

1 of 1 DOCUMENT

THE  
NEW YORKER  
NEWYORKER.COM  
The New Yorker

June 30, 2003

**THE NEW WAR MACHINE;**  
How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military.

**BYLINE:** PETER J. BOYER

**SECTION:** FACT; A Reporter At Large; Pg. 55

**LENGTH:** 13321 words

The first shots fired by American forces in the global war on terrorism came on October 7, 2001, in a barrage of Tomahawk missiles and bomber strikes that hit Kabul, Kandahar, and other cities in Afghanistan. The American public heard that day from President Bush and shortly thereafter from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard B. Myers. But the general who was commanding the war did not address the public through the press that day, or that week, or the next. The war was more than a month old before Tommy Franks, accompanied by Rumsfeld, was coaxed into the briefing room at the Pentagon to meet the press.

If Rumsfeld needed an Eisenhower for what some were already calling the Third World War, what the press wanted was a Norman Schwarzkopf, the rotund commander of Desert Storm, whose televised briefings in early 1991 entertained journalists and the public alike. What they got this time was a soldier who, but for the four stars on his shoulders, might have passed for an old gunnery sergeant. A tall, lank Texan with prominent ears and drooping bags under his eyes, Franks bore a weary and slightly sorrowful look. Standing next to Rumsfeld, who was quickened by such encounters with the press, Franks, fifty-six and looking every minute of it, seemed like someone who had just been taken captive.

A reporter suggested that Franks had a duty to keep the American public informed and to help make the case for the war. "And with all due respect, sir," the reporter continued, "what you hear is, Tommy Franks is no Norman Schwarzkopf."

"Well," Franks answered, "I suppose I'd begin sort of at the end, by acknowledging that Tommy Franks *is* no Norman Schwarzkopf."

That answer wasn't likely to arouse public confidence in an undertaking that was already seen as floundering, which is perhaps why Rumsfeld leapt to the microphone to amend it ("Nor vice versa!"). But in military circles Franks's remark was telling. If Schwarzkopf had defined the public's idea of a winning general, in the insular world of the Army he was seen as an egotist and a bit of a blowhard, qualities deeply offensive to the institutional culture. Franks was a

THE NEW WAR MACHINE; How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

soldier keenly attuned to that culture. Retired General Crosbie Saint, Franks's friend and former boss, says of the two men, "They are not the same at all. Franks is not a whiner. He is not a pontificator. He is not seeking self-glory. He's a good ol' boy." As it happened, an Army "good ol' boy" was precisely what Donald Rumsfeld needed, a figure who might validate, in the eyes of a deeply skeptical military establishment, the war on terror that Rumsfeld was shaping.

Rumsfeld's second tenure at the Pentagon (the first was during the Ford Administration) has been marked by an agenda for change so insistent and sweeping that it has been likened to a hostile takeover. Rumsfeld believed that the American military was too set in its thinking, too attached to the weapons systems and fighting doctrines of the past—particularly the Army, which is by its nature a heavy and deliberate force, and thus least suited to Rumsfeld's vision of a fighting force that is potent, lithe, and quick. Senior Army leaders who didn't embrace Rumsfeld's ideas (and even some who did) felt discounted or ignored, or, in the case of the Army Chief of Staff, General Eric Shinseki, publicly humiliated. They were characterized as "Clinton generals"—a reference to the President who had promoted them—or, more broadly, as "Old Army." Most of them were men of a certain age—men like Colin Powell, who had served in Vietnam and taken lessons from that vexed experience, and who had then shaped a force that seemed more comfortable with peacekeeping than with waging war. The military should be used, Powell posited, only when the national interest is clearly at stake, when there is public support, a clearly defined mission, and the political will to apply decisive, overwhelming force. Many of the senior leaders bitterly resented Rumsfeld, and saw his revolution as a repudiation of their doctrines, their values, the great institution of the Army itself. "They hate him. I mean it, they hate him," one of Powell's senior deputies told me earlier this year. "He's lucky he hasn't gotten fragged."

The first time I heard the term "Clinton general" used pejoratively was during a conversation with Newt Gingrich, the former Republican Speaker of the House, in the early autumn of 2001. Gingrich was in a sour mood. The war in Afghanistan, under Franks's direction, was just starting, and progress against the Taliban was slow. Gingrich worried that American military planners were flummoxed by this new kind of war. "I think the underlying fact is that you have Bill Clinton's generals designing a campaign that is not very creative, and it's not very clever, and it's very worrisome," he said.

Gingrich had been out of the House for nearly three years, but he was an ally of Rumsfeld and a member of his Defense Policy Board, an influential advisory group. Gingrich was also one of a number of military theorists in the nineteen-eighties who tried to imagine a new American military suited to a world beyond the Cold War. Their intellectual patron was the late Air Force Colonel John Boyd, whose cardinal tenet was a concept that he called the "ooda loop": success in war is a matter of observing, orienting, deciding, and then acting faster than the enemy. Boyd's brainstorm generated others, and for military thinkers the great quest was figuring out ways to "get inside the other guy's loop."

One result was the rediscovery of the art of maneuver warfare, an old fighting doctrine that became a new article of faith for military reformers. The idea of maneuver warfare is to defeat the enemy by disrupting his capacity to fight rather than by overcoming him in a head-on contest of firepower. A maneuver attack might feature a ferocious assault on the enemy's front as a means of distraction while flanking forces dash to the adversary's rear, enveloping the opponent's force and collapsing it. The German tank blitzkrieg against France in May of 1940 is one of the best-known examples.

The themes of maneuver warfare—speed, agility, flexibility—became the language of the military-reform movement. As a Presidential candidate, George W. Bush had associated himself firmly with the reformers, and with a particular wing of the movement that placed its faith in the transformative power of microchip technology in warfare. This group, which included Rumsfeld and a handful of key defense intellectuals who would form his executive core at the Pentagon, believed in a "revolution in military affairs" triggered by the advent of precision-guided munitions. A smart bomb was the apotheosis of the speed-over-mass ideal, the reformers' fundamental creed.

In office, Rumsfeld and his team synthesized sundry elements of the reform movement into a firm ideology, which they called "transformation." They began a months-long comprehensive review of the military, in which weapons

THE NEW WAR MACHINE; How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

systems, force structures, and even the senior military leadership were measured against the transformation ideal. Precision weapons and a space-based missile defense system were adjudged transformative. A mammoth artillery system called the Crusader, costing eleven billion dollars, was not. (The program was eventually killed.) In any assessment that values speed over mass, the Army is going to lose. Army resentment was so pronounced that some officers in the Pentagon began to refer to Rumsfeld as "the enemy" and to plot strategies to defeat his transformation plans.

Over the years, pockets of reform had appeared within the Army, most notably in 1999, with President Clinton's promotion of General Shinseki to Army Chief of Staff. Shinseki announced a transformation program that anticipated Rumsfeld's, but the Rumsfeld team deemed his effort insufficient. Rumsfeld marginalized him and frustrated his program, and the Army, in turn, used its political influence to impede Rumsfeld on Capitol Hill. Rumsfeld, a lightning rod without a strong constituency in the press or in Congress, was the media's choice as the new Administration's Cabinet secretary most likely to be eased out of his job.

That is where things stood until the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the resultant global war on terrorism. Few knew exactly what was coming, or where it would unfold. Rumsfeld himself seemed uncharacteristically at a loss for words ("this conflict, this campaign, this so-called war," he would say). What was certain was that there would be a fight and that it would be waged Rumsfeld's way. And when war came it would almost certainly be fought somewhere in a region stretching from the Horn of Africa, in the west, to Central Asia, in the east, and to the Red Sea, in the north-the region covered by the United States Central Command (centcom), led by an Old Army artilleryman from Texas.

Friends and retired officers made clear what they hoped for from Tommy Franks in the autumn of 2001 as he designed the war on terror with Donald Rumsfeld. "He's not the kind of guy who is convinced that some number of laser-guided munitions at a standoff distance is going to do the job every time," retired Colonel Stephen Robinette told the *Washington Post*. The same article also quoted two retired generals who were longtime friends of Franks. "I think he would say we need to proceed carefully with what we're doing to conventional forces," said retired Major General Leo J. Baxter, who also expressed confidence that Franks would do right by the Army's conventional forces. In sum, retired Lieutenant General Randall Rigby said, "We've got a lot of faith in old Tommy bubba."

