-guided munitions can veer off course, or be pushed by high winds; and cloud cover, smog, or dust storms can obscure targets that require visual acquisition at the last minute. Attempting to successfully destroy a mobile target—especially an individual—is even more difficult. The primary reason is that despite all of the intelligence collection assets utilized by the United States and its allies, human beings who believe they are targeted are adaptive, resilient, and hard to kill from a distance. Throughout the years, efforts to eliminate from afar such adversaries of the United States as Muammar Qadhafi, Slobodan Milosevic, Saddam Hussein, and Osama Bin Laden have generally failed. For these reasons, as well as countless other problems that arise in the fog of limited operations, U.S. DMOs fail to achieve their military objective as often as they succeed.

UNDERSTANDING DISCRETE MILITARY OPERATIONS

The ultimate tool of diplomacy, force is utilized with varying degrees of destructiveness, duration, and effectiveness according to the objective and military capabilities available.

The U.S. military conceives of conflict occurring along a spectrum of five general operational themes, of which the middle three could include DMOs: peacetime military engagement, limited intervention, peace operations, irregular warfare, and major combat operations.[9] Another way to consider DMOs is along a use-of-force continuum as described by the following list—with peace at one end and total war at the other. DMOs exist in an as yet poorly defined zone between threat of force and limited war.

Discrete Military Operations Typology of Force:

Peace with potential adversaries

Show of force to influence an adversary with no certain intent of war

Threat of force to achieve a change in an adversary's behavior

Demonstrative force to achieve a change in an adversary's behavior

Limited force to punish an adversary or achieve a change in behavior
Limited war with no certain intent of escalation
Total war of unrestrained use of capabilities to eliminate an adversary

As an illustrative metaphor for understanding international uses of force, consider an assailant pointing a gun at a person's head. If the aggressor pulls the trigger and kills the target without making a political demand, this action would be an act of punishment, or brute force. If the aggressor threatens to pull the trigger but does not, and affects some change of behavior in the target as a result of the threat, it is a *threat of force*. If the aggressor makes a specific demand of a change in behavior, seeks to maintain the status quo, or simply seeks to punish the target, and puts a bullet into the target's foot, those are all the equivalents of a *discrete military operation*. The foot-shot type of DMO may be undertaken for one or several primary or secondary reasons: to achieve a tactical military objective, to punish, to deter, to coerce, or to demonstrate resolve to a domestic or international audience.[10]

From a strategic perspective, what ultimately distinguishes a DMO from more ambitious and destructive uses of force is that it is usually undertaken without a theory of victory—a hypothetical narrative detailing how the ensuing conflict could be permanently resolved on favorable terms.[11] Although DMOs rarely have a theory of victory, they can be evaluated as being successful on the basis of the intended political and military objectives. DMOs can also be the iterative application of limited force against an adversary during an ongoing hostile relationship. After the DMO is completed, there is no clear military or political resolution between the two adversaries. For example, President George H.W. Bush in 1989 declared his "war" on drugs, which he claimed that "together we will win."[12] In 1993, U.S. Special Forces either assisted in, or were directly responsible for, the death of Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar. While Escobar's death might have momentarily slowed the supply of cocaine from Columbia, and even deterred other drug lords, it hardly resulted in a U.S. victory in the war on drugs. Similarly, while three presidents used DMOs between 1993 and 2003 against Iraq, none were "fight and win" operations undertaken with the clear intent of resolving the state of hostilities with Saddam Hussein's regime. By contrast, the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq—Operation Iraqi Freedom—intended to depose the ruling regime and install a new political authority into power, thereby resolving America's long-standing contentious relationship with Hussein.

There are two terms used by political scientists and military historians that should not be confused with DMOs. The first is the historical *limited war* concept ascribed to North Atlantic Treaty Organization powers during the Cold War, which attempted to find a use for conventional tank-based armies without risking the escalation of a strategic nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union.[13] As defined by Robert Osgood, "limited war is one in which the belligerents restrict the purposes for which they fight to concrete, well-defined objectives that do not demand the utmost military effort of which the belligerents are capable. . . . It demands of the belligerents only a fractional commitment of their human and physical resources."[14] Second, DMOs should not be considered alongside the *small wars* of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, conducted by imperial powers to politically and militarily control overseas territories, extract natural resources, or brutally eliminate colonial resistance movements.[15] These wars were rarely small in their intensity or intent, but are defined as such by the size of the adversarial target—that is, any state that is not also a great or middle power.

