

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: DEC 19 2014

MEMO TO: Secretary Rumsfeld

DATE: January 24, 2002

FROM: Paul Wolfowitz *Paul W.*
SUBJECT: Special Military Planning

Don,
10 U.S.C. § 1306

Attached are three fascinating papers that bear on the planning that General Franks is currently doing:

1. A table that my Senior Military Assistant, Brigadier General John Batiste, prepared early last year when he was still in J8 contrasting Iraqi capabilities now with Iraqi capabilities in Desert Storm, along with the contrasting increase in U.S. capabilities over the same time period (Tab A);
2. A very private note to me from General John Abizaid, along with an article he wrote about his experience commanding an airborne battalion in 1991 in OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT. His battalion, along with a few other battalions of light infantry, succeeded in helping the Kurds evict the Iraqi Army from the northern third of the country, essentially without a shot being fired – but of course, with the enormous credibility of U.S. airpower backing them up (Tab B);
3. Perhaps most interesting of all, and most sensitive, [redacted] report on his conversations with General Franks and the current state of CENTCOM planning on Iraq. It is fairly encouraging about the state of Tom Franks' thinking, but a little less so about the thinking of his staff (Tab C).

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, FSD, WHS
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MDR: 14 M-1227A 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6)

PLEASE BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL NOT TO SHOW EITHER OF THE LAST TWO DOCUMENTS TO ANYONE ELSE. THEY ARE VERY SENSITIVE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL AUTHORS.

As soon as you've had a chance to read these, I would like to talk to you about their implications.

OSD
5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(3) : 10 U.S.C. § 1306
5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6)

CENTCOM
5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(3) : 10 U.S.C. § 1306
5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6)

14-M-1227-A1
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17-M-0208
11-M-2581

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INFORMATION PAPER
 US MILITARY CAPABILITY TO FIGHT AND WIN IN SWA

(U) There is an assertion that US forces cannot "do" another DESERT STORM. In the past nine years, numerous changes have ensued in the US military. In fact, the past decade of transformation has molded the force in new directions, in response to the changing world environment. The force structure used to fight one Major Theater War (MTW) like DESERT STORM has also changed considerably to accommodate improvements in weapons and upgrades to current systems. It logically follows that changes to operational art and tactics have also been altered as these new capabilities have been fielded. Clearly, pressures on the force continue, but *our basic ability to conduct a successful MTW in Southwest Asia has not diminished* this decade. In fact, it has improved.

SCENARIO CHANGES	THEN	NOW
SITUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immense uncertainty due to fall of the Berlin Wall and new US role as only global superpower • Iraq had <u>element of surprise</u>... US had no foothold in Kuwait/Saudi • Iraq economically and militarily powerful...<u>regionally dominant</u> • Casualty predictions from study <i>Burnt Camel I & II</i> were 28% of US troops in Halt phase, 18% in counter attack 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustained period of recognized US superiority and leadership • US fully engaged in SWA...JTF SWA, ONW and CJTF/Kuwait (FWD) • Iraq severely weakened by 9 years of economic, political, military and financial pressures • Casualty predictions are 15% of personnel, 8% of systems (greater with chemical, halt phase mod to high risk)
THREAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iraq had most experienced combat force in the world...1.2 million • Iraq had 69 divisions (12 Heavy) • 669 combat aircraft • 5800 tanks • 3850 artillery • 5100 APCs <p><u>Conclusion:</u> <i>Substantial threat...combat capable</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iraqi armed forces significantly smaller with 350,000 military • Iraq has 23 divisions (33%) (10 Heavy), radically less capable • 260 functioning aircraft (39%) ...lethality questionable • 2588 tanks (45%) • 2694 artillery (70%) • 1780 APCs (35%) <p><i>Threat reduced...more realistic view of Iraqi capabilities</i></p>
FRIENDLY (includes all services)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 Divisions (6 Heavy) • Few precision weapons... approximately 116 PGM aircraft, early (288)TLAMs, no JDAM, no JSOW, 35 CALCMs (in IOC during DS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Divisions (4 heavy) • <u>Majority of fighter aircraft PGM capable</u>...6000+ PGM avail... New weapons JDAM, JSOW ...tested in OSW...653 TLAMs, 231 CALCMs (current inventory, requirement over 300)