What these men did not know was that, amid the disharmony between Rumsfeld and the military, their Old Army buddy had come to his own conclusion.

Franks owed the Army everything. For a young man growing up in Midland, Texas, the Army wasn't so much a career choice as a lifeline. His daughter Jacqy, who is herself married to a military officer, says, "The Army saved Dad."

The Army saved Franks from the life of inconsequence, or worse, that is so often the portion of young men of his social station in places like Midland. The boom-and-bust oil town in the desolate Permian Basin attracted an influx of postwar risktakers. Many of those who staked themselves and came to Midland looking for the big chance, like George H. W. Bush, a senator's son from Yankee aristocracy, made it big. Some, like Harold Welch, whose daughter, Laura, would one day marry George W. Bush, capitalized on the sudden new money by carving the dreary basin into real-estate developments. On the other side of town, people like Ray and Lorene Franks, Tommy's parents, managed to earn a living and get by, but only just.

Ray Franks, who grew up in Seminole, Oklahoma, was a mechanic, and a good one, even though a childhood accident cost him an eye and the tips of his fingers on one hand. Midland had work for men who could use tools, and Lorene's sister owned a beauty shop there, so when Tommy was nine Ray moved his family to Texas. He found work in the shops around town, and Lorene, whom the family called Pete, sold homemade cakes through her sister's shop.

Not long ago, Tommy Franks jokingly reassured President Bush that he had never asked Laura Welch for a date when they were in high school together. In truth, given the sociology of that time and place, it's hardly likely that he

THE NEW WAR MACHINE;How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

would have. Laura came from a prosperous family and was in the popular crowd at Robert E. Lee High School. She was on the student council and the yearbook staff, and she was a member of the Rebelee Court. Like many of her contemporaries in Midland, she doesn't remember Tommy from high school. His only extracurricular activity was the Rebel football team, and even then the yearbook got his name wrong-"Charlie Franks"-in the team picture. Tommy liked to hunt, ride motorcycles, and work on cars. "He was a car guy," his cousin David Foster recalls. "I used to love going riding around with Tommy. He had the fastest cars. He loved to drive fast. The family, of course, just hated for me to get in a car with Tommy."

After high school, Franks enrolled at the University of Texas at Austin, but flunked out in his sophomore year and enlisted in the Army. "I was a kid trying to grow up," he says now.

It was 1965, the year of the big American buildup in Vietnam. Franks may have looked like just another dumb country boy, but his Army superiors discerned qualities in him that had gone unremarked at home. If nothing else, he worked hard and he learned fast. After basic training, he was put into an Army intelligence unit, where his superior, Corporal Sam Long, suggested that he try to enroll in Officer Candidate School. "I said, 'Well, gosh, that sounds like a good thing to me,' so I did that," Franks says. Back in Midland, the social order was an insinuation, enforced by the unspoken rules of the culture, but in the Army rank was spelled out right there on the uniform. Franks found that he liked the idea of being saluted. He graduated from artillery school and was commissioned a second lieutenant at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, in 1967, and shortly thereafter shipped out to Vietnam. He was a fire-support officer and a forward observer, which meant that his job was to probe enemy positions and direct fire upon them. He was wounded in action three times and was awarded three Purple Hearts, although even his family isn't sure of the details. "My dad never talked about Vietnam," Jacqy says. "To this day, he never talked about Vietnam to me. I think it scarred him. . . . I know that he was shot in the leg, and the bullet was in pretty deep. It's not anything he complains about, but it left quite a scar."

After his tour, Franks returned to Fort Sill, where he commanded a cannon battery. In a chapel there in 1969, he married a local girl, Cathy Carley, whom he had met before the war. The prospect of marriage reinforced Franks's sense of his limitations. Cathy had graduated from college, and wanted to teach; Franks was a junior Army officer with a high-school diploma. He determined to go back to school, even if it meant leaving the Army. He recalls telling Cathy, "We're going to get out of the service. I don't have a college degree, and I need to do that, because of my view of myself, if nothing else."

Again, the Army intervened. "Within a matter of weeks-it was sort of like Providence, perhaps grace-my battalion commander, a fella by the name of Al Lamas, said, 'Would you like to go back to college?' And I said, 'You mean you guys in the military would pay, and let me do that?' And he said, 'You bet.' " Franks enrolled in the Army's Boot Strap Degree Completion Program, getting his bachelor's in business administration at U.T.-Arlington in 1971. The price of his degree was another contract to stay in the Army, which had lost much of a generation of young officers in Vietnam.

It was a trying moment for Army careerists, and those who stayed internalized the lessons of Vietnam and the "hollow military" years of the Carter Administration. But there was opportunity, too. Franks rose steadily up the command chain, and in the late seventies he landed an invaluable posting in Washington, where he worked as an investigator for the Army's Inspector General's office and then as a congressional liaison and executive assistant for two Army Chiefs of Staff. Franks would say, "I don't do politics," but he was there just as the early stirrings of a military-reform movement were being felt, and his time at the Pentagon gave him close-up schooling in the art of bureaucratic warfare.

Franks was second-in-charge of the key 1st Cavalry Division during Desert Storm, in 1991, and by the end of the nineties he had taken command of the Third Army, overseeing the ground forces in Central Command. President Clinton, in his last year in office, nominated Franks for a fourth star, and the command position at centcom, largely on the recommendation of General Anthony Zinni, his predecessor. Zinni believed that Saddam Hussein was so dangerous that a second war against Iraq was possible, and he knew that Franks was thoroughly acquainted with the contingency

THE NEW WAR MACHINE;How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

war plan that was waiting on the shelf at the Pentagon. It was a plan that Franks had helped to create.

Tommy Franks knew that he had become the commanding general in the war against terror as a matter of "happenstance," one of Rumsfeld's top aides in the Defense Department recalled. "He happened to be the commanding general of centcom." But it didn't mean that he couldn't be replaced. The Bush team had not chosen Franks, and his Old Army credentials were hardly qualifications for the new style of war that Rumsfeld foresaw, beginning with a campaign in Afghanistan. "Franks was very blunt early on," Newt Gingrich recalls. "He just said this to Rumsfeld: 'If you can't work with anybody who Bill Clinton promoted, you need to get a whole new team. But if you want to work with me I'll work my heart out for you.' "

President Bush had asked for a war plan for Afghanistan on September 12th, and Rumsfeld and Franks delivered it within ten days. The General and the Secretary had to develop a working relationship on the fly, even as they were trying to fashion a plan from a set of options representing two contradictory impulses-the Army's way and Rumsfeld's way.

The Afghanistan campaign was precisely the sort of conflict that Rumsfeld's transformation had anticipated, and the military's plan for it-which would take months to execute-was exactly what Rumsfeld thought was wrong with the military. He argued that the plan would have to be something entirely new, because the nature of the enemy was entirely new. "The Taliban and Al Qaeda do not have armies, navies, and air forces," he said.

Rumsfeld wanted an unconventional war. It would exploit American advantages in technology with unmanned drones and precision weapons, and it would come as close as a Western nation can come to answering terrorism in kind-with a full deployment of Special Forces, operating "behind the wire." To the degree that there would be a "conventional" ground fight at all, it, too, would be unconventional-with special operators organizing and leading indigenous militias and calling in air strikes from Navy and Air Force warplanes.

Army commanders had an institutional prejudice against integrating Special Forces into a main battle plan, and not entirely without reason. By an act of Congress, Special Forces operated under separate command (and were budgeted separately). Much of what they do is classified, meaning that some of their missions are kept secret even from the battlefield commanders of conventional forces, which adds confusion to an undertaking that is by its nature chaotic. To Rumsfeld, that was another bureaucratic encumbrance that the Army needed to overcome. "While certain things have to be top secret and compartmentalized, most of it does not," General John M. (Jack) Keane, an advocate of integrating Special Forces with conventional troops, says. "So we just got past all of that."

