USES OF FORCE

ND WILSONIAN FOREIGN POLICY

REDERICK S. CALHOUN

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To Ken and Holly Hargreaves
À la recherche du temps perdu

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been a dozen years in the making, not because the ideas were so difficult nor the research so overwhelming nor even the writing so terribly hard. Thanks to the faith and support of my good friend John T. Hubbell at The Kent State University Press, even publishing it went reasonably smoothly. Other tasks and diversions simply intervened to keep me from it. I first developed the idea for a vocabulary of force based on Woodrow Wilson's multiple resorts to force as the subject of my doctoral dissertation in the late 1970s. At the time it seemed a good idea to provide a general history of each of Wilson's seven military interventions before defining the various uses of force on which he relied.

So I set about to write that general history, thinking always of it as Part One of some larger study defining the uses of force. As I finished each chapter, I dutifully sent it off to my adviser. When I finally got through the twin interventions in northern Russia and Siberia, I put the chapters in the mail with a note indicating that Part One was now complete. I vowed to begin Part Two.

By return mail my adviser advised me that enough was enough; Part One was sufficient for a dissertation and, ultimately, for a book of its own. For that wise counsel, I am grateful for the kind intercession of Akira Iriye. He insisted that I divide into more easily digestible pieces my theories of Woodrow Wilson, his power and principles, and his uses of force. Iriye not only guided my graduate studies, delivering me to some level of maturity as a historian, but also has continued over the years to offer me the benefit of his guidance. I know of no greater historian.

Once my dissertation was complete, it was then of course necessary to earn a living and begin supporting my family. In 1984 Stanley E. Morris hired me to write a history of the United States Marshals. My work on *The Lawmen: United States Marshals and Their Deputies, 1789–1989* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990) again kept me from finishing Part Two. Curiously, though, the marshals complemented my work on Wilson. In *Power*

and Principle, I studied the government's application of power internationally; in *The Lawmen*, I studied its domestic application.

For the past seven years, I have worked with a group of men and women who use force professionally. Seeing it expressed at that primal level has given me a considerably different perspective on force. Reading eighty-year-old letters and reports of Wilsonian interventions is one thing; watching (from a distance) a deputy marshal, weapon to hand, kick in the door of a wanted felon's house is quite another. I am grateful to all those deputies, and there are a large number of them now, who suffered my curiosity—and kept me from harm—as they risked their lives chasing fugitives, protecting judges, escorting prisoners, or executing the orders of the courts.

Over the years a number of good friends have debated my ideas with me, challenging me to think more thoroughly than I am accustomed to doing. I am grateful to Steve Wheatley and Jack Michel, Deborah Gough and Nancy Protheroe, Barry Karl and Friedrich Katz, and David Trask and Jonathan Utley. Lloyd Ambrosius read the manuscript and offered many useful suggestions and critiques. I also imposed upon a number of friends to read it. Jeff Miller and Roger Archega, Michael McShane and Ana-Marie Sullivan, and Akira Iriye and Cynthia G. Fox each gave invaluable comments on the early drafts of this book. They improved it considerably, though I am afraid that my native Southern intransigence may have kept those improvements to a minimum.

As always, my parents, Jim and Eleanor Calhoun, sustained me beyond the point of parental support or filial recompense. Their faith in me and my future has always been the brightest beacon guiding me.

Ken and Holly Hargreaves, more than anyone else outside my family, have suffered with me the writing of three histories. Their influence has been immeasurable, their friendship irreplaceable.

My wife Leslie has occasionally been able to remind me that there is life beyond Wilson and the United States Marshals. She and our children, Austin and Emily, have enriched that life with their love.

And to Amy Blake Calhoun, who was born just as I finished reviewing the final page proofs to this book, I can only repeat what I once wrote her older brother and sister. I hope that she will grow up in a world where the subject of this book will be an archaic curiosity. The first step to achieving that is understanding. I have—again—tried to take that step.

The ideas, conclusions, interpretations, and errors in this study are purely my own and do not represent the views of the many friends and advisers who helped me with it. Nor are they the views or interpretations of any of my employers, past or present.