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<p>FRIENDLY (includes all services)</p> <p><u>Conclusion:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1338 Fixed wing, 518 rotary wing • Old systems: F-4 WW, F-111. One JSTARS (not at IOC) • Limited POMCIS • B-52s only bomber used • Unfamiliarity with SWA desert operations • M1A1 Tanks, M2/3 Bradley • Limited Ballistic Missile Defense • Federated, cumbersome, highly classified intelligence structure <p>Large, older force, starting period of transformation. <i>Strategy: Counter mass with mass</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1128 Fixed Wing, 432 rotary • New systems: F-15E's, F-16CJ, F-14D, 7 JSTARS operational • Substantial PREPO...AWRS managed by Army Material Cmd • B-2, B-1 and B-52 all available • Continued desert training...GPS, comms greatly improved • M1A2 tanks, Bradley ODS mod • Improved Patriot systems • Intel Transformation to improve access & speed to lower cmd echelons = working toward INFO DOMINANCE <p>More deadly force structure. <u>Numerous weapons improvements</u> <i>Strategy: Counter mass with greater lethality and Dominant Maneuver</i></p>
<p>WORSE CASE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circa 1990. No notice attack into Kuwait. Required approximately 6 months to build up, train for and execute our counter attack. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant posture of engagement stressing the force, major SSC(s) in effect prior to hostilities • Counter offensive begins C+120
<p>ANALYSIS / RESULTS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations in 1990: <u>substantial casualties</u> from sustained, hard fought combat--up to 28% • Limited advanced scenario modeling available for predicting outcomes • Results were significantly different than model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current <i>theater specific modeling</i> allows more precise planning for base plan and branches. • Analysis indicates we can <u>accomplish the same mission to Tallil faster</u>, and with <u>54% fewer casualties</u>

precision fires and maneuver

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CONCLUSION

(8) The United States does not intend to re-fight DESERT STORM. We have no desire to employ forces as we did nine years ago. Force modernization efforts and force transformation had to happen in the 1990s, and did at the expense of other important investments. In 1990-91 we moved approximately 550,000 troops and their equipment. Today, we will use about the same size force to stop Iraq, and push back to Tallil. (Enhanced Sep Bdes arrive later to push north of Tallil if necessary.) The Force changed over time. Evaluating the threat resulted in a more lethal force capable of promptly responding to the Iraqis. We can quickly deploy troops who are more lethal pound for pound than the force used to win DESERT STORM. By constantly evaluating improvements to our systems (and our allies) in relation to the threat, we continued to refine our conceptual framework for prosecuting war. There is no doubt we can prosecute a single MTW on the scale of DESERT STORM, and with superior effectiveness.

19 JAN. 2002

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORD

DEPSECDEF -
CLOSE HOLD -
DELIVERED BY

SUBJECT: USCENTCOM TRIP REPORT

1. **GENERAL.** In accordance with the guidance received, the undersigned met with General Franks, CINC, USCENTCOM, and key members of his staff and planning cell. The following paragraphs highlight important points raised in the discussions.
2. **DISCUSSION WITH GENERAL FRANKS.** General Franks together with the Deputy CINC, J2, executive officer and chief of strategic planning met with the undersigned at 1015 on 19 January. Originally scheduled for 45 minutes, the meeting last for nearly 90 minutes. After brief introductions, the meeting opened with a terrific 12 minute overview briefing by GEN Franks. GEN Franks concluded with the statement that he was exploring new ways to approach Iraq and asked for my opinion.
3. The following points were outlined in response: First, that whatever we undertook, it would have to involve actions that were not expected or anticipated. Second, that a small, robust and highly trained force should strike suddenly and without warning directly at Baghdad to induce a complete collapse of the Iraqi regime. Third, that surprise depended on a skillful manipulation of both American, as well as SWA perceptions. Fourth, that the US ground forces would have to be tightly integrated with US air forces.
4. **CINC RESPONSE.** GEN Franks listened and said the following: "Attack from a cold or standing start - I agree. Small and fast, I agree. Straight at Baghdad, I agree. Simultaneity or sequentially, simultaneous is probably better - I am not sure yet." He then asked "What size force are you suggesting?" I answered, "Initially, no larger than 35,000 troops with rapid reinforcement during the advance and occupation of Baghdad by 15,000 additional troops." GEN Franks then said: "You mean about two divisions." I responded, "Sir, no. On the ground in the first phase, 3 or 4 Armored Brigades, an Air Assault-Attack Aviation Task Force and a Marine Expeditionary Brigade." I pointed out that the marine and army air assault elements were critical to the sudden seizure of bridges, as well as the feint toward Basra that would reinforce the enemy's conviction that the southern approach would be the one taken by US forces. The J2 interrupted to add that I was right on this point. I then suggested that 4 reinforced Armored Brigades along with the elements of an Air Assault-Attack Aviation TF would have to be alerted and formed well in advance to ensure they arrived in a state of training that supported an attack from a standing start. I further asked whether it would not be possible to deploy the proposed Air Assault-Attack Aviation TF to Southern Oman for 3 months' training before the attack under the guise of preparing for operations in the horn of Africa? GEN Franks said that was doable. In addition, I suggested that the roughly 5-7,000 Army Support troops that

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5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(3): 10 U.S.C. § 1306

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5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(3): 10 U.S.C. § 1306

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5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6)

would be required to sustain the operation should be infiltrated into Kuwait slowly over a 90 day period prior to operations.