Franks had been struck by the disastrous record of the Soviet conventional forces in Afghanistan-ten years and thirteen thousand dead Soviet soldiers-and he agreed to construct a war plan "from whole cloth." With Special Forces "A teams" inserted to work with the Northern Alliance and other indigenous fighters, the first American conventional force sent to Afghanistan was a Marine Expeditionary Force. It wasn't until Kabul and Kandahar had fallen that the first significant Army force got into the fight. Even then, it was on Rumsfeld's terms. In a conventional war, the Army uses artillery to suppress enemy fire. But in Afghanistan very few artillery units were deployed. Instead, soldiers were forced to call in air strikes when, for example, they began to take fire from Taliban mortars. This type of fighting-"combined arms" or "joint" warfare-was the very essence of the reform ideology.

The Army hated what came to be called "the Afghanistan model" of war. Army officers complained that the plan was too hastily considered, that it relied too much on Special Forces and untrustworthy native militias, and that the lack of artillery risked American lives, because air support was often too slow to arrive, if it came at all. And, they argued, if there had been more conventional forces on the ground Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar would not have escaped.

In the coming months, Rumsfeld killed plans for the Army's cherished Crusader artillery system, leading to a showdown before Congress between Rumsfeld and General Shinseki. But by then Rumsfeld had effectively done away with Shinseki; the Defense Department leaked word of Shinseki's chosen successor as Army Chief of Staff fourteen

THE NEW WAR MACHINE;How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

months before his term would end, making him a lame duck. Rumsfeld chose General Keane, who had earlier brought to the Army training fields the idea of mixing Special Forces with conventional forces. Rumsfeld also began to stack the deck, insuring that the Army's top leadership comprised officers amenable to transformation; every general officer in line to receive a third or fourth star now had to pass through a screening process, including two or more interviews with Rumsfeld or one of his top assistants. "When you're the Secretary of Defense and you personally interview everybody for three and four stars, you politicize your general-officer corps," a top Army official complains. "That's what they accused Clinton of doing, and now *they're* doing it. If you're asking general officers if they agree with political decisions, then you're not asking for the best professional military advice."

But Rumsfeld was playing to a constituency of one, the President, and Bush enthusiastically endorsed the Afghanistan model as the American way of war. "This revolution in our military is only beginning, and it promises to change the face of battle," Bush said, in December, 2001. "Afghanistan has been a proving ground for this new approach. These past two months have shown that an innovative doctrine and high-tech weaponry can shape and then dominate an unconventional conflict."

Franks had made an important turn, professionally and personally, during his dealings with Rumsfeld. The back-and-forth of war planning, Franks says, "caused me to respect him a lot. And you ought to ask him if he respects me. My guess is he'd probably say that he does." Some in the Army thought that Franks had gone beyond respect to sycophancy. One Army official has referred to him as "Rumsfeld's general." Months after the main combat operations ended, there were complaints that Franks, of all people, had co-authored a plan that put the Marines in first and diminished artillery.

Last fall, the criticism turned nasty when someone informed Army investigators that Franks had violated security rules by allowing his wife, Cathy, to remain in his presence when he was discussing a classified matter, and that he had violated rules about the use of government property by letting her fly with him on military aircraft. Cathy Franks more than occasionally accompanied her husband on his specially outfitted military plane for the long flights between centcom headquarters, in Tampa, and centcom's area of responsibility, half a world away. "When you have to travel as much as he does away from home, you want to take a part of your home with you," Jacqy says. "She makes him comfortable, and drives him, and gives him energy. There is real adoration there, from both sides." Rumsfeld shrugged off the allegations, and Franks was eventually cleared of wrongdoing. He applied to have Cathy's security-clearance level raised.

Rumsfeld was plainly convinced that Tommy Franks had come over to his side, and he determined that if there was to be a war with Iraq it would be commanded by Franks. When Franks's term at centcom expired last summer, Rumsfeld and Bush asked him to extend his tenure for another year, and Franks agreed. He was now a Bush-Rumsfeld general. As Bush later put it, "I really trust Tommy. We speak the same language."

The Army was desperately worried that Rumsfeld and his team had taken the wrong lessons-dangerous lessons, even-from Afghanistan, if they were to be applied to a future war in someplace like Iraq. There was a good possibility that the lack of artillery had led to American casualties, including seven soldiers who were killed and dozens who were wounded by enemy mortar rounds or small-arms fire in a battle called Operation Anaconda. The greatest fear was that the Afghanistan model would be used to rationalize the deployment of minimal ground forces in future conflicts. It posed that prospect to Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz a year ago. "I think you need people on the ground," he said. "I just think it would be nice if you could do it with less of them, and if you could deploy them faster, so that the next time there's a Desert Storm it doesn't take six months to get ready for it."

As it happened, Wolfowitz was already making the case for the next war in Iraq, arguing in a series of speeches and briefings that an Iraq freed from Saddam Hussein could become a model of democracy and tolerance in the Middle East. And Rumsfeld was preparing for it. He asked Franks to bring him a plan for an invasion of Iraq.

Franks's plan amounted to the military establishment's blueprint for the American way of war. It was what Franks

THE NEW WAR MACHINE; How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

calls the "no-risk plan," and having helped draft it he knew it cold. As Franks says, it called for "a whole bunch of divisions, a whole bunch of jets, a whole bunch of bombs, a whole bunch of aircraft carriers." That translated to a force of more than two hundred thousand troops, including three divisions of "heavy" forces—armored tanks and personnel carriers. It was not at all what Rumsfeld had in mind.

"That is truly, I mean, that is a big force," Rumsfeld said, as Franks recalls it.

"That's absolutely right," Franks responded.

"Do we need that?" Rumsfeld asked.

"Absolutely not," Franks said. "I'm gonna come next week and we'll talk about a little bit different variant of this." Franks's recollection plainly softens his exchanges with Rumsfeld, which were, by most accounts, quite heated at times. Rumsfeld himself has said that when he and his team looked at the off-the-shelf plan for Iraq, their reaction was "No way! That's not going to work."

For several months, Franks kept coming back with new plans. It was an arduous, excruciating process, one very closely followed by the military grapevine. The Powell doctrine itself was at stake. Implicitly, the Powell doctrine held that the commitment of overwhelming force carried such a political cost that the civilian leadership would resort to it only cautiously. Many in the last two Administrations, however, believed the doctrine had led to a paralyzing aversion to risk. "What's the point of having this superb military that you're always talking about if we can't use it?" Madeleine Albright once asked Colin Powell. Devotion to a fixed idea of "overwhelming force" also tended to stifle doctrinal innovation and battlefield ingenuity.

The argument for using a large force in any new Gulf war was partly based on an estimate of Saddam's military strength at as high as three hundred and seventy-five thousand troops. But there was also the ambitious nature of the mission itself. As the war plan evolved, it became clear that the Bush Administration meant to send the American military on a truly audacious undertaking: simultaneously to overturn Saddam's regime, to preserve Iraq's natural resources and infrastructure, to minimize "collateral damage" (civilian casualties), and even to allow much of the Iraqi Army to survive so that it could help to restore order after the war. In that light, it seemed to some that Franks's first proposal, for some two hundred thousand troops—less than half the number used to oust Saddam from Kuwait in the first Gulf War—was relatively modest.

Rumsfeld's starting position, what Franks called the other "bookend" in the range of options, was "a little bitty ground force"—eighty thousand troops or less—"and overwhelming airpower." The view that wars can be won mostly with airpower is an irksome one to Army officers, and Franks is no exception. "My response to that was 'How did we do with the Kuwaiti oil fields the last time we took that approach?'" During the thirty-eight-day bombing campaign that preceded the ground war in Operation Desert Storm, Saddam's forces blackened the Gulf skies by igniting the Kuwaiti oil fields. In response to the proposition that a significant ground force wasn't required, Franks again cited the first Gulf War. "How long did it take to get the Iraqis out of Kuwait? The answer to the question is: Duration of the war." For all the bombing, Saddam's forces did not quit Kuwait until they were chased out by American tanks.

As Rumsfeld and his circle argued from one bookend, Franks slowly worked his way down from the other ("You have to have somebody for the enemy to give their guns to"), until a compromise suggested itself: the war would start with a force of a hundred thousand or less, but deployment orders would be given to a much larger force, which could be fed into the battlefield as needed, through an open "pipeline."

