



Interagency Fratricide: Policy Failures in the Persian Gulf and Bosnia

Vicki J. Rast

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Leaders face enigmatic challenges within our increasingly complex world of international affairs. Foremost among them for the US government is determining how senior officials—policy makers and military commanders—can harness effectively the friction inherent to the interagency policy-making process, doing so in ways that advance US national security during interventions into conflicts and wars. Specifically, leaders and decision makers at every level must understand the roles they play in generating and sustaining interagency conflict that detracts from the nation’s capacity to develop sound conflict termination policy, thereby impairing our ability to analyze crises, envision desired end states, formulate termination criteria, and execute termination strategies. To address this issue, we must first understand the sources of that friction, identifying its causes and consequences across the policy-making arena. *Interagency Fratricide: Policy Failures in the Persian Gulf and Bosnia* provides a comprehensive analysis of the factors that affected both interagency processes and policy outcomes during the Persian Gulf War (1990–91) and the early stages of the Bosnia crisis (1993–95). Going one-on-one with members of Washington’s policy elite who were involved directly in these two cases, the author demonstrates that the US government’s approach to termination policy proved fragmented and personality driven. She systematically presents evidence to support the study’s conclusion, revealing that the nature of the gap between diplomats and war fighters will consistently produce policies that bring about cease-fire in the form of war termination, but fail to address the underlying causes and conditions that generated conflict (and, potentially, war). These issues must be resolved if the US government hopes to improve the social and political conditions of those embroiled in conflict while at the same time bolstering a security posture favorable to US interests in the aftermath of intervention. The three sections of this work thematically present the interagency process, the analysis and its findings, and implications for future termination policy development endeavors. This book is the first of its kind. It integrates the real-world experiences of post–Cold War diplomats and war fighters, demonstrating that both need to think in more far-reaching terms regarding the development of conflict termination policy and the interagency’s role therein. As Carl von Clausewitz says, this type of intellectual endeavor must be undertaken “before the first shot is fired.” To accomplish this feat, policy makers must cast aside their institutional and individual personalities to determine what is best for those on whose behalf the United States intervenes—especially when the armed forces are called upon to act in the service of our country. I commend this work to you as a necessary first step in understanding interagency policy making. It’s up to you to bridge the gaps between diplomats and war fighters toward creating effective conflict termination policy in the future.

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