5. At this point, I outlined measures that should be taken quickly to achieve a state of readiness for the attack on or about 1 October. These measures included the following:

- Money should be released to provision the designated preposition sets of equipment in SWA with the required repair parts and supply stocks essential to the operation. This was based on conversation with the logistic planner, [REDACTED]
- Additional funds should be released to ensure that every ground platform in the operation is equipped with a Cobra Wave transmitter to provide a real-time picture of all ground platforms to all the strike assets. I noted that the army had purchased roughly [REDACTED] of these devices. The current satellite array can track as many as [REDACTED] in one theater with this technology. Satellite-based blueforce tracking integrates the real-time picture in less than 1.2 seconds with JSTARS. This eliminates wasteful and unnecessary reporting and liberates USAF and USN aircraft to attack anything that moved to the flanks or forward of the advancing columns. Contacts for this technology were provided to the planning cell.
- All US forces designated for participation in this operation should be told they are training for operations in the horn of Africa until the last possible moment. An operation involving air or missile strikes should be launched in the horn of Africa immediately before the operation in SWA begins in order to divert attention.
- If the Air Assault TF and Aviation Attack units were deployed three months in advance of the attack to Southern Oman where they could train, these forces could be deployed from the shore to platforms at sea like the Kitty Hawk. From there they could eventually deploy from the Gulf directly ashore to An Nasiryah.
- Anything that cannot maintain a pace of 30 - 35 MPH should be left south of the Euphrates. I suggested that this applied to the 155 mm self-propelled artillery that could be used to back-stop the marines facing Basra whose mission is to attract and divert the SWA enemy's attention. This also improves the fuel situation.
- Two basic loads of ammunition are enough. I said that I would be surprised if we got through one basic load. GEN Franks agreed.
- Finally, the forces arriving in Kuwait and Qatar falling in on pre-positioned sets of equipment would have to attack within [REDACTED] of arriving.

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OSD 1.4(a)(g)

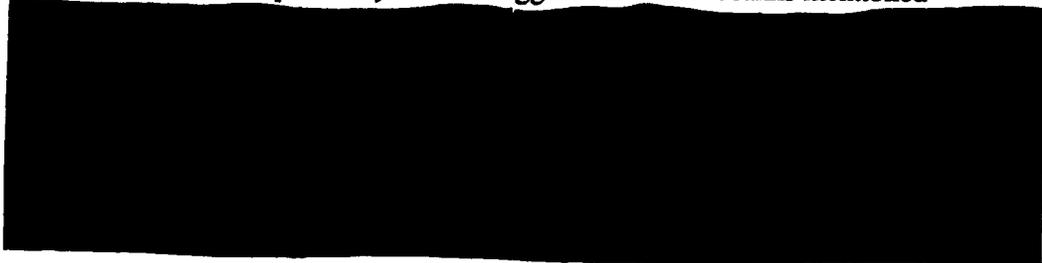
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6. GEN Franks reacted positively to these suggestions. GEN Franks mentioned



7. **CONCERNS.** Both during the meeting and in earlier sessions, GEN Franks' officers raised questions about the viability of the concept. Comments and responses are outlined below.

8. **COMMENT.**



Many continued to favor an air campaign and a larger build-up on the ground prior to the attack.

9. **RESPONSE.**



10. **COMMENT.** An intelligence officer argued that the timeframe (1 October) would be the time when the Iraqi force achieved its highest state of training readiness.

11. **RESPONSE.** Fall or winter weather guarantees that the water table will be low and that trafficability will not be a problem. This is important if we are compelled to cross at An Nasiryah where the far side is wet and marshy in the spring and summer rather than further up river at An Samwah. Second, the Republican Guard divisions' highest state of readiness was achieved in 1991 and if that was any indicator, this was the least of our concern. The intelligence officer agreed with this comment.

12. **COMMENT.** One senior officer said "You realize that by the time you reach Baghdad, the three best divisions will have deployed to defend against you astride your avenue of approach. That could be one hell of a battle."

13. **RESPONSE.** "Sir, I sincerely hope so. If they do, between the United States Air Force and our advancing armor, these divisions will be annihilated and this will make our subsequent job much easier. I expect at least 50% of the remaining SWA forces will not fight and that attempts by the rest will be inept and incapable."

