STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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DESERT STORM: A MODEL FOR MODERN CAMPAIGN PLANNING

BY

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ABSTRACT

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A campaign plan translates strategic guidance into operational guidance. The campaign plan is the combatant commander's vision of prosecuting the war from deterrence and build up through a series of military operations to a well-defined conclusion that attains the strategic objective. Examination of the Operation Desert Storm Campaign plan reveals a highly developed, simple, and executable concept. The Persian Gulf War was one of the greatest and quickest victories in history. However, critical analysis of this campaign exposes errors for strategic leaders to guard against in conducting future combined warfare with nations or organizations with extremist leadership. Combatant commanders must be versed in conducting post conflict negotiations and lay the foundation for political change within an opposing force.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT III

DESERT STORM: A MODEL FOR MODERN CAMPAIGN PLANNING 1

CONFLICT AND CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND 2

CAMPAIGN EXECUTION 8

CAMPAIGN EVALUATION 11

STRATEGIC LESSONS AND DOCTRINAL IMPLICATIONS 14

SUMMARY 18

ENDNOTES 21

BIBLIOGRAPHY 23

DESERT STORM:
A
MODEL FOR MODERN CAMPAIGN PLANNING

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait set in motion the first major post-Cold War conflict for United States (U.S.) military forces. The campaign strategy used in the 1991 Persian Gulf War has had a lasting influence on Joint employment and doctrine. The campaign plan is the combatant commander's vision of prosecuting the war to ultimately attain the strategic objectives. The plan should span a series of military operations from deterrence and build up through post war negotiations and transition to an exit strategy. Examination of the Operation Desert Storm Campaign Plan reveals a highly developed, simple and executable concept. This paper will demonstrate how the campaign strategy exploited our technological advantage over Iraq and led to one of the quickest military victories in history. Further analysis will indicate that the military had unprecedented success at the operational level of war but fell short in meeting the political objective of ensuring regional stability and security. The critical examination of this campaign exposes errors for strategic leaders to guard against in the future when conducting joint and combined warfare.

The conflict and campaign background section of this paper provides a thorough description of the events leading up to the Persian Gulf War and the factors that formed the development of the campaign strategy. The description of the campaign execution looks at force employment, service utilization, target sets, and the key technological advances that led to the success. In the campaign plan evaluation section the nine principles of war are used as a framework to analyze the attainment of the Desert Storm strategy. The strategic lessons and doctrinal implications section summarizes how the Desert Storm campaign plan lacked clear guidance in accomplishing the transition phase to ensure the political objectives of stability and security were met in the post hostility environment.

CONFLICT AND CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND

On 2 August 1990 Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait setting off the chain of events culminating in the Persian Gulf War. Iraq rationalized this act by claiming it intervened on behalf of local revolutionaries, who formed the Provisional Free Government of Kuwait.[1] However, Saddam Hussein was attempting to cancel a war debt. Iraq's long war with Iran left the country $80 billion in debt to western powers and to the wealthier Arab states of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Hussein had hoped to solve the debt by selling oil, but increased world oil production had driven prices down. In July 1990 Saddam publicly threatened military action if Kuwait did not reduce their production of oil to comply with quotas established by the Organization of Petroleum Producing Countries (OPEC). By 31 July Iraq backed this threat by massing approximately 100,000 troops on the border with Kuwait.

In the last century, border disputes between Iraq and Kuwait had not been uncommon. Following the defeat of the Central Powers in World War One, the Ottoman Empire disintegrated and resulted in the emergence of new Middle East kingdoms. These new kingdoms, created by European powers, resulted in several border disputes. Iraq never formally accepted their border with Kuwait. In 1970 Iraq began to dispute their border with Kuwait but backed down under international pressure. In August 1990, the U.S. thought Saddam was just saber rattling when he moved troops near the Kuwait border.[2]

In 1980 President Carter announced the Carter Doctrine. The doctrine declared that an attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region would be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault would be repelled by any means necessary, including military force. President George Bush was committed to supporting the U.S. doctrine towards the Middle East. President Bush's personal diplomacy and his long-standing relationships with other world leaders played a major role in forming and cementing the political unity of the coalition that defeated Iraq's aggression.[3] On

August 5 President Bush publicly condemned the Iraqi invasion and expressed disappointment at the reaction to Baghdad's aggression in the Arab world. He urged the Arab states to also condemn the hostility and expel the Iraqis from Kuwait. The 19 United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolutions became the foundation for building the coalition.