It was an elegant solution. Rumsfeld's model would be given a chance to work, and if that failed the war would be won the Army way, with overwhelming ground force. "If the cost begins to approach a gamble," Franks says, "then you put in the pipeline forces, which guarantee success in the event you've miscalculated with the start force." As it turned out, diplomatic developments so delayed the start of the war that by the time it began Franks had more than ninety thousand combat forces and more than a hundred thousand pipeline forces in the area.

THE NEW WAR MACHINE;How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

Franks and Rumsfeld took their plan to Bush. "It was one of those things where we all reached a comfort zone," Franks says. "We looked at each other and we said, 'If we do this, we win.' "

In the days and weeks before that proposition would be tested on the battlefield, Rumsfeld and Franks continued to refine the plan. Rumsfeld spent long hours thinking of things that could go wrong, filling pages of a legal pad with what-if questions and then passing them on to Franks and his commanders, who were doing the same thing themselves. They worried the plan into a kaleidoscopic construct of almost infinite options, categorized on the computerized chart into "branches" and "sequels." Franks could go to his laptop and punch in "equipment" and pull out layers of information, all the way down to the number of replacement combat boots in inventory. As they went into battle, according to Major General Victor E. (Gene) Renuart, Franks's director of operations, "In every commander's psyche, there was a mixed emotion of, Did I forget something? Do we have everything in place? Are we really sure we've answered all the what-if questions?" The fretting continued until March 19th, when Bush sent the coalition forces to the battlefield.

"Mr. President, the rules of engagement are in place," Franks told the President from Saudi Arabia via video telephone. "The command and control is in place. And this force is ready to go." Franks then detailed the time and sequence for the start of the war, which would begin with stealth. Thirty-one teams of Special Forces (about ten members to a team) would enter Iraq in darkness that night. Forty-eight hours later, after sundown in Baghdad, an intense air campaign would begin, followed the next morning, Saturday, March 22nd, by the movement of ground forces into Iraq.

The men saluted each other, and Bush left the situation room to get some fresh air. Franks flew from Saudi Arabia to his headquarters in Doha, Qatar.

Franks was still, however, fighting an undercurrent of ill will from within the military. In the weeks before the war, Norman Schwarzkopf had gone public with the Army's grievance against Rumsfeld, calling the Defense Secretary's micromanagement of the war plan "scary." "When he makes his comments, it appears that he disregards the Army . . . that he is the guy driving the train and everybody else better fall in line behind him-or else," Schwarzkopf told the *Washington Post*. "There are guys at the Pentagon who have been involved in operational planning for their entire lives, O.K.? . . . And for this wisdom, acquired during many operations, wars, schools, for that just to be ignored, and in its place have somebody who doesn't have any of that training, is of concern."

Schwarzkopf had uttered what many Army officers had long felt. Not since the Vietnam War had there been such pronounced dissonance between the civilian and the military leadership in a time of war. Schwarzkopf's view reflected the institutional sentiment, including that of some of the commanders in the field.

Franks ignored the criticism. His peers were bothered, he says now, only because they didn't know the plan. "There are only five people in the United States of America who knew the plan," he says. "The President of the United States, the Secretary of Defense, Dick Myers, Pete Pace"-the vice-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff-"and me. . . . I think that construct would have been appreciated by about anyone who has worn the uniform, had they been able to see it."

The plan reflected Franks's commitment to the Rumsfeld way of war: the efficacy of speed and precision over mass. Afghanistan had convinced him of the utility of precision and of Special Forces, and he allowed himself to be convinced that they could be applied to a very different sort of war in Iraq. In planning for Iraq, Franks accorded to Special Forces a far larger, broader role than had ever been imagined (and once the war began that role would expand even more). Where Special Operations forces had once been considered "behind the wire" guys who worked apart from the main fight, Franks installed Brigadier General Gary Harrell (one of the hot-shot Delta Force officers featured in "Black Hawk Down") in command headquarters, along with representatives of the C.I.A. There would be hundreds of "shadow soldiers" on the battlefield, effectively replacing two conventional divisions. In that sense, the battle plan had dictated the force size.

THE NEW WAR MACHINE;How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

The plan envisaged five fronts, Franks says: "A front from the south, one from the north, one from the west, one directly in the environment of Baghdad proper, and the fifth one was information operations."

During the first forty-eight hours of the war, Special Forces teams would slip into Iraq at night, with one set of teams assigned to kill enemy observers stationed near the Kuwait border. Another would move into western Iraq from Jordan, neutralizing missile launchers in the "Scud box" that potentially threatened Israel and Jordan. Others would move toward Baghdad, joining C.I.A. paramilitaries who had been in the city for weeks. In the Persian Gulf, teams of Polish commandos were assigned the job of taking the Iraqi oil platforms.

The plan called for heavy conventional forces to move into Iraq from the south and the north, converging on Baghdad. In the north, the Army's 4th Infantry Division would stage its attack from Turkey, secure the oil fields near Kirkuk, and then move toward Baghdad. The 4th Infantry Division was to be joined by the 173rd Airborne Brigade, which would be flown in from Italy.

In the south, the First Marine Expeditionary Force would move from Kuwait into Rumaila, secure the oil fields there, and then fight its way up the Euphrates Valley to Baghdad.

The Army's mammoth 3rd Infantry Division (with ten thousand tanks, Bradleys, and other vehicles) would also move in from Kuwait. But instead of plodding in the conventional manner, fighting for every town and bridge, winning and holding ground, it was to dash straight through to within striking distance of Baghdad. "Their purpose was to kill what they had to kill and to bypass it," Franks says, "and to move as quickly as they could to Baghdad."

It was war fighting straight from the reformers' handbook, a maneuver designed to use speed to pressure the enemy's rear-Baghdad-in the hope of prompting a quick collapse. Franks hoped that if he could get his forces to Baghdad quickly enough it would stop the enemy from making a fighting retreat into the city, where it could dig in and fortify, creating the conditions for a bloody urban fight-the coalition's nightmare scenario. In one war and more than a decade of near-war with the Western allies, Baghdad had never before been directly pressured.

The planned dash to Baghdad carried a risk-a long supply line (it would be the Marines' longest march since they stormed the shores of Tripoli) that was vulnerable to attack. "There's a difference between a risk and a gamble," Franks says. "A risk is something that is appropriate in a given circumstance. A gamble is something from which one cannot recover forces." Franks believed that, with a pipeline of reserve forces, he was not gambling with his troops' lives.

From the start, Franks knew there could be no prolonged preliminary air war, which could soften the enemy but could also increase civilian casualties and give Saddam time to create an environmental disaster, further hardening world opinion against the war. Instead, there would be a short, intense bombing campaign lasting for as little as two days. Planners called it "Shock and Awe."

Franks said that the plan was, above all, flexible, and, as things turned out, it needed to be. Before the war even started, there was a significant hitch in the form of an inconvenient expression of democracy in Turkey, whose parliament voted against the country's use as a staging ground. That decision removed from the battlefield the Army's 4th Infantry Division-one of only two full heavy divisions committed. The 3rd Infantry Division and the lighter Marine unit were left as the main conventional forces, a design that was much closer to Rumsfeld's original vision. Rather than insisting upon a delay, Franks changed the plan. Instead of attacking from the north and trying to destroy the two Iraqi divisions there, the coalition would try to "fix" the enemy forces in place, keeping them from joining the fight in the south. Franks hoped to do that with Special Forces, working with the anti-Saddam units of the Kurdish *peshmerga* and the lightly armed 173rd Airborne, and by deception. Franks had long been getting signals from the Turks that they would refuse the coalition a staging area, but he decided not to move more than thirty cargo ships that were floating in the Mediterranean with the 4th Infantry Division's equipment, vehicles, and supplies. The hope was to deceive the Iraqis into believing that there would be a northern front at least long enough to make them delay a move south.

Plans were also changed by a C.I.A. operative on the ground in Baghdad, who was tracking Saddam's movements.