14. **COMMENT.** Operations officers with **ENDURING FREEDOM** experience claimed that the USAF will refuse to cooperate in a surprise attack because the Air Force is wedded to a long air campaign against the integrated air defenses (IADS) first.
15. **RESPONSE.** "Brigadier General Dave Deptula and his staff will work with me on this." Initial air attacks can strike at IADs around Baghdad, [REDACTED] launchers in the north and Iraqi troop concentrations in the south. This works for the rapid offensive by confusing the enemy about where or what the main attack is.
16. **COMMENT.** Another operations officer asked "How will you provide enough fuel to keep the offensive rolling?"
17. **RESPONSE.** Commercial fuel trucks driven by Army soldiers in addition to Army fuel trucks can be taken on the attack. In addition, CH47s can fly forward fuel blivets (containers) to predetermined locations during the advance. This is the reason for organizing the 3 air assault battalions with 32 CH47s along with 50 AH64Ds and 73 UH60s.
18. **COMMENT.** An intelligence officer said "The bridges over the river will be rigged for demolition and you will never get across as soon as suggested. The Iraqi engineers are good." And, later, "What about the Arnhem experience that resulted in the destruction of the 1st British Airborne Division?"
19. **RESPONSE.** If we strike in the direction that was least expected as outlined and used the air assault forces with AH64ds to rapidly leapfrog ahead, we would get the crossing sites without building any bridges. And we have the firepower to seize and hold them. In contrast to Operation Market Garden, we are in relatively open country and one of several bridges over one river, rather than three bridges over three rivers will provide success. However, this is another reason why deception is so important.
20. **SUMMARY.** USCENTCOM has many fine officers, but more combat experienced available from all the services should be assembled to boost the planning effort and develop the concept and the plan for SECDEF approval very quickly. Specific questions about bridges, river hydrology, trafficability and the recommended avenues of approach must be thoroughly examined. This point notwithstanding, when outlined to Mr. Dan Coats, chief intelligence analyst on Iraq, and one of his analysts in private they said: "It is bold and risky. But that is exactly what we need to do. Nobody here is saying that."
21. The criticality of carefully selecting the individual officers charged with driving this offensive on the ground forward at high speed cannot be overstated. The leaders on the ground must be ruthless and unafraid. The spearheads must be led by confident commanders (preferably officers with combat experience against the enemy) that will not stop and will take whatever route promises forward movement to Baghdad. Lead

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ground elements must be integrated with Army aviation assets to ensure real situational awareness and responsiveness to changing or unanticipated circumstances.

22. In sum, this can all be done. The CINC believes in the potential efficacy of this approach, but he will need lots of support throughout the process. The SECDEF will have to side-line the ponderous Joint Staff co-ordination process in order to ensure the CINC can meet the following recommended timeline:
- ✓ **1 March.** Concept Briefing for NCA approval. Assuming approval, assessment teams to evaluate PREPO requirements dispatched to SWA. Money released for Grenadier Brat (Cobra Wave) transmitters and equipment.
 - ✓ **15 March.** Force list and organization identified and directives issued under the guise of on-going operations in the horn of Africa.
 - ✓ **1 April.** Operational Plan Brief for NCA information and approval.
 - ✓ **1 June:** Up-date on status of logistical and equipment issues.
 - ✓ **1 July:** Infiltration of enabling elements to Kuwait and Qatar begins. Air Assault/Aviation TF deploys to Oman.
 - ✓ **1 September:** Training readiness for reinforced armored brigades to include special operations teams inside the brigades is reviewed and assessed. Ground commanders and brigade battlegroup Commanders personally brief CINC and SECDEF on their state of training.
 - ✓ **15 September:** Final approval given and specific time and date set for execution.
 - ✓ **30 September:** Troop elements are told when and where they will attack.
 - ✓ **Post 31 September:** Operation *SECURE FREEDOM* is launched within 48 hours of the arrival of the armored brigade battlegroups in Kuwait.
23. 1 October may seem distant, but Army battlegroups are not organized in peacetime for the way they will deploy and fight. GEN Franks acknowledged that the structure of readiness and training in the army necessitated this because Army units are not maintained in a deployable posture on a routine or rotational basis. Units are not up to strength and they are not cohesive. Soldier and equipment assets from at least four divisions will be needed to field the ready, deployable force outlined in the concept. This will take time. However, the intervening time presents an opportunity to lull the enemy into a false sense of confidence.
24. Strongly recommend that consideration be given to the temporary assignment of the following key individuals to the USCENCOM planning cell.
- MG John Sylvester (currently Chief of Staff, TRADOC) should be considered inclusion in the operational planning process, as well as command of the ground operation.
 - BG Jim Warner (currently Assistant Division Commander, 82nd Airborne Division) should be included in the operational planning process and be considered for command of the air assault TF.

- BG Dave Deptula, USAF, should be brought in to assist with the planning process immediately.
- [REDACTED] now at Maxwell and recently returned from the Air Operations Center in Riyadh should be brought in as soon as possible to help plan and execute this operation.
- [REDACTED] US Army, currently at USSTRANSCOM, should be brought in immediately to assist with logistical planning.
- [REDACTED] theater missile defense analyst, DCSOPS, Department of the Army Staff, should be brought in to advise on WMD defense.
- Hopefully, given my experience during 1991, I could play a role in this process as well.