Among the UN mandates that shaped the campaign plan were Resolution 660, which condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as a violation of the UN Charter and demanded Iraqi withdrawal. UN Resolution 661 imposed mandatory sanctions and an embargo on Iraq for the unwelcome occupation of Kuwait while resolution 665 called for the enforcement of those sanctions. The political catalyst for the war was UN Resolution 678, which called on Iraq to implement all earlier resolutions before 15 January 1991; otherwise all necessary means would be used to restore international peace and security in the area.

The U.S. buildup was code-named Operation Desert Shield, to emphasize that it shielded Saudi Arabia from further attack. The initial strategy in the campaign plan involved deterrence through show of force. The military objectives during Desert Shield were to develop a defensive capability in the gulf region to deter Saddam Hussein, defend Saudi Arabia if deterrence failed, build a militarily effective coalition with integrated operational plans, and enforce the economic sanctions prescribed by UN resolutions 661 and 665.[4] This operation halted Iraq from taking any further territory and allowed for the military build up of coalition forces. On 6 August Saudi Arabia's King Fahd met with the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney and requested U.S. military assistance. In three weeks, the U.S. successfully deployed seven brigades, three carrier battle groups, 14 tactical fighter squadrons and a Patriot air defense missile umbrella 8,000 miles from the United States.[5]

Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff, guided Norman Schwartzkopf, the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) commander in the overall military buildup. As the Commander in Chief (CINC), General Schwartzkopf chose to organize the forces assigned to CENTCOM as service component commands. A unique command relationship was tested for

the first time during the Persian Gulf War. In addition to serving as Commander of the Air Force Component, Central Command (CENTAF), Lieutenant General Charles Horner was appointed by Schwartzkopf as the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC). The JFACC was responsible for all air missions to include the planning and design of the historic air strategy.

As the component commanders began their preparations, the primary national security concern in the Middle East was to protect the world's oil supply. The Persian Gulf accounts for more than half of known world oil reserves. By defeating Kuwait and subsequently Saudi Arabia, Saddam would have had access to the world's largest concentration of oil reserves. Left unchecked, this would have had serious worldwide repercussions by disrupting the world's oil supplies and the economic stability of virtually every industrialized nation. The seizure of Kuwait's financial resources would also have had a worldwide impact. Saddam would have used his new economic strength to increase his military technology and further develop his nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) weapons programs.[6]

President Bush's national policy objectives in the Persian Gulf were to force unconditional Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, restore Kuwait's legitimate government, protect American lives, and ensure regional stability and security.[7] From the President's objectives, the coalition planners derived the theater military objectives to: Attack Iraqi political-military leadership command and control, gain and maintain air supremacy, sever Iraqi supply lines, destroy NBC warfare production and delivery capabilities, destroy Republican Guard forces in the Kuwait Theater of Operations (KTO), and liberate Kuwait City.[8] The national political objectives were clear cut and militarily achievable. A principal difference between this war and Vietnam is the President established clear and concise political goals.

The national objectives were met by conducting a four-phase campaign. Phases I-III constituted the intensive use of airpower. The air staff organization known as Checkmate designed the air plan code-named Instant Thunder. Phase I was a simultaneous attack on the Iraqi national air-defense system and on the strategic targets it protected. Phase II focused on

air superiority and involved attacking Iraqi air defenses in the KTO. Phase III prepared the battlefield with a series of attacks on ground forces in the KTO. Phase IV was the ground offensive to liberate Kuwait, supported by air operations. A group of graduates from the Army School of Advanced Military Studies known as the Jedi Knights were assigned the responsibility of building the ground offensive code named Eager Anvil. The political objectives were clearly defined and the military designed a strategy to support achieving those objectives.