CONTENTS

1 The Uses of FORCE in Wilsonian Diplomacy

Force achieves many international goals. Nations turn to arms to defend their territories or to steal more; to protect their citizens or to punish others; to exert their independence or to subdue it in others; to resolve disputes or to impose their views. Wars have been fought over God and women, gold and land, glory and status. The Greeks fought for a decade to rescue Helen of Troy; the crusaders battled for two centuries to reclaim the Holy Land. Throughout history, national leaders have accepted force as a convenient method to express their will, whether toward their own peoples or toward the peoples of foreign lands.

In a previous book, I suggested that international power assumes many forms—diplomatic, economic, moral, military (the threat of force), and armed power (the actual use of force). To examine the subject of power, the study used force as the example, policy as the theme. The presidency of Woodrow Wilson provided the setting. Wilson repeatedly relied on force to implement his foreign policies. Between April 1914 and July 1918, he embarked on seven armed interventions, a record unsurpassed by any other American president. Wilson dispatched military expeditions twice into Mexico, into Haiti, the Dominican Republic, the battlefields of World War I, northern Russia, and Siberia. In Wilsonian foreign policy, force was an adjunct to diplomacy.

After analyzing each of Wilson's military interventions, I concluded that Wilson turned to force to promote American ideology, enforce international law, encourage international cooperation, and effect collective security. During each intervention, Wilson maintained strict command over the military to ensure that his policies—and his alone—were implemented. In the Wilsonian way of war, civilian control over the military was the method used to employ force. American democratic ideology defined the goals for armed power, international law described the rationale, and cooperation among nations provided the conceptual framework for international relations.[1]

Force was ancillary to Wilsonian internationalism. Wilson insisted that the same principles and moral scruples that shaped his internationalism also guided his use of armed power. "The force of America is the force of moral principle," Wilson proclaimed to the graduating class of the U.S. Naval Academy shortly after the navy occupied Veracruz, Mexico, in 1914. "Is that not something to be proud of," he asked the new graduates, "that you know how to use force like men of conscience and like gentlemen, serving your fellow men and not trying to overcome them?" America was unique, Wilson argued, because it directed its power toward the greater good of mankind, not toward aggrandizement and oppression.[2]

In investing American power with internationalism and ideology, Wilson insisted on absolute control over armed power. He imposed stringent limitations on his uses of force and the men who implemented them. Wilson depended on the American military to determine the tactical approach to occupying a city or country or engaging in a war (provided those tactics closely coincided with his policies), but he gave the military little say about the strategy and policies behind his interventions. That determination was his. The president jealously guarded his prerogative to establish the goals and define the objectives for using force.

Wilson limited his first intervention to the occupation of Veracruz, Mexico, despite the military's dire warnings that invading the city would lead to war. In taking the port, Wilson originally intended to punish the government of Victoriano Huerta, the Mexican dictator who offended Wilson's concept of democracy. In the spring of 1914, soldiers loyal to Huerta arrested a handful of U.S. sailors in Tampico, forcing them at gunpoint from a whaleboat flying the American flag fore and aft, then parading them through the city streets. This insult outraged Wilson and his military advisers. After the navy took Veracruz, however, Wilson saw an opportunity to initiate negotiations with all the parties to the Mexican Revolution. During the subsequent conference, the insult was forgotten; instead, Wilson sought not merely to rid Mexico of Huerta, but to solve the social, political, and economic problems causing the revolution. His strategy depended on limiting the intervention to the occupation of Veracruz.[3]

Two years later, Wilson dispatched the Punitive Expedition across the border to punish the Mexican marauders who had attacked Columbus, New Mexico. He again ignored the military's contention that the chase would result in war. As he had during the occupation of Veracruz, Wilson used the presence of American forces on Mexican soil to open discussions with Mexican authorities on ending the revolution. Once again, he believed that the negotiations depended on limiting the intervention, not expanding it. As a direct result of the intervention, American officials conferred with

representatives of the Mexican government, but neither Wilson's force nor his persuasion proved effective in resolving the Mexican Revolution.[4]