CENTCOM

5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(3); 10 U.S.C. § 1306

5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(6)

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5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(6)

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5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(3); 10 U.S.C. § 1306

5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6)

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 IAW EO 13526, Section 3.5
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DSD —

Mr. Secretary:

Personal For, please do not provide to anyone else. 4/1

Sir:

Attached is an article I wrote after returning from Provide Comfort. You asked for some observations about the Iraqi Military from that time period (1991). Here are some very general comments, if you'd like me to elaborate further just give me a call.

Regular Army

Poorly led, motivated by fear, under supplied, ill-informed and much abused.

Officers rarely present, command system overly centralized, timely decision making non-existent.

Officer corps fears the Republican Guard, wary of the secret police and other "spies" and absolutely terrified of what Saddam Hussein could do to them and their families. (Whenever I mentioned SH's name to Iraqi officers they would react with either physical fear or exaggerated praise.)

Troops and Officers alike were extremely fearful of American firepower, especially air power.

Ability for offensive maneuver and combined arms coordination extremely limited.

Ability for defensive positioning, fortification and coordination of defensive indirect fires better than most Arab armies. Counter attack ability low to non-existent.

Regular Army best used for World War I static defensive fighting least suited for modern maneuver warfare.

Republican Guard Units

Quality considerably better than regular army but still unable to maneuver.

Will stand and fight, have more small unit initiative but are still hampered by overly centralized command and control systems.

Presence of RG units "stiffens" the resolve of regular forces.

Officers brutal, ruthless and empowered to do whatever necessary to protect the regime.

Officers can be corrupted, especially if they know Saddam will not be around at war's end.

These observations suggest:

Achieve surprise—don't let them dig in.

Destroy command, control, information and regime leadership targets first.

Take out Saddam and the leadership early...the Army only fights out of fear of him not for him.

Present the Iraqis with multiple, simultaneous military activity on land, sea and airthink Panama not Desert Storm.

Provide a viable, broad based opposition around which the country rally.

Hope this helps, sorry not to have had time to put more thought into this.

Regards and Happy New Year

V/r



CENTCOM

5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(3) : 10 U.S.C. § 1306

5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(6)

The began a training program to introduce our paratroopers to the requirements of building and maintaining checkpoints that would be required to control movement into and out of the main enemy forming security zone. We then developed a rudimentary checkpoint drill that was exercised on the athletic field at our small base in Halq.

Drills to extract troops from mined areas [were devised] and rehearsed. . . . The combat engineer platoon worked overtime to perfect their marking, breaching and mine identification skills. Despite these efforts . . . one of our soldiers was killed and four others seriously wounded as a result of operating in areas that were heavily mined and which could not be bypassed. Had we not emphasized countermeasures preceding before deployment, our casualties would have probably been greater.

challenges of peacekeeping. During our four months in northern Iraq, we maneuvered against Iraqi military units and survived over 120 kilometers from our base in southern Turkey. We learned checkpoints and observation posts, ran extensive patrols, maintained the security of large towns and strategically diverse areas and kept order between various warring Kurdish militia groups. Before deployment, we had the luxury of time to think about our mission. Once deployed, we found ourselves in a dynamic "war" of maneuver where no jobs were exchanged. Later, operators settled down into a stark "war of checkpoints" where we controlled a sector over 35 kilometers wide and 40 kilometers deep. Our preparations for and operations in both the dynamic and static roles of a peacekeeping force are presented here in the hope that our future peacekeepers begin to think about this challenging, demanding and dangerous type of mission before they deploy.

Preparing for Deployment

Because there was nearly a week between our wanting to move and our actual order to move, we had time to make some preparations in Vicksburg, Miss. During this period we developed checkpoint drills, conducted countermeasures training, redistributed organic transportation assets and procured additional equipment.

After analyzing our likely mission in Iraq, we began a training program to introduce our paratroopers to the requirements of building and maintaining checkpoints that would be required to control movement into and out of the main enemy forming security zone. We developed a rudimentary checkpoint drill that was exercised on the athletic field at our small base in Halq. We stressed maintaining the number of soldiers who needed to be exposed at the checkpoints, proper search techniques for personnel and vehicles, the overwhelming of avenues of approach and the absolute need to fortify the position and plan for its reinforcement as if it were the key to a major point of defense.

Because of the Gulf War, our focus had been extremely directed toward close combat. Recently, Kurdistan required a major shift in mentality. Soldiers had to clearly understand the rules of engagement and the level of discipline necessary to keep order under the most provocative circumstances. Leaders at the platoon and squad levels had to change their mind-set from that of clearing with and destroying the enemy to that of accomplishing the mission without resorting to force. Wagoning responses to logical peacekeeping contingencies and ensuring that squad and platoon leaders understood that they would have many tough decisions to make did much to prepare the command for the important, sensitive work ahead.