DMOs also do not include humanitarian or refugee relief operations, in which the military essentially provides protection or basic provisions for displaced persons;[16] peacekeeping, counterinsurgency, or stability operations, in which the military attempts to shape or control the operational environment of a defined territory through shows of force, direct actions, or policing;[17] or noncombatant evacuation operations in non-hostile environments, such as those the U.S. Marines have undertaken in Liberia (October 1992 and April 1996), Yemen (May 1994), and the Central African Republic (May 1996).[18] Although force may have been used to protect U.S. troops or citizens during these operations, none of them were undertaken with the intent to create casualties or damage.

There are yet two more types of military operations that are not counted as DMOs. First, DMOs in support of civilian authorities that occurred within the United States are not assessed, such as the April 19, 1993, armored invasion of the Branch Davidian complex in Waco, Texas, which resulted in seventy-five deaths.[19] This omission is because the scope of this book only considers limited military force as a tool of U.S. foreign policy. Second, DMOs that received covert or overt intelligence or logistical support from U.S. military or intelligence agencies, but that are conducted by other countries, are also excluded. Recent examples include Turkey's 2007 and 2008 limited air and ground campaign against suspected members of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK)

in Northern Iraq, which received real-time intelligence and overhead imagery from U.S. aircraft and unmanned drones;[20] the intelligence and logistics assistance given by the George W. Bush administration to the Ugandan government in its efforts to kill Joseph Kony, the leader of the Lord's Resistance Army;[21] and the Obama administration's provision of planning support, firepower, and intelligence for more than two dozen ground raids and airstrikes in Yemen in late 2009 and early 2010.[22] While such operations benefited from direct U.S. assistance, they ultimately were both authorized and conducted by foreign military or intelligence agencies.

U.S. DISCRETE MILITARY OPERATIONS USE AND ISSUES

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, American foreign policy decision-makers have faced a radically changed international landscape. First, the United States is a unipolar power in the international system, so far lacking a competing superpower to substantially constrain its actions.[23] Second, many new threats have arisen, including rogue states that are harder to deter than was the Soviet Union; the spread of weapons of mass destruction to such states; and transnational terror networks lacking an identifiable military force and operating from stateless zones, where the government does not or cannot maintain oversight or political control. Despite the widely held belief among academics and policymakers that "everything changed after 9/11," a close reading of the U.S. national security strategy documents published in the past decade demonstrates that there has been little variation in America's declared national interests and security threats.[24] These threats are much less clearly identifiable and smaller in scope than was the Soviet threat, and far less state-centric. To counter these current and other foreseeable security threats, a troubling dilemma emerges when leaders shape America's policy responses: while each threat clearly contains the potential to endanger vital or secondary U.S. interests such that they necessitate the use of military force, they usually fail to justify the costs of a conventional war. Consequently, American political leaders keep returning to the use of DMOs.

As a unipolar power, America also remains the military hegemon in the post–Cold War world. No other state maintains a comparable cumulative military capability to project force against an adversary anywhere in the world. No other government has committed the sustained resources needed to research and develop more advanced capabilities to rapidly project offensive military power—be it through ground forces or missiles.[25] In addition, only

the United States has the range of international interests that could compel intervention anywhere, as well as forty-eight reported off-the-shelf warplans that contemplate attacking other countries through, among other military options, prompt global strikes.[26]

Despite being a growth industry over the past two decades, limited force as a tool of statecraft remains undefined, and largely unexamined in an analytical manner. Simply put, scholars and military historians of the United States have shown a substantial bias toward studying major incidents rather than smaller ones.[27] In fact, the most-utilized dataset for security studies scholars of warfare—the Correlates of War Inter-State War Dataset—does not include any use of force that resulted in fewer than 1,000 battle-related deaths. An advantage to studying DMOs over conventional wars is that limited applications of force are increasingly perceived by both civilians and the armed forces as a more "usable" and internationally palatable military option.[28] One reason for this, according to a survey of all public opinion polls on the U.S. uses of force abroad between 1981 and 2005, is that Americans show higher levels of support for airstrikes than for the deployment of U.S. ground troops.[29] A second reason is that military planners—often employing worst-case planning assumptions—offer civilian decisionmakers ground combat options that include a larger number of troops to deploy overseas than civilians find politically acceptable.[30] Thus, although the United States occasionally used DMOs prior to the Cold War's end, a review of the political-military debates over using force in Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, and elsewhere demonstrates that they have been much more regularly "on the table" since 1991.