In 1915 Wilson ordered the navy to take over Haiti and, a year later, to impose a military government on the Dominican Republic. The chronic breakdown of organized government in Haiti convinced him to protect foreign residents and to prevent some other nation—France or Germany in particular—from acting first. When, a year later, the Dominican Republic seemed to slip into Haitian-style chaos, Wilson again ordered the navy to take over the country. Throughout each occupation, the president insisted that the navy carefully restrict itself to the minimum force necessary. He intended to teach the Haitians and Dominicans American principles of democracy and self-government.[5]

Wilson timed America's entry into World War I, even to the extent of discouraging the military from preparing for it until the last moment. German transgressions on American neutral rights convinced Wilson of the necessity of war. Once he committed the country to the fight, however, Wilson hoped to reorganize international relations to avoid future wars. The reorganization depended on cooperation among nations. Throughout the war, Wilson generally allowed the military to fight as it thought best, but he reserved all authority to address the political issues of the war's resolution.[6]

Later Wilson, again overruling the military, agreed to the joint Allied interventions in Siberia and northern Russia in mid-1918. Although he concurred with his military subordinates that the interventions would offer little of military value, Wilson saw in each a way to underscore his commitment to collective action with those nations allied against Germany. In Wilson's mind, the interventions portended a future international system in which collective security would protect the peace and solve international problems. The twin interventions in Russia were the test cases for Wilson's commitment to collective action.[7]

The military never understood. "There seems to be almost a determination to deny the fact that the military ingredient exists in our national and international life," Rear Admiral Bradley Fiske, the aide for operations to the secretary of the navy, complained privately in the fall of 1914 at the conclusion of the occupation of Veracruz. Five years later, General William S. Graves, who commanded the American military expedition into Siberia—the last of Wilson's interventions—admitted that he had "never been able to come to any satisfactory conclusion as to why the United States ever engaged in such intervention." During the interventions that took place between Veracruz and Siberia, other soldiers expressed strikingly similar confusion over Wilson's policies and plans.[8]

Tasker H. Bliss, one of the few military men whose judgement Wilson respected, eventually came to share his colleagues' disillusionment with the Wilsonian approach. Bliss prayed that World War I would lead to the complete destruction of militarism and the disarmament of all nations. "It is European militarism, world militarism, that is the curse of the world," he declared firmly in October 1918. His solution to the war was to dump all armaments into the sea. "The cause," he wrote of the war, "was good because we believed that we were forever putting an end to the cruel business." Unfortunately, the Paris Peace Conference convinced him that Wilson and the other diplomats had failed to destroy militarism.[9]

As a member of the American commission to the peace conference, Bliss embraced the Wilsonian vision, even as he witnessed first hand its failure. By midpoint in the negotiations, he retained little hope that the peace settlement would achieve the Wilsonian goals. As he wrote his wife on 25 March 1919:

> Things here seem to me to grow blacker and blacker every day. Two months ago I offered to bet . . . that the Peace Conference would end in nothing. Now I am ready to bet more. To me there does not seem to be any honesty or common sense in political men over here. I don't wonder that the world is going Bolshevik. It is the last despairing cry of people who have lost all faith in their government.

"Civilization," Bliss wrote a friend, "cannot endure such another war." Unfortunately, the terms of the Versailles peace treaty, and the subsequent unwillingness of the victorious nations, including the United States, to disarm, convinced him that another war was unavoidable.[10]

Yet Admiral Fiske and his uniformed colleagues were wrong. Far from denying the importance of the military ingredient, Wilson understood it all too well. Wilson instead vehemently denied the importance of generals and admirals in determining when and why to use force, what to achieve, and when and why to quit. Wilson sought the military's advice only on how best to achieve goals that he defined. To the bitter disappointment of the leading soldiers of the day, he wanted nothing more of them.