Before we deployed, we learned that Special Forces troops operating in and around the mountain refuge camps had encountered a large number of mines and had taken casualties from them. We began a mine education program, devised drills to extract troops from mined



A column of paratroopers moving through a heavily mined area. The terrain was extremely dynamic, field situations which required constant offensive maneuvering to enter the Iraqi zone as an expanding security zone.

Some of our preparations had focused on maintaining checkpoints and static defensive posts. Instead, the battalion found itself involved in an extremely dynamic, fluid situation which required constant offensive maneuvering to enter the Iraqi zone as an expanding security zone. *Some of our preparations had focused on maintaining checkpoints and static defensive posts. Instead, the battalion found itself involved in an extremely dynamic, fluid situation which required constant offensive maneuvering to enter the Iraqi zone as an expanding security zone.*

Sometimes Iraqi positions could be bypassed but often they could not. . . . If we could find an Iraqi officer, which was not always an easy task, we would demand that he withdraw. In most instances, the threat of force was enough, but on those rare instances where the Iraqis dug in their heels, a company would stay in contact while the main force bypassed. Once bypassed, it was only a matter of time before the Iraqis withdrew.

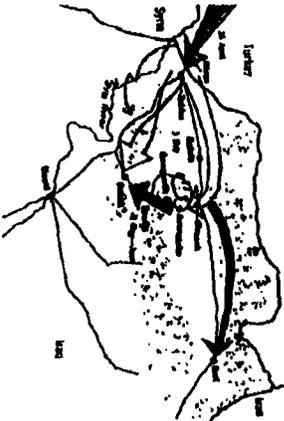
areas and rehearsed them. The combat engineer platoon worked overtime to perfect their marking, breaching and mine identification skills. Despite these efforts, mines were our greatest danger in Iraq. Indeed, one of our soldiers was killed and four others seriously wounded as a result of operating in areas that were heavily mined and which could not be bypassed. Had we not emphasized countermeasures training before deployment, our casualties would have probably been greater. Mines in northern Iraq were generally antipersonnel, plastic, buried and very difficult to detect. They were more often located at obvious defensive sites but they were also frequently found in areas that defied any military logic. Marking thousands of mined areas became one of our least favorite activities in Kurdistan.

Another concern was one of tactical mobility. Unlike most light infantry units, the paratroopers had over 150 vehicles. Since the area of operations was large, extremely rugged and very isolated and because allied aircraft were tied up delivering relief supplies, there could be no relying on someone else to move us around. We

decided to reauthorize our vehicles to make one infantry company completely mobile through high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicles

Our equipment included SLUGGER surveillance devices that proved extremely valuable for our scout and patrol, as the majority of the scout operations were not completely accurate. Laser rangefinders were also delivered and, when used in conjunction with the SLUGGER, provided a near perfect ability to fix and target any location.

(18AW(VVA). Although we had no exact vehicle, a careful assessment revealed which of our combat platoon could afford to "convert" to our "recon" company. Normal carriers were quickly converted into scout carriers, and because the conversion was not readily available, the battalion's mechanics locally fabricated a reasonable fix. With careful allocation of our 2 1/2- and 5-ton truck assets, the battalion was capable of moving the entire combat load of 1,100 men organization with organic transportation. This internal reorganization gave us great tactical flexibility in a theater where general supporting units were in short supply. Because initial lift assets into the theater were limited, our heavy engineers were unable to



deploy with their bulldozers, road graders and other heavy equipment. Instead, we opted to draw those of the much lighter small engineer excavators (SEEs) from westside. Indeed, the SEEs proved extremely versatile, useful and, while exposed, large engineer equipment did some work, the SEEs contained our most expensive and useful tool for building and improving the numerous fortifications necessary in rugged Kashmir.

Other equipment located in the Persian Gulf area was sent to Vietnam before departure for Iraq. These included SLUGGER night-vision devices that proved extremely valuable for our scout and patrol, as the maps of the area of operations were not completely accurate. Laser rangefinders were also delivered and, when used in conjunction with the SLUGGER, provided a near perfect ability to fix and target any location. Additional squad automatic weapons and M60 machineguns were distributed to our rifle-battalion, optically tracked, were guided (TOW) missile platoon in order to give them greater protection against light infantry or guerrilla. But because long armor was within striking distance, the TOW's had to remain on the carrier. While the dual mounting of automatic weapons and the TOW was suboptimal, there was no reasonable alternative to meet the varied threat.

Operational Lessons

A reconnaissance mission is often viewed as being essentially static. This probably stems from the perspective of UN troops holding the line somewhere in Lebanon, Cyprus or the Golan or from our own Army's experience with the Marine Corps and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai. Indeed, most of our preparations had focused the command on waiting checkpoints and static defensive posts. Instead, the battalion found itself involved in an extremely dynamic, fluid situation which required constant offensive maneuver to evade the Iraqi from an expanding security zone. Only after a month of constant movement to the south and east did operators assume the more familiar shape of static reconnaissance.