Critical to the success of maintaining a cohesive coalition was the political necessity to keep Israel out of the war. A key element of coalition strategy was to frustrate Saddam's efforts to draw Israel into the war and thereby change the political complexion of the conflict. The Scud ballistic missile was Iraq's psychological weapon of terror to provoke Israel. Early U.S. plans concentrated on attacking the fixed Scud launch facilities and production centers. Even though these inaccurate weapons were not a significant threat militarily, the political terror of the scud made it a priority target. Targeting scud missiles and associated launch sites drastically thwarted one of Saddam's key strategy elements of transforming the conflict into an Arab-Israeli war. A unified coalition was paramount to the Gulf War success. By drawing Israel into the conflict Saddam hoped to fracture that coalition.

A principal limit to military power was world opinion and a strong coalition was essential to keeping opinion favorable. The home front in America and Europe was supportive, although opinion was split at the onset. A British opinion poll conducted in January showed 54% approved 'all action including force' while 32% favored 'all action short of armed force'. A similar poll in France revealed that 80% did not consider Kuwait worth dying for.[9] On 12 January the U.S. congress authorized President Bush to use the military pursuant to UN Resolution 678. The vote in the Senate was 53 to 47, and in the House of Representatives 250 to 183.[10] The support of the coalition nations, who opened their ports and airfields, provided the essential home front commitment necessary for the ultimate victory over Iraq. Coverage of the war dominated the media and heavy collateral damage might have caused a shift in world

support. As a consequence, targeting policies were implemented to reduce the likelihood of collateral damage. Only Precision Guided Munitions (PGMs) could be used to attack targets in downtown Baghdad. Intelligence analyst reviewed the master attack target list looking for potential collateral damage sites such as schools, hospitals, and mosques within six miles of targets. Facilities that might have civilian use were attacked only at night to reduce the possibility of civilians being in the vicinity. A key principle underlying Coalition strategy was the need to avoid collateral damage and casualties, both to the Coalition and to Iraqi civilians.[11]

As the 15 January deadline for the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait approached some critics claim there were other alternatives to war. The coalition could have continued the application of sanctions. This would have given Saddam more time to dig in and prepare for war. He would have had more time to develop Iraq's NBC weapons capability and more time to disrupt the balance of the coalition. The coalition was at optimum strength at the beginning of the war and any delays could have resulted in a change of policy within the Arab countries. Another alternative to war could have been to do absolutely nothing. The international community could have let Iraq keep Kuwait. Hussein would have become the dominant Arab voice in the gulf and would have controlled a majority of the world's oil supply. Inaction would have been a missed opportunity for America. Victory in the Gulf has resulted in much greater credibility for the U.S. on the world scene. America demonstrated that it would act decisively to redress a great wrong and to protect its national interests in the post-Cold War world.[12]

CAMPAIGN EXECUTION

On January 15, President Bush signed the two-page National Security Directive formally authorizing an attack to liberate Kuwait unless a last minute breakthrough resolved the crisis.[13] That breakthrough never materialized and at 0238 local time on January 17, Apache helicopters fired the first shots of Operation Desert Storm at two early warning radar sights inside southern

Iraq. According to the Pentagon, Baghdad had deployed 590,000 troops in Kuwait and southern Iraq; and the total Iraqi hardware amounted to 700 warplanes, 5750 tanks, and 15 warships. They were facing a total allied force of 700,000; and the coalition force's military hardware amounted to 1,746 warplanes, 3673 tanks, and 149 Warships. The Pentagon's original estimate of Iraqi troop strength was later scaled down to 350,000.[14] The first three phases of the war lasted 38 days and the fourth phase of ground and air attacks lasted 100 hours.

Although the air attack was planned in three distinct phases, all phases of the air plan were flown simultaneously at varying levels of effort. Strategic targets were attacked throughout the war, as were Iraqi ground forces; therefore, there was also no distinct Phase II. Air superiority efforts over Iraq and Kuwait began the first night and lasted throughout the conflict. This flexibility in the execution of the campaign was effective in accomplishing most of the six military objectives as defined by the National Command Authority.