Nor did Wilson believe, as Bliss did, that war could be eradicated simply by disarming nations and relying on international cooperation or comity. Rather, armed power undergirded the Wilsonian international system. Wilson sought limited disarmament and collective security to dissuade nations from turning to arms, but collective security meant, ultimately, collective, forceful action against renegade nations. "Armed force is in the background in this program," Wilson readily admitted about the League of Nations, "but it *is* in the background, and if the moral force of the world will not suffice, the

physical force of the world shall. But that is the last resort, because this is intended as a constitution of peace, not as a league of war."[11]

Indeed, despite his reputation as a man of peace, Wilson never decried the resort to arms, only those selfish purposes over which other nations too often went to war. If the cause was right and the purposes enlightened, Wilson readily enlisted in the battle. "There is nothing noble or admirable in war itself," he maintained, "but there is something very noble and admirable occasionally in the causes for which war is undertaken." Americans, Wilson repeatedly asserted, were "the champions of free government and national sovereignty." As he explained in January 1916:

> There is something that the American people love better than they love peace. They love the principles upon which their political life is founded. They are ready at any time to fight for the vindication of their character and of their honor. . . . there is one thing that the individual ought to fight for, and that the Nation ought to fight for, it is the integrity of its own convictions. We can not surrender our convictions.

Although force was a "clumsy and brutal method," Wilson refused to advocate its abolishment until just wars were no longer necessary. "I will not cry 'peace,' " he proclaimed in 1911, "so long as there is sin and wrong in the world."[12]

In a speech to the National Press Club in May 1916, Wilson admitted that, "If I cannot retain my moral influence over a man except by occasionally knocking him down, if that is the only basis upon which he will respect me, then for the sake of his soul I have got occasionally to knock him down. If a man will not listen to you quietly in a seat, sit on his neck and make him listen." The power of America, Wilson believed, was "the might of righteous purpose and of a sincere love for the freedom of mankind." Force, for Wilson, was not inherently wrong or evil, it was the motives, purposes, and goals of force that were either wrong or laudable.[13]

In fact, Wilson promised that America "would lend her moral influence not only, but her physical force, if other nations will join her, to see to it that no nation and no group of nations tries to take advantage of another nation or group of nations, and that the only thing ever fought for is the common rights of humanity." To accomplish this, Wilson pledged "the full force of this nation, moral and physical, to a league of nations which shall see to it that nobody disturbs the peace of the world without submitting his case first to the opinion of mankind."[14]

Because he so strongly believed that force took its morality from the policies that controlled it, Wilson as president held firmly to his authority as

commander in chief to control the military. He brooked neither quarrels nor interference from his uniformed subordinates. Nor did he allow them much control over any of the interventions conducted during his administration. By protecting his authority, Wilson ensured that each intervention, each resort to force, was confined to the purposes and policies he embraced.[15]

In the Wilsonian way of war, the limits of force were equal in importance to the power of force.

Consequently, the interventions undertaken by Wilson bore his stamp more than anyone else's. In the Wilsonian way of war, Wilson was the principal warrior. For this reason, studying his seven military interventions revealed much about Wilson, his policies, and his purposes. Those I analyzed in *Power and Principle: Armed Intervention in Wilsonian Foreign Policy.* But Wilson's reliance on armed power also illustrated how force could be used to achieve international goals. As I examined each intervention, it became clear that the general policies Wilson pursued—fostering American ideology, sustaining international law and cooperation, and establishing collective security—compelled him to alter, even during the course of a single intervention, the ways in which he applied force. Circumstances, too, changed, which also required Wilson to refocus the immediate purpose of the intervention on new or different objectives. The cumulative effect of studying all the interventions was to derive specific definitions or categories of how force was applied during each intervention. For my purposes, I called these applications *uses of force.*

Originally, for example, Wilson intended the occupation of Veracruz as a punishment for an insult to the American flag. As Wilson and his military advisers plotted this punishment, however, they learned that a large shipment of arms consigned to Huerta was due to arrive at Veracruz. These arms posed a serious threat to the American naval troops about to land in Mexico. Wilson hastened the intervention in order to intercept the munitions. Immediately after the occupation of Veracruz, Wilson privately arranged for the governments of Argentina, Brazil, and Chile to offer to mediate the dispute between the United States and Mexico. Wilson used that mediation to discuss the far broader issue of ending the Mexican Revolution. Months later, as he prepared to withdraw American forces from Veracruz, Wilson delayed the evacuation until the new Mexican government promised not to harm those Mexicans who had helped the American military administer the city.