The lack of scholarly attention to DMOs is troubling because such limited attacks have become the norm among American uses of military force since the First Gulf War. The United States has used direct military force against another country at least forty-one times during the time period covered in this book. Of these, five are not DMOs, as they had the intended goal of controlling, or altering the control of, the territory of another sovereign state or overthrowing a governing regime: Haiti, Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan since 1991, and the Iraq war that started in 2003. As listed in the appendix, thirty-six of the U.S. post–Cold War direct uses of force were Discrete Military Operations—88 percent of all uses of force.

Even as the employment of DMOs has increased, their use has been questioned and even ridiculed at times by political and military leaders as being ineffective. For example, George W. Bush, while campaigning for the presi-

dency in 2000, derided the use of "pinprick strikes" in retaliation for suspected Al Qaeda terror attacks. President Bush later spelled out his low regard for DMOs: "When I take action," he said, "I'm not going to fire a $2 million missile at a $10 empty tent and hit a camel in the butt. It's going to be decisive."[31] Yet President Bush found DMOs to be an attractive option when he approved a Predator attack against suspected terrorists in Yemen in November 2002, in addition to dozens of other instances in Pakistan, Somalia, and Syria. But later, as detailed in Chapter 6, Bush did not, prior to March 2003, authorize a DMO against a terrorist training camp in Northern Iraq that might have eliminated terrorist operative Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, his followers, and a potential WMD production facility. The Clinton administration used limited force on multiple occasions, and President Clinton himself had an affinity for creative DMOs, once telling Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Hugh Shelton, "You know, it would scare the shit out of al-Qaeda if suddenly a bunch of black ninjas rappelled out of helicopters in the middle of their camp. It would get us enormous deterrence and show those guys we're not afraid."[32] Yet throughout 1998–1999, when there were reportedly at least ten opportunities to capture or kill Osama Bin Laden, the Clinton administration repeatedly decided not to act.[33]

The American military, meanwhile, has generally held a strong institutional opposition to DMOs. Despite the battlefield necessity since 2006 to adapt and integrate counterinsurgency principles into the Army and Marine Corps, since World War II, the U.S. military has preferred large-scale conventional wars of annihilation to smaller-in-scope, low-intensity operations.[34] Historically, America's military doctrine, force structure, global military posture, education and training, and career promotional incentives have all overwhelmingly supported a preference for big wars.[35] Military officials perceive that civilians prefer DMOs because they are an immediately responsive tool of statecraft that will result in fewer U.S. and target-state casualties, have fewer domestic political costs, and quickly demonstrate America's resolve and willingness to use force. Many generals and admirals disagree with the latter point, and furthermore argue that DMOs have little long-term impact on changing an adversary's behavior, but have the inherently dangerous potential to uncontrollably escalate into a larger unwanted war. Military officials ideally prefer some version of the Powell Doctrine, in which force is used in an overwhelming manner, with clearly defined political goals, the sustained support of the American public, and an achievable exit strategy.[36] As a consequence of

that mind-set, senior military leaders have decried DMOs as "tank plinking," "salami-tactics," "a wrist-slap plan," "token retaliation," "pissing in the wind," "pure fantasy," "cowboy Hollywood stuff," "quasi military," "a waste of good ordnance," or simply "political."[37]

In his excellent study of the military's influence on decisionmaking for U.S. uses of force during the Cold War, Richard Betts provided an institutional logic behind the civilian-military split highly relevant to intra-administration debates over DMOs. Betts's rationale is worth quoting at length:

> The military's natural professional impulse is toward worst-case contingency planning for any conceivable disaster. The standard rationale is that enemy intentions cannot usually be perceived with certainty, and even if they are, they can change abruptly (such as in a cabinet or presidium shuffle), while lead-time requirements mean that enemy capabilities cannot be matched in a comparably short time. Political leaders, on the other hand, have to be more sensitive to competing nonmilitary needs. Their natural tendency is to "satisfice" rather than optimize, to shave as much as possible from the military estimates of their requirements. Because scarcity prevents providing resources for all hypothetical contingencies but because paralysis of policy is also undesirable, political authorities may sometimes be more prone to take risks by selecting options that have only a probability of success rather than a guarantee.[38]

Contrary to the opinion of some civilian and almost all military leaders, DMOs have several clear advantages over both conventional warfare or choosing not to use force at all. First, DMOs can support a wide range of military objectives, including destroying suspected WMD production facilities, damaging anti-aircraft systems, demolishing an adversary's runways or aircraft, killing political leaders or terrorist suspects, and rescuing hostages. Second, DMOs can achieve any combination of primary political goals against an adversary such as deterrence, compellence, or punishment, and secondary goals before a wider audience, such as signaling resolve, alliance-management, or domestic political gain. Third, because DMOs pursue more limited political objectives than full-scale warfare, presidents are rarely penalized for those that are a mixed success, or even an outright failure. Success in a conventional war is easier to measure with yes-no questions: adversary's military defeated?; regime changed?; territory conquered and controlled?; adversary's behavior changed?; political leaders killed or captured? Presidents have authorized several DMOs that failed, or were at best mixed successes, in the past thirty-five years. For

example: Ford—the May 15, 1975, bungled assault and bombing raids against Koh Tang, Cambodia, over the *Mayaguez* incident;[39] Carter—*Desert One*, the April 24–25, 1980, unsuccessful hostage rescue operation in Iran;[40] Reagan—the December 4, 1983, raid on Syrian anti-aircraft sites in Lebanon that resulted in two downed planes, one killed U.S. pilot, and another taken hostage;[41] and George W. Bush—the February 16, 2001, airstrikes against five Iraqi command and control sites in which all but two of the twenty-eight Joint Stand-Off Weapons used missed their targets.[42] In each instance, even though the key military and political objectives of the DMO went unfulfilled, the president did not suffer a noticeable decline in public support and did not encounter persistent criticism among elite observers for the decision. Furthermore, American DMOs are conducted without a formal presidential declaration of war, and sometimes covertly, allowing the Executive Branch a relatively free hand, basically unchecked by congressional, media, or public oversight.[43] Fourth, since most DMOs are conducted with stand-off precision strike weapons, they greatly reduce the risk of casualties to soldiers, sailors, airmen, or Marines. Finally, DMOs generally do not require extensive logistical support in the form of basing or staging rights from other countries. Because they lack the same heavy footprint as larger uses of force, DMOs do not have many of the political-military cooperation problems associated with full-scale warfare.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Senior civilian officials are more likely to support the use of DMOs than are the uniformed military. Recent research, as reinforced by first-person interviews, shows that top-level civilian decisionmakers tend to have more interventionist foreign policy agendas, are more willing to use the military to achieve those foreign policy goals, and are more willing to place constraints on the manner in which force will be used.[44] As mentioned earlier, senior military officials, in contrast, prefer overwhelming and decisive force in support of clear political objectives. Measuring the validity of this proposition throughout the case studies in this book requires determining to what extent there was a split between the most influential military and civilian decisionmakers.

Senior civilian officials favor the use of DMOs more than do the uniformed military for four reasons. First, civilians believe that DMOs are effective in achieving their limited military or political objectives, whereas, as noted earlier, military officials generally find DMOs ineffective. Second, civilians believe that DMOs are controllable uses of force that will not escalate to a

wider conflict between the attacking state and the target. In contrast, military leaders believe that it is difficult, if not impossible, to manage "firebreaks" between different intensities of force, and that even small uses of force can trigger an incremental chain of events that can unleash a full-scale war.[45] Third, senior civilian leaders believe that the domestic political costs of a failed DMO will be low. Senior military officials, on the other hand, believe that unsuccessful DMOs have deleterious domestic political effects, because they can potentially harm the American public's perception of the military. Fourth, civilians believe that the use of some DMOs demonstrates resolve both to targeted adversaries and to a wider international audience.[46] In contrast, many military leaders believe that DMOs are actually a sign of weakness to the world regarding America's willingness to use overwhelming military force. This "all or nothing" school of thought,[47] best articulated by General Colin Powell, finds DMOs to be nothing more than "gratification without commitment."[48]