In relation to the first military objective, Coalition forces initially isolated and incapacitated the Iraqi regime by attacking leadership command facilities, military-related electrical power production facilities, military industrial systems, telecommunications, and C3 nodes. The Iraqi national power grid was effectively shutdown through the use of precision strikes by cruise attack missiles and PGMs. The primary strategy of the coalition air campaign was to seize air superiority and rapidly paralyze the Iraqi leadership and command structure by striking this crucial center of gravity. Planners knew this was easily attained with stealth technology and PGMs. Bombing Saddam's leadership infrastructure caused the Iraqi leadership to avoid facilities best suited for command and control. It reduced their ability to communicate with military forces and forced them to use less secure communications, which provided valuable intelligence.

With respect to objective two the allied forces gained and maintained air supremacy, which permitted unhindered air and ground operations. Attacking Strategic Integrated Air Defense

Systems (IADS), IAD radar sites, Surface to Air Missiles (SAMS), Iraqi Air Forces, and airfields achieved superiority quickly. Within hours of the start of combat operations, the IADS had been fragmented and individual air defense sectors forced into autonomous operations. After the first week, Coalition aircraft were able to operate with virtual impunity; during the next three weeks, the Coalition lost only seven aircraft to Iraqi defenses. According to CENTCOM air forces estimates, 109 Iraqi combat fixed-wing aircraft flew to Iran; 151 were destroyed on the ground; 33 were shot down by coalition fighter aircraft; and 31 were captured or destroyed by ground forces.[15]

Destroying NBC warfare capability was an objective not totally met. Although the Biological and Chemical Warfare programs were seriously damaged, the nuclear program remained intact. UN inspection teams and U.S. intelligence sources discovered Iraq's nuclear weapons program was more extensive than originally thought, and did not suffer as serious a setback as was desired.[16]

The campaign was effective towards accomplishing the fourth military objective of eliminating Iraq's offensive military capability. Coalition forces destroyed major parts of key military production, and power projection capabilities. Coalition air strikes and naval gunfire effectively destroyed the Iraqi Navy in the first three weeks of Operation Desert Storm. Approximately 87% of Iraqi combatant naval vessel were destroyed or damaged.[17] Aircraft carried out about 500 sorties against Iraqi oil facilities, dropping 1,200 tons of bombs on 28 oil refineries effectively ending refined petroleum production. Although PGMs and other advanced technologies provided outstanding results against the refineries, the hunt for scud missiles was not as successful. The scud hunt involved 2,493 sorties targeted at missiles, launchers, and the Scud-support infrastructure. Scud launches averaged five per day for the first 10 days of the war, but only averaged one per day for the last 33 days.[18] Air attacks reduced the scud attacks, but the mobile missiles were difficult to locate and were never fully suppressed.

Coalition forces accomplished the fifth objective by rendering the Iraqi army and its mechanized equipment in Kuwait ineffective and ultimately causing its collapse. Nearly 100,000 sorties were flown, 288 TLAMS and 35 ALCMS launched leading up to the Ground Campaign. By G-Day CENTCOM intelligence estimated Iraqi front line divisions had been reduced in effectiveness by approximately 50% due to desertion, supply degradation, and casualties.[19] At the conclusion of operations final CENTCOM estimates were that only five to seven of Iraq's 43 combat divisions remained capable of offensive operations and an estimated 86,000 prisoners had been captured. The final estimates of enemy vehicles destroyed or captured by coalition forces during the entire Operation Desert Storm were 3847 tanks, 1450 armored personnel carriers, and 2917 artillery pieces.[20] An overwhelming joint and multi-national ground offensive enveloped Iraqi forces, destroyed the combat effectiveness of Iraqi units in the KTO and liberated Kuwait.

Beginning the war, Iraq had the fourth largest Army and the sixth largest Air force in the world. American air power dominated the Gulf War as no other conflict since World War II.[21] The Gulf War illustrated the devastating impact that precision bombing and other associated advanced technologies can yield in modern warfare. Coalition ground forces overwhelmed their Iraqi foes and despite difficult terrain, coalition maneuver forces moved rapidly over great distances. In 100 hours of combat, the coalition covered over 200 miles to envelope Iraqi forces.