Thus within the single intervention at Veracruz, Wilson changed the tactical purposes for employing force four times. The strategical goal of settling the Mexican Revolution along democratic lines remained essentially the same throughout Wilson's eight years as president. But during the course of the occupation of Veracruz, as with the Punitive Expedition two years later,

the direct or immediate objectives he sought with force changed a number of times. Wilson moved quickly from punishing the Mexican government to protecting American forces from the shipment of arms, to proposing solutions for the Mexican Revolution, to protecting Mexican citizens. As I examined the other interventions, it became readily apparent that Wilson's flexibility in applying force was not restricted to Veracruz.

In the Wilsonian way of war, force responded to the needs of the moment, adeptly shifting course as events changed and new problems or concerns arose. I began to see, not a pattern, but certain characteristics as common threads. Specific uses of force reappeared in different interventions, if only temporarily. As with Veracruz, the Punitive Expedition began as an act of punishment, but during its course Wilson again arranged negotiations with Mexican authorities to discuss the Mexican Revolution. Similarly, Wilson went to war against Germany to punish its transgressions against international law. His ultimate objective was the creation of a new international system. In the Wilsonian way of war, force was a tactic of diplomacy, its uses intimately tied to foreign policy.

Other interventions contained different uses of force. The occupation of Haiti began as an effort to protect foreign interests in the strife-torn island, but it was subsequently used to impose an American solution on Haiti's presumed inability to govern itself. A similar chain of events obtained a year later in the Dominican Republic. The twin interventions in northern Russia and Siberia began as efforts to cement Allied cooperation under the publicly proclaimed excuse of protecting Allied war supplies in the north and Czechoslovakian troops in Siberia. Both interventions were quickly, though unsuccessfully, used to compel a peaceful, non-Bolshevik resolution of the Russian Revolution. In the Wilsonian way of war, force was flexible, its uses responding to new conditions, new policies, and new goals.

In thinking about the common threads running in various ways through the interventions, I developed a vocabulary to describe them. The idea for such a vocabulary was borrowed from international law, which uses such terms as *reprisal*, *force short of war*, *police action*, *limited intervention*, and *war* to discuss the various ways force is used among nations. The concept of defining different types of force is a sound one because it provides a convenient way to discuss complex events. The legal vocabulary of force permits international lawyers to justify, compare, and contrast armed interventions across time and among different nations. In other words, international law has developed an authoritative language for discussing force.

Their particular terms, however, are better suited to the demands of the law, not to the needs of historians. The terms are defined in broad generalities meant to cover myriad possibilities. Lawyers use them to describe an entire

intervention at once, thereby compressing into one definition the changing purposes and circumstances that beset most resorts to armed power. Because the purpose of each term is to assess the legality of the action, the vocabulary implicitly contains a moral judgement. National leaders throw them about quite freely to justify their actions, to cover their misconduct, or to rationalize their decisions, thus making the vocabulary of international law too encumbered to be of much use to the historian.

I defined my own terms. The new vocabulary offers three principal advantages. First, the terms provide a convenient shorthand for describing the shifting course of events. They help clarify what happened during each intervention by tracking the changes that Wilsonian policy underwent. After isolating the various ways in which Wilson applied force, it was relatively simple to plot the changes during each intervention. The picture that developed showed that Wilson was reasonably capable of responding to changing circumstances. By defining the uses of force, a clear image of an enforced flexibility inherent in Wilsonian foreign policy emerged. Far from being a rigid idealist, Wilson was strikingly adept at fashioning his policies to the circumstances of the moment.

The new vocabulary provides a concise description of each intervention.