THE NEW WAR MACHINE; How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

Just hours after Bush's teleconference with Franks, the agent informed centcom that he had located Saddam inside a compound called Dora Farms. A "hit" would require Presidential approval, and the President's forty-eight-hour ultimatum period had not yet expired. "The intelligence information came to be more and more clear," Franks says. But the President insisted "that we would not execute a takedown inside of Baghdad until the expiration of that period." The President had long ago authorized a covert effort to kill or oust Saddam, but he was squeamish about starting the war with a takedown attempt; the opening images of the war might be Al Jazeera pictures of Saddam's dead or wounded grandchildren. The military's primary concern was the effect on the war plan. The chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Richard Myers, called Franks on the Commander's special "red switch" phone connecting him to the Pentagon. Could the coalition launch a quick strike against Dora Farms, and would it change the plan? "Yes, we can certainly do that," Franks answered, "and it has no effect at all." He added that it was only a matter of getting "penetrators"-bunker-busting bombs-loaded on the F-117A stealth bombers that would deliver the strike, along with ship-launched Tomahawk missiles.

The prospect of killing Saddam trumped the possibility of civilian casualties and scenes of smoking rubble. The President approved the strike, and just before dawn on Thursday, March 20th, four one-ton satellite-guided bombs and forty Tomahawk missiles hit Dora Farms. The intelligence source in Baghdad reported a direct hit, and it has been the official American line ever since that Saddam may have been killed in the strike. "People can trick this, and think about it in a lot of different ways," Franks said after the war. "But . . . I still haven't seen anything that convinces me that Saddam Hussein's alive." American military forensics teams were still sifting through the rubble in the hope of deciding the issue, and as the weeks passed it seemed increasingly likely that Saddam had survived.

Franks had told Myers that the strike at Saddam wouldn't change the war plan, but indirectly it did. A primary objective of the plan was to seize the oil fields before Saddam could torch them. The productive fields in the south were particularly important; they had been used for Iraq's "oil for food" program during the long sanctions period, and the coalition wanted to get them running again quickly after the war, to help pay for Iraq's reconstruction. Intelligence sources had spotted several trains carrying explosives into the south, toward the Rumaila region, suggesting that Saddam was making a move on the oil fields. "The concern then was, if Saddam had not planned to blow those oil fields just yet, the fact that we may have tried to target him personally or his family and senior leaders may have tipped the scales," General Renuart says. Commanders on the ground saw an opening: Saddam had not yet positioned forces that would block a quick move from the south toward Rumaila. The war plan called for Shock and Awe first, but Franks seized the chance and ordered the start of the ground war. "I made the decision to do the ground force early because our reconnaissance told us that we had the opportunity to get the southern oil fields intact," Franks says. Seven wells were set on fire, and explosives were found in others, but more than three hundred were secured unscathed.

Starting the ground war before the air campaign also provided an element of surprise, an unlikely advantage for a coalition force that had been showily building for months. Franks and his commanders did not discourage authoritative news reports of the anticipated Shock and Awe bombing campaign, and the command counted on Iraqis believing that it would come first. "I think we tried to reinforce the concept that this would be days of air campaign, followed by ground," Renuart says. Franks hints as much, too. "Sometimes even the critics can be deceived," he says.

At four in the afternoon on Thursday, March 20th, a Marine light armored patrol made contact with a group of Iraqi personnel carriers and destroyed them. The long, clamorous convoy of the 3rd Infantry Division began its dash to a line outside Baghdad extending from Karbala to Kut. By the next morning, the division had advanced two hundred miles on Baghdad.

By Saturday, the coalition claimed to have taken the crossroads town of Nasiriya and Iraq's only deep-water port, Umm Qasr, where a marine hoisted an American flag. That afternoon, on the third day of the war, Tommy Franks made his first appearance at centcom's Coalition Media Center, outside Doha. He said, "Let me begin by saying this will be a campaign unlike any other in history, a campaign characterized by shock, by surprise, by flexibility, by the employment of precise munitions on a scale never seen before, and by the application of overwhelming force."

THE NEW WAR MACHINE;How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

As Franks spoke that first Saturday of the war, surrounded by a thirty-eight-foot world map, digital clocks displaying the time in the war zone and in Washington, and an array of plasma video screens projecting battlefield images, he seemed to be at the very epicenter of the global war on terrorism. But he was standing on a briefing stage, finished just days before the war (at a cost of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars), that had been devised by a Hollywood set designer to look like the hub of decision and, by implication, of news. Actual news emanated from the Coalition Media Center only by mistake, however, when someone strayed from the script. centcom had credentialed thousands of journalists to cover the war from Franks's headquarters in Doha, but when the war began the Coalition Media Center was subjected to an information blackout that lasted two full days, and a virtual news blackout that lasted well beyond that.

The media strategy was coordinated in part by the Office of Global Communications, a sort of para-information unit associated with the political wing of the White House. The unit, staffed by a team of young and intensely political communications operatives, was created to shape the American message. (They portrayed the Afghanistan conflict as a war of liberation for Afghanistan's oppressed women.) The unit's plan for the Iraq war, mimicking the real war plan, was to orchestrate the dynamics of the information "battlefield" and to control the outcome-the message of the war. (The Bush Administration's fixation on "story-lining" the war could have unexpected consequences-especially in the search for weapons of mass destruction.)

The war would first be seen from the viewpoint of the five hundred or so reporters and crew who were embedded with the military units, a brilliant conception that had several advantages. One was that it instantly eliminated the culture gap between the press and the military. "These guys are going to be a band of brothers with our troops," one commanding general said. "It's a great thing." Nothing creates empathy like a three-hundred-mile ride inside a Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

What the world saw through the embeds was a blitzkrieg of American force, viewed from the turret of an M1 tank as it roared through the desert, unchallenged and seemingly unchallengeable. The veteran ABC News anchor Ted Koppel gamely captured the thrill of the dash to Baghdad with the 3rd Infantry Division, and was moved to paraphrase Shakespeare: "Wreak havoc and unleash the dogs of war!" But he recognized the limits of the view he was getting. During a live broadcast, when Peter Jennings asked him about the broader progress of the war, Koppel replied, "Let's be perfectly candid about this. We get much of our news either when we chat with you or when we listen . . . to the BBC on shortwave on the hour." The drawing of the larger picture of the war was left not to the commanding general, as had been the case in Desert Storm, but to Donald Rumsfeld and the Pentagon.

As for Tommy Franks, his public role was in the custody of Jim Wilkinson, a thirty-two-year-old transfer from the White House Office of Communications. When I met Wilkinson last winter at centcom's permanent headquarters, in Tampa, he had the distracted look of an overtaxed student at exam time-nails bitten to the quick, his shirttail hanging out of his unpressed trousers, one hand nervously twirling a pen. When I next saw him, in Qatar, he was in full desert-battle dress, his thick brush of red hair cut short in the military style, and with the bearing of a man in charge of important things. Although he was a civilian with a junior officer's rank (lieutenant) in the naval reserve, at centcom he was given a civilian rank equal to that of a two-star general. Wilkinson had come to his job at centcom, which bore the lofty title "director of strategic communications," after soldiering as a partisan for the Republican Party. He entered politics on the rebound from disappointment in his first ambition: to be an undertaker. In 1992, he walked into the office of his congressional representative, the Republican House leader, Dick Armey, and talked his way into a job.

Wilkinson eventually became Armey's "oppo man," charged with finding Democratic vulnerabilities and feeding them to the press. It was Wilkinson who seized upon Al Gore's claim to early support for the Internet and spun it into damaging braggadocio. He moved up to the national Republican Party, and worked the disputed Presidential-election results in Florida.

At centcom, Wilkinson accompanied Franks virtually everywhere, including the Commander's visits to the regional heads of state. It was not part of his job to make Franks accessible to the press, which was just fine with Franks; after

THE NEW WAR MACHINE;How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

his first appearance, on the third day of the war, Franks briefed reporters only twice.

Franks's friends and colleagues portray a man considerably more colorful than the stiff professional who in public seems to talk only in military-speak. Franks has a robust temper, and he swears like a ranch hand. He drinks salty margaritas, enjoys a good cigar, and bellows along with his beloved country-music tunes. He is not one of the military's deep thinkers—he spends his free time watching movies on his portable DVD player, his taste running to Eddie Murphy comedies. But he shouldn't be underestimated. "He is very quick," retired General Crosbie Saint, who commanded Franks when he was a lieutenant colonel on the rise, says. "When you talk to him, you can see the wheels going around." Franks loves to be among his soldiers, in whose company he easily assumes the unpolished manner of the enlisted class. On his first visit to the troops during the Iraq war, he collapsed formation and waded into the crowd, hugging the troops, praising their effort, and asking what he could do for them. "And don't be giving me any of this horseshit about 'putting me on a plane,'" he joked, to hearty approval. A digital camera was in nearly every soldier's rucksack, and when a soldier asked to take a picture Franks feigned modesty. "Why would anyone want a picture of me?" he asked. "I'm an old ugly son of a bitch."