CAMPAIGN EVALUATION AND THE PRINCIPLES OF WAR

The principles of war provide the strategist a set of questions that should be considered if military strategy is to best serve the national interest. The principles also provide the tactician an operational framework for the military actions that must be carried out. The value of the principles of war lies in their utility as a frame of reference for analysis of strategic, operational,

and tactical issues. An analysis of the principles of war as applied to the Operation Desert Storm campaign is useful in identifying strengths and weaknesses of the plan.

Objective. President Bush's national policy objectives were clearly stated. The campaign planners attempted to achieve these political objectives through six precise and attainable theater campaign objectives. From the theater objectives, the coalition air planners derived the objectives to: isolate and incapacitate the Iraqi regime, gain and maintain air supremacy, destroy NBC warfare capability, eliminate Iraq's offensive military capability, and render the Iraqi army and its mechanized equipment in Kuwait ineffective.[22] General Horner confirmed this fact by stating " I think one of the principal differences between this war and Vietnam is in this war the President gave us clear political goals to achieve - kick the Iraqi army out of Kuwait, cripple the nuclear, biological and chemical capabilities".[23] Desert Storm's success was primarily due to having clearly defined and obtainable objectives at each level of war from tactical to strategic.

Offensive. The principle of offensive dictates the time, purpose, scope, intensity and pace of operations. The campaign strategy focused on this principle by establishing air superiority and isolating Iraq's leadership regime quickly. Air superiority, or the dominance of a group of aircraft in a given time and space without prohibitive interference by the opposing force, was effectively gained in the first hours of the war.[24] The strategic air attacks struck 45 key military targets in the Baghdad area with the result that the Hussein regime was driven underground in disorientation, confusion, and ignorance, preventing Iraqi decision makers from controlling events or reacting to Allied initiatives.[25] The Air Staff concept plan had been called Instant Thunder to contrast it with Operation Rolling Thunder's prolonged, gradualistic approach to bombing North Vietnam during the 1960s. Instead of piecemeal attacks designed to send signals to enemy leaders, Instant Thunder was designed to destroy 84 strategic targets in Iraq in a single week.[26]

Shaped by Vietnam experience, the U.S. military built a winning strategy of overwhelming force. Diplomatic pauses were avoided so the enemy could not regroup. The doctrine had

been applied in the invasions of Panama and Grenada with good results. Coalition forces gained the initiative the first night and never relinquished it throughout the war.

Mass. There was a difference of opinion separated by service lines on where to concentrate combat power at the decisive place and time. Colonel John A. Warden III, the mastermind behind Instant Thunder, believed the command, control, communications, and decision-making capability of the enemy should be the prime target for any air campaign.[27] He believed the least important target set were enemy forces. However, General Powell defined victory in terms of defeating the ground forces. As a result 23,430 sorties were flown against Iraqi ground forces while 11,616 sorties were flown against all other target sets.[28] Directing the concentration of air power on the ground forces may have extended duration of the air campaign and delayed victory.

Economy of Force. Except for the Scud hunt, the Gulf War air operations are the perfect example of optimum use of force with the best mix of combat power. In addition to the multiple sorties targeted against Scud missiles, many Patriot missiles were fired in defense of friendly positions. In all, 158 Patriots were fired at 47 Scuds, intercepting 45 of them. Generally two Patriots are fired at each target. However, five Scuds fired at Saudi Arabia broke into 14 pieces, attracting 28 Patriots.[29] From a strategic point of view, this level of effort was required to keep Saddam Hussein from launching Scud missiles at Israel in an attempt to draw them into the war.