Setting an Iraq trap, which turned out to contain several hundred rounds of enemy ammunition.



Communicating the commander's intent, so vital in combat, proved just as vital in recon. Understanding the limits of just how much pressure could or could not be applied on the enemy was essential. Conducting offensive operations without resorting to force was a great challenge at every level of command.

During much of the dynamic phase of Private Company, the battalion operated under the operational control of 3 Commando (Royal Marine) Brigade (CDB), United Kingdom (UK), which then had one Royal Marine battalion and one Dutch Marine battalion. On 1 May, the brigade received the mission to expand the security zone eastward and southward and to clear or isolate all Iraqi units (then believed to be about brigade strength) in the sector. At that time, the battalion was under the operational control (OPCON) of the 24 Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) occupying positions in and around the initial entry point into Iraq. At 1400, the battalion was placed under operational control of 3 CDB, relieved in place at night by units from 24 MEU and began what was essentially a 120-kilometer movement to conduct in a driving rain-storm at 0300 hours the next morning. Even the most subtle planter at one of our training centers would have released from dreaming up that scenario. Operating under intense time constraints, in adverse weather, at night and in a hostile environment is not a problem peculiar to units in an active combat theater.

The battalion moved with scouts well forward, infantry mounted on trucks and plenty of air cover. Rules of engagement were realistic and gave commanders great flexibility in taking actions necessary to protect their troops. This did not mean, however, that we could retreat, and it was also clear from the commander of 3 CDB that we were not to seek contact but force the enemy out of the sector through our threat of action. Sometimes Iraqi positions could be bypassed but often they could not. In most of our recurring engagements, we took the following actions: we kept air cover circling above or near the Iraqi position, deployed infantry into defensive positions well within view of the enemy and immediately began digging in, brought up TOW carriers to overwatch the position and reinforcement routes and began to maneuver elements around the flanks of the position, out of range of small arms but in view of the enemy. If we could find an Iraqi officer, which was not always an easy task, we would demand that he withdraw. In most instances, the threat of force was enough, but on those rare instances where the Iraqi dug in their heels, a company would say in contact while the main force bypassed. Once bypassed, it was only a matter of time before the Iraqi withdrew.

Maneuvers such as those required company commanders and platoon leaders to solve while maintaining tight control. Keeping young soldiers and young leaders calm in such situations was absolutely essential, as a single mistake could cause the confirmation to quickly escalate. Communicating the commander's intent, so vital in combat, proved just as vital in

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Despite these problems, the well-known requirements for preparing and synchronizing the attack still had to be applied, and while the power of medical (TAC) air, artillery and mortars could not be used to prepare targets, it was still to be ready for immediate use in case things degenerated into a fight. Since friendly troops would then be extremely close to any supporting fires, communication adopted the motto of the Roman legions: when you sleep, loudly. Though the troops grew extremely weary of digging in at every halt where they confronted the Iraqis, the fact that we were planning on staying and were serious about using force, if necessary, was never lost on the local Iraqi commanders, many of whom had the unhappy experience of meeting American troops in the south.

Another offensive form of maneuver became known as the flying checkpoint. Mobile units, usually consisting of mounted infantry, combat engineers and TOW vehicles, would move forward to key intersections in areas where armed Iraqi or guerrilla fighters were known to operate and would set up a heavy roadblock in order to disrupt unauthorized or unwanted military activity. This mission always included destroying soldiers to detain and search enemies, a stable element to overwatch the heavy checkpoint, air cover on station, mobile mortar support and a quick reinforcement force of TOW and infantry carriers that could engage the flying checkpoint force from trouble or reinforce it. This technique proved extremely valuable in controlling the very large sectors assigned to the battalion.

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Like on the checkpoints was never boring. Consider the poor platoon leader who faces such situations as: ... an Iraqi nuclear scientist wants to defect ... Kurdish guerrillas want to pass through to attack the Iraqis ... Iraqi "civil authorities" are demanding passage to arrest a local Kurd leader ... armed Kurds are demanding that we capture "sudan" cards from local "agents" as they pass through ... a mother brings in a dying child ... several thousand rounds of ammo is discovered in a secret compartment of a car ... a guerrilla engages between two armed Kurdish groups ... the press wants a story and wants the dead to pass into Iraqi-held territory—the fact that we were virtually endless. The pressure on junior leaders to make the right decisions was



There was absolutely no substitute for our own local intelligence apparatus. While information flowing from the CTF and JTF concerning Iraqi positions and intentions was accurate, no one knew our sector better than we did. Once Iraqi army units had been pushed out of the area, the Kurds returned and their villages came back to life. The intelligence problem quickly shifted from one of concern about the Iraqi order of battle to that of knowing the various civics, guerrillas and religious leaders in our sector.

enormous, and there was a great impetus to put all checkpoints under centralized battalion control. We found, however, that there was no substitute for the chain of command. This confidence in junior leaders paid off time and time again; mistakes were made, but we learned from them and developed some very savvy, capable peackeepers.