In general, U.S. use of DMOs since 1991 has been tactically successful at meeting most military objectives, but strategically ineffective in achieving specific political goals. Appendix I codes the level of success in meeting the stated military and political objectives of thirty-six instances of U.S. use of DMOs. It also contains a short description of each instance, aside from the four studied in depth in the case studies in this book. These assessments admittedly are subjective, though it is more straightforward to determine the objective military success of a DMO than the political success.

The findings are not promising for DMOs as a political solution. A detailed analysis of the evidence shows that five of the thirty-six cases had an undetermined military outcome. Of the remaining thirty-one, sixteen (52 percent) met all of the intended military objectives, while only two (6 percent) met all of the intended political objectives. When success and mixed success are combined, the results even out: twenty-two cases met roughly one-half of the intended military objectives (71 percent), twenty-seven cases met at least one-half of the intended political objectives (75 percent). Nine cases totally failed to meet their intended military goals—all of which were assassination attempts (Osama Bin Laden, Saddam Hussein, Abu Hamza Rabia, an as-yet unidentified Al Qaeda member, Ayman Al-Zawahiri, and four attempts on Al Qaeda officials in Somalia)—while nine completely failed to meet the intended political goal. Thus the data demonstrate that DMOs are a useful tool for destroying a target but that the attacks are generally unsuccessful in punishing, deterring, or compelling an adversary.

CASE STUDIES TELL THE STORY

Collecting and analyzing data is a dry and insufficient means of evaluating complex decisionmaking processes, such as whether or not to attack another country or sub-state actor. Examination of case studies allows for a broader geostrategic, psychological, and historical understanding of the adversary against whom U.S. officials considered using limited military force. The four cases that are studied in-depth to better understand DMOs are as follows.

Iraqi No-Fly Zones (NFZ) (July 1991–April 2003). The no-fly zones operated under three names: Provide Comfort II, which included tens of thousands of sorties (July 24, 1991–December 31, 1996); Northern Watch, which included around 16,000 sorties (January 1, 1997–April 30, 2003); and Southern Watch, which included over 200,000 sorties (August 26, 1992–April 30, 2003).[49] The no-fly zones were intended to deny Iraq the ability to fly fixed-wing flights against the perceived internal political enemies of Saddam Hussein's regime. The typical enforcement flight included a package of four to five aircraft flying inside the zones for thirty minutes to two hours, under strict rules of engagement created in collaboration with the host country from which the planes originated. Although British and French planes participated, only U.S. planes attacked Iraqi anti-aircraft and radar sites, and only after the planes were threatened.[50]

Operation Infinite Reach (August 20, 1998). In retaliation for bombings against U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the United States simultaneously launched thirteen Tomahawk cruise missiles against a pharmaceutical plant in Khartoum, Sudan, suspected of producing nerve gas and sixty-six Tomahawks against six sites within an Al Qaeda training complex in southern Afghanistan with the intention of killing Osama Bin Laden and other terrorist leaders. Between twenty and sixty people in the camps were killed and several dozen others injured—many of whom were reportedly Pakistani militants training for operations in Kashmir. Neither Bin Laden nor his chief lieutenants were killed.[51]

Yemeni Assassination (November 3, 2002). A Central Intelligence Agency–operated Predator drone originating and controlled from Djibouti launched a Hellfire missile at a car carrying six suspected Al Qaeda members one hundred miles east of the capital, Sana'a. All six were killed, including Abu Ali al-Harithi, suspected mastermind of the *U.S.S. Cole* attack, and Ahmed Hijazi, a naturalized U.S. citizen and alleged ringleader of a purported terrorist sleeper cell in Lackawanna, New York.[52]