Keeping Franks out of the news made it easier for the Office of Global Communications to achieve its purpose, which was to make the three thousand or so journalists who were stuck in Doha focus on the centcom message: The fight to liberate Iraq from Saddam's evil regime was going exactly according to plan. The daily briefing chore fell mostly to a young African-American brigadier general, Vincent K. Brooks, who was cast in the role after a brief audition. Brooks and his brother Leo, who is also a brigadier general, are West Pointers—their father, Leo Brooks, Sr., was an Army brigadier general as well—and are considered rising stars in the Army. At centcom headquarters, Vincent Brooks declined most requests for interviews, adhering to his role as the bearer of the daily message, delivered bloodlessly and beginning almost invariably as it did on the afternoon of March 27th: "Our plan is working, and we're one day closer to achieving our objectives."

By then, however, the relentlessly upbeat centcom message was beginning to ring false. The giddy tone of the opening days of the invasion of Iraq began to give way by the end of the first week. The weekend of March 22nd brought the news that a British plane returning from a bombing mission over Iraq had been shot down by an American Patriot missile battery near the Kuwaiti border, killing all aboard. At around the same time came the grim, bizarre news of a fragging incident in the 101st Airborne Division, in central Kuwait. A sergeant had tossed three grenades into the command tent, killing two and wounding fourteen.

From the battlefield, a stream of reports suggested that things were not going according to plan. The cities of Umm Qasr, Basra, and Nasiriya, which had been declared "quelled" and "controlled" and "secured" just the day before, were now the scenes of sharp fighting. The coalition had hoped, even expected, that the Shia Muslims in the south would rise up, turn against the regime, and join the liberation forces. Instead, all through the south of Iraq, coalition forces were suddenly under attack. In the first two days of the war, there had been reports of broad Iraqi Army surrenders, which the coalition was firmly counting on; plans for postwar Iraq were based partly on using the Iraqi Army to help secure the country. But the mass capitulation never came. The Iraqi regulars either fought—often at the point of a gun—or managed to melt away into the population.

The fiercest resistance came from enemy irregular forces—Baathist loyalists, foreign mercenaries, and jihadis—and detached Republican Guard fighters. These paramilitaries fought wildly, even madly, attacking armored American vehicles head on with small-arms volleys fired from Toyota pickup trucks. They stood no chance against the coalition forces, but the attacks were more than a mere annoyance. Fire from rocket-propelled grenade launchers managed to knock out four Abrams M1 tanks—vehicles designed to survive direct confrontations with Soviet formations. Coalition commanders seemed surprised and confused by the attacks. "The truth of the matter is it's difficult for us to understand completely who all is operating in these various actions," a centcom commander conceded.

In Baghdad, the coalition's strategic air campaign, the famous Shock and Awe bombardment, was beginning to look like a fizzle. It had not only failed to incite an immediate capitulation; it had failed even to shut down Iraqi broadcast

THE NEW WAR MACHINE;How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

operations. Iraqi television showed tapes of Saddam Hussein appealing to world opinion ("We have seen how Bush, the mean one, has taken lightly your stance and opinions") and broadcast the daily taunts of the Information Minister, Muhammad Said al-Sahhaf ("Our initial assessment is that they will all die").

The coalition's long, exposed supply line was now being randomly attacked by the Iraqi irregulars. Franks's plan had left out the armored cavalry units that many believed would be necessary to protect the force's rear. On Sunday, March 23rd, a convoy of mechanics from the 507th Maintenance Company, a follow-on unit, made a wrong turn and was ambushed. A dozen U.S. soldiers were captured or killed. Arab television broadcast gruesome images of the dead, and showed frightened American prisoners of war-including Specialist Shoshana Johnson, a cook with the unit-being roughly questioned by their captors.

On that same Sunday night, the Army's 11th Aviation Regiment, a deep-strike force of Apache helicopters equipped with Hellfire missiles, prepared for its first assault on a Republican Guard armored formation. A unit such as the 11th had been believed capable of taking out an entire brigade of enemy armor, but as the Apaches swooped toward their objective they were met with an onslaught of fire-mostly from handheld small arms fired into the night sky. One of the Apaches was brought down and its two pilots taken prisoner; the rest aborted the mission and returned to base so damaged that the regiment was declared un-airworthy.

From the battlefield to the Coalition Media Center, in Qatar, and even in Washington, the mood had turned. "It's clear that this war is no cakewalk," the NBC Pentagon correspondent began his report that Sunday morning. "The war stumbles after a fast start."

Soon afterward, centcom's information operation, changing tactics, invited a group of reporters to a background briefing with a senior commander, who found it necessary to assert that the coalition was not going to quit. "We are prepared to pay a very high price, because we are not going to do anything other than insure that this regime goes away," he said. "And if that means there'll be a lot of casualties then there'll be a lot of casualties. But we're not gonna walk away from this thing."

On Monday, March 24th, the winds began, a fierce, near-hurricane-force blow that darkened the Iraqi sky for three days. The picture from embedded television correspondents instantly darkened, and now depicted an Army standing still, its great machines fouled by driven sand. With no forward movement to report, journalists found stories about strains on the two-hundred-and-fifty-mile-long supply line-one Marine unit was reportedly down to a single meal a day. Soldiers in the field began to question the soundness of the mission.

On Thursday, March 27th, Washington awakened to an astonishing front-page report in the *Post*, which said that "some senior U.S. military officers are now convinced that the war is likely to last months and will require considerably more combat power."

After one week, the war was edging toward quagmire status in the commentariat. Then, in what would become one of the most cited comments of the war, Lieutenant General William S. Wallace, commander of the Army's V Corps, was quoted by the *Times'* Jim Dwyer as saying, "The enemy we're fighting is a bit different than the one we war-gamed against because of these paramilitary forces." That statement was taken as proof of the war plan's inadequacy, and it inspired people who had opposed the war, or at least the war plan, to abandon restraint. "They thought they would be greeted as liberators and that the regime would collapse like a house of cards," President Jacques Chirac, of France, said. "But they underestimated Iraqi patriotism. They would have been better off listening to us."

"That's what I was trying to warn them about two years ago," former Senator Gary Hart said, referring to his 2001 assertion that, in projecting an Iraqi war, one must assume "several tens of thousands of American casualties and hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties in downtown Baghdad."

General Franks delayed the assault on Baghdad, which had been planned for the weekend of March 29th. And he ordered Jim Wilkinson to remind field commanders that, when talking to reporters, they need to "stay in their lanes."

THE NEW WAR MACHINE;How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

But it was too late for message control. The weather delay became an "operational pause," welcomed by many of the Old Army loyalists, who saw a chance to repudiate the obviously discredited Rumsfeld plan, to regroup, and effectively to start the war over again. Evaluating the war as expert commentators on television, the retired officers were withering in their criticism.

"Their assumptions were wrong," retired General Barry McCaffrey, who became the voice of Old Guard remonstrance, said. McCaffrey had been a star commander in the first Gulf War, described by Norman Schwarzkopf as "the most aggressive and successful ground commander of the war." Now his disagreement with the war plan came across as genuine anger at Rumsfeld. "At the end of the day, the question arises: Why would you do this operation with inadequate power? Because you didn't have time to get them there? But we did. Because you don't have the forces? But we did. Because you're trying to save money on a military operation that will be two hundred billion dollars before it's done? Or is it because you have such a strong ideological view and you're so confident in your views that you disregard the vehement military advice from, particularly, Army generals who you don't think are very bright?"