The checkpoints were often the scene of violence or the threat of it. It was essential to have reinforcement and counterattack plans made and rehearsed. Time standards and various levels of alert were specified. Checkpoint commanders could call for illumination from company or battalion mortars or from our organic artillery battery and alert reaction forces in order

to break up difficult situations. During particularly dangerous night situations, we called for Apache support and found that the end of the area often coincided with the arrival of the attack helicopters. There was no doubt that aircraft circling in the vicinity of our positions during tense moments had a sobering effect on potential adversaries.

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came back to life. The intelligence problem quickly shifted from one of concern about the Iraqi order of battle to that of knowing the various chieftains and religious leaders in our sector. Needless to say, the local Kurdish political language was so complex that it would have been impossible to keep the peace in our sector without their cooperation. Local intelligence gathering became a mission-essential task for every member of the battalion and once we understood the local forces at work, we were able to gain much better control of our sector.

Of course, there are always less tangible lessons that peacekeeping learn. One is the absolute deterrent effect of soldiers being well drilled, organized, in complete battle gear and fully alert. At one point, when the utterly bedeviled, unhelpful Iraqi army units withdrew through one of our checkpoints, a newsman remarked that you only needed to look at two soldiers from the two nations in order to predict the outcome of battle between them. Another intangible lesson was the deterrent effect gained

from constant training. Iraqi and Kurdish commanders frequently overestimated our strength because of the constant training and operational activity within our sector. Finally there was tremendous good will derived from the friendly nature and excellent behavior of American soldiers. Kurdish and Iraqi civilians long brutalized by the army of Saddam Hussein, no doubt were shocked to learn that armies and soldiers could be used for the common good.

In a speech before the UN on 21 September 1992, then President George Bush directed that the secretary of defense "place a new emphasis on peacekeeping" and while his remarks did not commit the United States to any impending peacekeeping operation abroad, it is clear that our Army may face the challenges of a future Operation Provide Comfort sooner than many suspect. The lessons presented above are obviously technical and oriented to military professionals who will either have to lead peacekeeping forces or serve with them. The greater questions of American versus UN command and control,

specific versus open-ended commitment and complex, highly sensitive versus flexible rules of engagement are left for others to explore. Suffice it to say that Provide Comfort's American command and control, limited objective and flexible rules of engagement proved highly successful.

On the less grand scale of concern there are obvious preparations we can make now to better prepare the Army for the practical concerns of peacekeeping.

First, we need to understand that peacekeeping is dangerous, stressful duty that requires highly disciplined, well educated soldiers who understand the nature of the peacekeeping base. This requires updating the doctrinal literature and getting it out to the field and the study of peacekeeping "campaigns" in our schools. There are many lessons to be derived from Provide Comfort, Opyn, the Congo and Lebanon.

We can also increase our understanding by establishing peacekeeping missions at the beginning or end of training center exercises. Letting a conflict describe into peacekeeping or allowing it to escalate from peacekeeping to LIC would allow units to focus on combat skills and peacekeeping. Indeed, we must never lose sight of the fact that every unit assigned peacekeeping duties must be able to fight. Well-trained combat units will always make the more effective peacekeepers. But even that said, there is nothing to keep us from giving our leaders tougher rules of engagement and challenging them with realistic, ambiguous situations in training when decisions have to be made about the use of force. We can simulate and develop skills for small-unit leaders that tell them how to man, build and fight a typical static or flying checkpoint commonly found on nearly every peacekeeper's "battlefield." Along these same lines, increasing unprepared, unmeted training and awareness will do much to save lives.

PEACEKEEPING

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We should insist that US forces heading for peacekeeping duties have adequate tactical mobility to operate in the large, often remote sectors that so often characterize such areas. This requires that we recognize the often dynamic nature that peacekeeping operations can assume. Once committed in a dynamic peacekeeping situation, our forces must have the tools to fight and win. Tactical mobility and the flexibility to fight, even if only in self-defense, should never be sacrificed.

Any American force committed to peacekeeping must keep in mind the Marine barracks bombing in Lebanon. Force protection becomes extremely important and should never take second place to troop comfort or convenience. Rules of engagement must be clear and make provisions for self-defense. We should never allow our peacekeepers to deploy with a business as "peacekeeping" expectation.

Finally, we must recognize that peacekeeping is no job for amateurs. Now is the time to more fully explore the problems of peacekeeping. As we get ready to fight the next war, let us also keep thinking about how we might have to keep the peace in some far-off corner of the world. More than anything else, competent, well-trained and flexible soldiers and units can meet that challenge. **RRF**

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