Khurmal, Iraq (Summer 2002). In early 2002, U.S. intelligence got word that in Iraqi Kurdistan, near the city of Khurmal, a Kurdish terrorist organization—Ansar al-Islam—was running a training camp and reportedly producing cyanide gas, toxic poisons, and ricin for terrorist attacks by its affiliated cells in Western Europe. The U.S. military developed a combined air-ground operation option that anticipated striking the camp on July 4, 2002. That option was unanimously supported by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and proposed to the White House. President Bush ultimately opted not to strike the camp because the DMO potentially could have derailed the goal of removing Saddam Hussein from power.[53]

These cases were selected for five reasons. First, they involve all of the services of the U.S. military and CIA, thus negating any single-service bias in the sample. In addition, some of the DMOs are multi-service. Second—with the exception of the still-covert Yemen targeted killing—the cases have produced a wealth of available data that include participants who were willing to discuss them on the record, thus providing a deeper understanding of each case. Third, they differ in terms of length of duration, intensity of operations, and type of operation. Fourth, there are enough variations across the cases with regard to political and military intent—such as revenge, punishment, deterrence, national morale, and so on—that any initial findings developed in this book will be applicable to other countries that employ DMOs.[54] Finally, the decisionmaking processes behind the three actual—and one proposed—DMOs reviewed have not been presented or analyzed in detail elsewhere. For scholars and historians, the careful presentation of the facts supported by first-person interviews reveals new details about each event. For the lay reader, the strategic setting and decisionmaking processes of the cases are meant to illustrate how intra-administration debates are occurring today over whether to strike Al Qaeda operatives in Pakistan, attack pirate infrastructure onshore in East Africa, or bomb suspected Iranian nuclear facilities.

The Khurmal case is an example of the dog that did not bark. Social scientists refer to such non-events as *negative cases*, in which an expected and relevant outcome of interest did not occur, even though it was a strong possibility.[55] The case was included because, for the purposes of studying and evaluating U.S. limited uses of military force, it is important to understand the causes and conditions of negative cases, when limited force is proposed and debated among senior officials but never implemented. To be sufficiently comprehensive, one cannot only look at DMOs that were executed.

Recent examples of negative cases run the gamut from the oversized extreme with indeterminate political objectives to a very limited plan with well-defined political goals to initially limited operations that expanded beyond what was politically acceptable when logistics and support elements were included. An example of the first would be the decision by the NSC in June 1996 not to execute the "Eisenhower option," a ground invasion in retaliation for the June 25, 1996, bombing of the Khobar Towers that ranged to as many as 500,000 troops, cruise missile strikes against strategic assets on Iran's coast and WMD sites, and strikes against Iranian-sponsored terror camps in Lebanon.[56] An example of the second would be President George H.W. Bush's decision in August 1990 to not attack an Iraqi oil tanker to disable it and prevent it from traveling to South Yemen, an operation initially planned to coerce Saddam Hussein to withdraw his forces from Kuwait.[57] And an example of the third would be the refusal, moments before it began, of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to authorize in late 2005 a complex U.S. Navy Seal operation to attempt to capture Ayman al-Zawahiri in northern Pakistan.[58] Within this spectrum, between these extremes, lies a wide range of limited military operations—such as the potential Khurmal operation—that were developed, proposed, and debated, but ultimately rejected by senior officials as inappropriate instruments of national power to tackle a specific foreign policy dilemma.

CONCLUSION

Even in a globalized era characterized by increased trade and transactions, freely flowing capital, relatively open borders, and unprecedented interconnectedness, the world remains stubbornly anarchic, and military force continues to be a fungible tool for achieving foreign policy goals. Whether it is the September 2007 Israeli airstrike on a suspected nuclear facility in Syria, Colombia's March 2008 small-scale raid against suspected Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) officials located just inside Ecuador, or Israel's attack against a suspected Hezbollah weapons convoy in northern Sudan in January 2009, limited military operations against other countries are an important instrument of international statecraft. Such operations are conducted with political and military objectives that foreign decisionmakers believe cannot be met—in the timeframe required—through available non-kinetic solutions. The United States has both the widest and the deepest range of global interests, and the most available military capabilities to use limited force in

support of those interests. It is no surprise, therefore, that the United States both considers at the most senior levels and conducts vastly more DMOs than any other country in the world. The goal of this book is to determine if those DMOs have been the correct course of action for the United States since 1991, and to prescribe the causes and conditions for their potential success in the future.