Two weeks before the war, Rumsfeld had been asked at a Pentagon press briefing whether he could promise the American people that the war wouldn't become a quagmire. "I can almost promise you that someone in this room will *say* it's a quagmire," he had replied. That day had arrived, much sooner than even Rumsfeld could have guessed. He and Myers worked damage control on the Sunday news broadcasts. Their joint Pentagon press briefing two days later was remarkable for its contentiousness, with Myers uncharacteristically lashing out at former comrades now serving as commentators, calling their remarks "bogus." And Rumsfeld, discussing his input into the war plan, even asserted, almost plaintively, "It was not my plan-it was General Franks's plan."

No commander had ever before fought a war under quite the circumstances facing Franks, with real-time, around-the-clock coverage and instantaneous peer review. Looking back, Franks admits to only faint annoyance at some of the harsher pronouncements that were made as the war unfolded. "There are a couple of differences between critics and people who actually have the job on the ground," he says. "And one of the differences is that the critics are not accountable to anyone for anything. They simply state an opinion. I think there is a much more important comment that I could make on the critics, or pundits-and that is, they don't know the plan."

The rear-line attacks from the irregulars, which had seemed so threatening at the end of the first week of the war, suggesting to some a long, painful counterinsurgency, amounted, in the end, to little more than minor skirmishes. "They'd come to the conclusion that if you put a bunch of guys in the back of a pickup truck, you arm the pickup truck with a machine gun, and you fling it at Americans, you're bound to cause some casualties," Lieutenant General John Abizaid, Franks's top deputy in Qatar, told me. "But when you look at the casualty figures from that part of the campaign they're really not that high. But they were psychologically important."

Of more concern to Franks was what lay ahead-the battle for Baghdad. Between the capital city and the Army's 3rd Infantry Division stood the Medina Division of the Iraqi Republican Guard, promising the first, and possibly decisive, major set-piece battle of the war. During the pause in fighting, the Iraqis had moved heavy divisions out of the north to help defend Baghdad from a southern approach, and had added force to the Medina Division. It was suggested that Franks do the same-use the operational pause to reinforce his troops. Franks bristles at the notion that there even was an operational pause. "Actually, it was really more of a sandstorm than it was a pause," he says. "And I'm really not defensive about this thing. We had, I guess, three or four days' worth of really bad weather in this." The storm, Franks says, stopped him only from softening the Iraqi formations with his ground forces. "We did not have enough visibility to be able to kill the targets using ground systems, and so we opted to use G.P.S. air systems"-satellite-guided precision bombs-"during this period of time," he says. Franks ordered a massive, relentless air attack on Iraqi positions-a thousand sorties a day, flown by Air Force, Navy, and Marine aircraft. During one run, coalition forces dropped eighty five-hundred-pound bombs on an Iraqi armored brigade.

Because of the sandstorm, centcom could not be certain what effect the bombardment was having; the satellite photographs were not clear. The air strikes continued for several days during the week of March 24th, and the storm

THE NEW WAR MACHINE;How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

forced Franks to push back the assault on Baghdad by at least three days.

Proponents of more force continued to urge Franks to wait for reinforcements. Joseph L. Galloway, a respected military correspondent with strong ties to the Army establishment (he is a co-author of the Vietnam saga "We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young"), wrote an article for the Knight Ridder newspaper chain quoting a senior officer who was virtually pleading with Franks not to press forward. "I hope Franks won't do this," the officer said. "He should stand on the perimeter and grind them down. He has got to bring the 4th Division in to do this. He can't do it with what he's got." The issue was debated inside Franks's briefing room at centcom and, on Saturday, March 29th, during a video teleconference with the President, who was at Camp David. With the President's acquiescence, Franks decided to push ahead.

That weekend, the battle-damage pictures began to come in clearly, and what Franks and his commanders saw astonished them. The Medina Division, which the coalition had hoped to degrade by fifty per cent, was down to less than twenty-five per cent of its fighting force, and its support divisions were nearly destroyed. "They didn't just destroy them a little bit," Abizaid told me, after assessing the battle-damage reports. "They were obliterated in a way that's fairly significant in military terms."

It was perhaps the war's most vivid display of the disparity between American and Iraqi military capability. To the air crews dropping the precision weapons in run after run, bombing became such a matter of routine that one pilot, who called himself Captain Steve, passed along to an online "warblog" called The Command Post haikus written by crew members looking to kill the tedium:

Republican Guard

Accustomed to all power

Now just a pink mist.

But Baghdad still lay ahead, and geography favored the Iraqis. To reach the approach to Baghdad, the Army's 3rd Infantry Division would have to squeeze through the Karbala Gap—a sandy lowland, just twenty-five miles wide. On one side of the gap lay Lake Buhayrat ar Razazah, and on the other the Euphrates River. Once through, the Americans would be only fifty miles from Baghdad.

To "shoot the gap," as Franks puts it, his ground commanders devised a maneuver that involved feinting a head-on attack against the Medina Division, to fix the Iraqis in place, while sending the bulk of the 3rd Infantry Division along the edge of the lake and through the Karbala Gap. On the other side of the battle zone, in the east, the Marines would also feint toward Baghdad, forcing the Medina Division to pay attention to possible assault from two sides. "And then, once the Medina was fixed in the center," Franks says, "the 3rd I.D. shot the gap over on the left."

The move worked impressively, and the 3rd Infantry rumbled through the gap almost without resistance, suffering just a single casualty. "All of that was made possible by airpower," Franks says.

By Tuesday, April 1st—the same day that Rumsfeld and Myers were defending the war plan in a heated Pentagon press briefing—coalition forces had reached what Franks and his commanders called "the tipping point" of the war. The first sign came that night, with a stunning victory on the public-relations front. With commanders at headquarters watching in real time, a commando team swept into an Iraqi hospital and rescued an Army private, Jessica Lynch, who had been held under guard there. The next morning, Franks, who had slept through the event, walked into his briefing room at centcom and found his subordinates in a celebratory mood. "You guys act like you're surprised," he scolded. "Our Special Operations forces are the best in the world. Of course they did it." Even so, centcom played it for all it was worth. The information team prepared a video showing the rescue ("The best-produced thirty-second spot you'll see," one information officer said) and let the word out to the television networks that the tape might be available. At the next afternoon's centcom press briefing, General Brooks went through his opening spiel, and then opened the floor to

THE NEW WAR MACHINE; How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

questions, without mentioning the rescue. On cue, CNN's correspondent asked about the tape. Brooks, feigning ignorance, in a stage aside, asked his colleagues, "Do we have the tape?" Although it was subsequently learned that the Baathist guards had fled the compound just before the raid, at the time the Lynch rescue was the tipping point in the message war, muting the skeptical tone of the campaign's second week.

Two days later, the 7th Cavalry Regiment secured the Baghdad airport, and again Franks was urged by press commentators to hold off on a final assault on the city. The 4th Infantry Division, the main backup force coming into the country, wouldn't be battle-ready for at least another two weeks. centcom had anticipated that the Iraqis would try a layered defense of the city. "You've got regular formations, Republican Guard formations on the outskirts of Baghdad, and then you still may have the same sort of types-militia, other Republican Guards, infantry units, et cetera-that may already be in the city, defending the city," a centcom commander said.

In a sense, the long, bitter argument over the war plan and the size of the coalition force came down to this moment. Waiting for the heavy 4th Infantry Division would have reduced risk and put more troops inside Baghdad to help stabilize the country when combat ended. General Shinseki had earned a sharp rebuke from Rumsfeld's team for his suggestion, based partly upon his own command of the American peacekeeping force in Bosnia, that "several hundred thousand" troops would be needed to secure a postwar Iraq. But part of the reason that Franks had fashioned a war plan featuring a quick dash to Baghdad was to avoid what one centcom war planner called the "fortress Baghdad" scenario. If the American forces could take the city quickly enough, Franks reasoned, the Iraqis wouldn't have time to dig in and mount their layered defense. Franks decided to push ahead.

On the weekend of April 5th, Franks ordered two armored battalions of the 3rd Infantry Division into the heart of the city. They met resistance, but it was mostly from disorganized fragments of the Iraqi regulars and foreign volunteers. An estimated three thousand of them were killed during the raids. "To do a raid like that unhinges the other guy, but you also find out what he's got," General Peter Pace says. "And when they went through they killed everything that got anywhere near them, which also sent a message to the Iraqis." Whatever organized defense of Baghdad the Iraqis had planned quickly folded, and three days later Saddam's statue in Firdos Square came down.