Second, the new terms allow comparisons among the seven interventions. By defining specific uses of force, it is possible to discuss how Wilson applied force in similar ways during different interventions. The occupation of Veracruz in 1914, the Punitive Expedition in 1916, and America's entry into World War I in 1917 each contained an application of force to punish those who had transgressed against the United States. By defining a particular use of force as a punishment, I was able to study how Wilson used it during at least three interventions. Identifying other uses of force allowed me to analyze the other elements of the several interventions. The terms establish criteria for assessing each intervention and for comparing the several interventions to one another. These comparisons help clarify what happened during each intervention.

The new vocabulary provides comparative terms for analyzing each intervention within an overall context.

Third, the new terms promise the potential for analyzing force across time and place. If Wilson used force in a particular way, then perhaps his successors and his predecessors also might have used it in similar ways. By defining that use, it should be possible to search for similar applications in other eras, under different leaders, and even by different nations. The new vocabulary allows force to become the subject, not the example.

Defining individual uses of force simply means understanding the use of force.

A use of force, then, is the application of armed power for a specific, definitive purpose. It is a historical judgement, not a contemporary rationalization, which describes the motive behind the resort to arms at any particular moment. Because conditions change, policies evolve, and new circumstances develop, the uses of force frequently change during the course of any intervention. Although an individual use of force is a static, identifiable—and therefore definable—entity, interventions are dynamic. Within the course of a single intervention, one or dozens of uses of force can obtain, their applications shifting in response to changing conditions.

Although Woodrow Wilson did not resort to all conceivable uses of force in his interventions, he relied on five different applications of armed power. Each of these five uses of force is detailed in subsequent chapters.

The use of force for protection is a government's resort to armed power in response to specific threats, real or simply perceived. It results from the belief that another government or organized group operating in a foreign country is about to take some action injurious to the intervening government's interests, ideals, or way of life. In short, it is an international act of defense.

The use of force for retribution is a government's resort to armed power to chastise another government or organized group operating within another country. It usually results from specific grievances over the attitude or behavior of the other government or organized group. In short, it is an international punishment.

The use of force for solution is a government's resort to armed power to resolve a problem with another government or organized group operating in a foreign country. It usually results from the belief that the intervening government can dispose of a problem with a foreign government or group by imposing its solution with military action. In short, it is an international consummation of will.

The use of force for introduction is a government's resort to armed power to compel or inaugurate negotiations with another government or organized group operating in a foreign country. It usually results from the belief that a military response will justify the intervening government's participation in negotiations. In short, it is an enforced invitation to discussion.

The use of force for association is a government's resort to armed power to ally itself with specific governments or groups, or in response to demands from its allies. It usually results from the belief that a military response will cement or maintain collective international action. The associates may be motivated by different uses of force. In short, it is an international act of cooperation.

In defining the uses of force, I do not claim that they are Wilson's terms, nor even that he would have understood, much less described, his actions in

precisely this way. I am imposing on Wilson's actions my own concepts, drawing them broadly enough to apply them to other interventions by other national leaders. By categorizing Wilson's actions, I am trying to elucidate how force is used by isolating its elements into discrete parts. In doing so, I well understand that the process of categorization imposes arbitrary boundaries on the flow of events. Were I writing a history of that flow, I should be loathe to interrupt it. Because I am dissecting action into elemental parts, I am wholly dependent on the interruptions. They are the dissections. My purpose is not to describe Wilsonian interventions, but to define them.

I am offering a theory of force, not a history of Wilsonian interventions. The new terms describe Wilson's actions accurately, but more important, they provide a conceptual framework, deriving general descriptions from specific events. As we emerge from the Cold War era—when wars that were not quite wars were fought with distressing regularity, when military excursions were commonplace, and when governments were toppled by subterfuge and espionage, not to mention flat-out interventions—a vocabulary of different types of force should be useful to any history of the period. It provides a schema to describe the varied ways nations exert their will forcefully.

The Wilsonian way of war helps define our understanding of force, its uses, and its abuses.