I asked Franks why taking Baghdad had been so easy-why Saddam hadn't staged a fighting retreat from the Kuwaiti border, blowing bridges and torching oil fields as his forces pulled back into Baghdad; why he hadn't made the fortified last stand that they'd so feared; why the Iraqis hadn't used weapons of mass destruction.

"We had, by way of intelligence, a pretty good sense of where all the enemy's formations are," he replied. "We certainly don't know where all the little people are, but we do know where all the big equipment is. So if you have a sense of where that is, and where the enemy happens to be sitting, if you like where they're sitting, then you simply plan to aggregate smaller, friendly forces at specific points against the enemy. And you want to do that in a way that takes you to the heart of it. And that is the business of decision cycles, or inside the decision loop, as people say. If you figure out that an enemy has a certain number of trucks with which he can move his heavy equipment a certain number of miles at a certain rate, and you figure out that you can get inside his ability to react, and if, in fact, you can deceive him with respect to what you are going to do, to cause him further confusion and make him keep his force in place one day too long, then, in fact, you find yourself all the way to Baghdad."

The three-week war had been an overmatch of historic proportions-the very "cakewalk" that Administration hawks had predicted. There had been remarkably light casualties-fewer than a hundred and fifty American deaths during the combat phase-and the Iraqi oil fields and most of the country's heavy infrastructure had been saved.

From a war-fighting perspective, Franks believes that the war in Iraq, taken together with the war in Afghanistan, validates Rumsfeld's ideas about the transformation of the American military. As combatant commander, Franks relied heavily upon Special Forces, using them essentially to replace an entire division in the west of Iraq and in the north, where the coalition had to fight without the 4th Infantry Division. When the 173rd Airborne Brigade was dropped into the north at the end of the first week of the war, it was put under the command of the Special Forces-a rarity, if not a

THE NEW WAR MACHINE;How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

first, for conventional forces. "That's kind of like a Navy seal being in charge of a carrier battle group," General Keane says.

"I think there are some lessons that are enduring," Franks says. "We certainly have become believers in precision. We're certainly believers in unmanned aerial systems. What I think this confirmed for all of us is the value of training in the joint, combined, and interagency world. That is transformational. If you ask yourself, 'What are the real takeaways from this that are transformational? Where do we want to go in the future,' that "-joint fighting-"is probably the largest lesson of all." Franks also believes that the war should teach the Army a lesson about "flattening" its "command-and-control organizations"-an argument for allowing more initiative to officers in the field, which is one of the fundamental tenets of the military reformers.

The Rumsfeld way of war, it seemed, had been wholly validated. Rumsfeld himself suggested as much when he took a victory tour of the war zone at the end of April, telling the command staff and troops in Qatar, "From this experience, our experience in Afghanistan as well, we're learning lessons that will affect how the United States of America, how the Department of Defense and the services, will organize, will train, and will equip, lessons that will impact budgets and procedures, training and doctrine, and affect the future success of our country for many years to come."

Triumphant, Rumsfeld now had the chance to make a clean sweep of the Army's top leadership. He forced the resignation of Army Secretary Thomas E. White, who had been a close ally of General Shinseki. Shinseki's own term as Chief of Staff ended this month. Rumsfeld chose as their replacements men who will very likely embrace his vision and accelerate his transformation. As Army Chief of Staff, Rumsfeld recommended retired General Peter J. Schoomaker, who is the former head of the Special Operations Command. (Keane, the heir apparent, declined the position for personal reasons.) Rumsfeld's choice for the new Army Secretary is someone from outside the Army altogether: James G. Roche, a former Navy officer who is currently the Secretary of the Air Force. No one in the Army will mistake the message in these appointments. General Abizaid, the Army's highest-ranking Arab-American and a favorite of Rumsfeld, has been nominated to succeed Franks at centcom.

The Iraq campaign proved that Rumsfeld is already very close to having the military that he wants-one that can move quickly and with devastating effect. That utility is inherently emboldening, as the rest of the world has noted to its dismay, and is perfectly suited to the Bush doctrine of preemptive military action when and where America perceives a potential threat. But the Iraq campaign also points up a paradox of the new way of war. A smaller, faster, more lethal American military may be designed to achieve quick victories over foes who are unable, or unwilling, to contest it conventionally, but the aftermath of such wars, as Rumsfeld understated it, can be most "untidy." Seven weeks after President Bush declared the end of major combat operations, the American military is conducting new combat operations, in the form of major sweeps north of Baghdad, hoping to eliminate the sources of the persistent, and dangerous, resistance to the American presence in Iraq.

The argument over the proper force size continues, in a wholly different context: whether or not the postwar planning had been carefully thought through. To many, the answer is clearly no, as evidenced by developments in Iraq since the fall of Baghdad. The Old Army was wrong, and the Rumsfeld hawks were right, about what it would take to defeat Saddam militarily-Iraq's forces had been seriously degraded by a decade of near-war (the no-fly-zone enforcement) and sanctions, and what remained melted away in the face of a cleverly designed war plan. But General Shinseki was exactly right when he testified in February that maintaining peace in Iraq would require more troops than Rumsfeld thought; it would require a force numbering "several hundred thousand." It was an inconvenient assertion, coming as it did on the eve of war, and it earned the repudiation of Vice-President Dick Cheney, of Rumsfeld (who said Shinseki was "far off the mark"), and of Paul Wolfowitz (who testified that Shinseki's estimates were "outlandish"). But Shinseki's projections were based on the cold arithmetic of experience. He himself had commanded the peacekeeping force in Bosnia, and, as Army Chief, he knew precisely how many American soldiers had been required to keep the peace in Kosovo. If Bosnia, with a population of four million, required sixty thousand peacekeepers, and Kosovo, with a prewar population of two million people, required a force of fifty thousand peacekeepers, then Iraq, with its

THE NEW WAR MACHINE;How General Tommy Franks joined Donald Rumsfeld in the fight to transform the military. The New Yorker June 30, 2003

population of twenty-four million, might well need the "several hundred thousand" troops that Shinseki predicted.

Franks himself believes that, depending upon events, the occupation of Iraq may indeed require the full quota of those forces put into the deployment pipeline-more than two hundred thousand troops. "If the fractious behavior subsides, and the Iraqis form all the city councils that are necessary in the twenty-seven highest population centers in the eighteen provinces, and things go very, very well, I think that force level can come down rather dramatically, rather quickly," he said. "The other bookend is the opposite of that, and that force level-which I do not see being enhanced-would remain for a longer period of time."

As for the larger geopolitical questions raised by the war-the unease it created in many of our allies, its as yet unresolved story line regarding weapons of mass destruction, its ultimate efficacy in the war on terror-these are questions for which the Bush Administration and Donald Rumsfeld are accountable, not the general who took Baghdad. For Franks, such matters can be considered from a remove. His partnership with Rumsfeld was a long and not entirely pleasant journey. Franks knew that Rumsfeld had offended the Army, and that many, if not most, of his peers believed that Franks should have pushed back harder, or even quit. Franks says that he came to his own peace with Rumsfeld. "As it turns out, I happen to not only respect him-I like him," he says. "Some people don't. I do." When Rumsfeld visited centcom headquarters in Qatar during his victory tour, one officer asked, "What was the hardest leadership decision that you had to make in the beginning of this campaign?" "Well, I'll tell you," Rumsfeld answered. "The best decision I made was asking General Tommy Franks."

During his tour of the war zone, Rumsfeld offered the Army's top job to Franks. It was, for Franks, a chance to become a truly pivotal military figure, presiding over, and perhaps moderating, his beloved institution's remaking. Franks, who once said, "I don't do politics," has maneuvered quite ably through the tricky politics of the terror wars. He saved his own job, found accommodation with Rumsfeld, and won two wars on the battlefield. And then, in his response to Rumsfeld's offer, he managed to avoid the messy aftermath of the war, both in Iraq and in the Pentagon. When I asked him whether he would be going to Washington, he seemed to be suppressing a laugh. He said, "I'm going to go-I'm going to go hunt quail."

**LOAD-DATE:** June 30, 2003

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

Copyright 2003 The Conde Nast Publications, Inc.