Maneuver. The Desert Storm campaign plan was designed to place the enemy in a position of disadvantage through the flexible application of air power and ground maneuver. Planners knew Iraq's decision-making power was highly centralized between Saddam and a few other military leaders. By severing the command and control, it would have a crippling effect in the field and the enemy would be unable to maneuver. As the air planners built Instant Thunder, they realized that in this war, the development of PGMs, and anti radar technologies like Stealth, jamming, and anti-radiation missiles would allow attacks directly against the leadership's ability to function. These leadership capabilities became targets for Instant

Thunder, and the main difference between it and more traditional strategic bombing campaigns.[30] Attacking the Iraqi leadership destroyed their ability to know what was transpiring on the battlefield. This blinding effect allowed for the success of the deception and hook maneuver of the ground offensive.

Unity of Command. This principle was the key to the overall success of Operation Desert Storm. Establishing a command relationship that would satisfy all the coalition partners was a challenging task. The solution resulted in parallel international commands. General Schwartzkopf, incorporating the forces from western countries headed one command. The other command was under the Saudi commander, Lieutenant General Khalid bin Sultan bin Abdul-Aziz, for the Arab and Islamic nations.

Operation Desert Storm was the first regional conflict in which the JFACC was formally established. All air forces supporting the air operations were under the command of the JFACC. As the commander of all coalition air forces the JFACC could concentrate air resources where they would best achieve the overall airpower objectives. The success of this command arrangement has had a lasting impact on joint air employment.

Security. Allied forces were able to prevent the enemy from acquiring an unexpected advantage. Coalition air forces flew defensive counter air sorties to ensure the arrival and movement of forces into the theater remained unimpeded by hostile attack. Control of the air allowed collection of intelligence information through the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS), U-2R, TR-1, Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS), space satellites, and other missions giving insight to the enemy's capabilities. The Persian Gulf War proved the strategic importance of air superiority.

Air superiority was the operational key to this overwhelming victory in the Gulf War and the Air Force must maintain this domination in future conflicts. The next century will be no less complex and challenging than the present world situation. The U.S. Air Force answer to this challenge is the F-22 advanced tactical fighter. Advanced fighter aircraft will be in service with a

variety of nations. In the future, offsetting numbers of highly sophisticated fighters with smaller numbers of even more sophisticated and stealthy F-22's is not merely desirable, but mandatory if America is to retain its air superiority edge.[31]

Surprise. The air campaign strategy successfully employed this principle to begin the war. The coalition air forces conditioned the Iraqis to the presence of AWACS and large numbers of fighter combat air patrols on the boarders with Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf. These aircraft flew defensive missions in the same orbits and numbers that would be used for the air offensive. Surges were used one night a week to create a pattern of activity. Placing many aircraft on ground alert masked the final preparations for Operation Desert Storm. The published reason was sold as a precaution against a pre-emptive Iraqi attack before the 15 Jan UN deadline. The true reason was to prepare the aircraft and crews for the start of the air campaign. To allow the F-15s to escort attack aircraft yet still allow Iraqi radar sights to see the patrol picture, F-16s not being used in the first attack were substituted for the F-15s in their CAP missions. Air campaign strategist use of the principle of surprise through this deception gained the coalition forces a distinct advantage.

Simplicity. The last principle of war calls for avoiding complex operations. Planners went to great lengths to prepare clear uncomplicated plans, straightforward orders, and clear-cut rules of engagement to ensure thorough understanding and compliance with the commander's intent. This was accomplished through the use of the Master Attack Plan, Special Instructions, Airspace Coordination Orders, and Air Tasking Orders. In addition, Air Operations Center planners built flexibility and responsiveness into operations planning by delegating most detailed mission planning to the wing and unit level. The success of this air operation proved the value of the U.S. Air Force's first tenet of air power, which is Centralized Control and Decentralized Execution.[32]

The Operation Desert Storm campaign was well planned. It was executed with strong leadership and highly trained personnel employing weapon systems with the latest in advanced

technology. Analysis of the Persian Gulf War campaign strategy using the principles of war demonstrates the campaign's overwhelming success.

STRATEGIC LESSONS AND DOCTRINAL IMPLICATIONS

There is little argument that the Operation Desert Storm Campaign was an unprecedented success at the operational level of war. However, nearly a decade after the U.S. achieved this decisive victory, our military forces are still conducting operations in Northern and Southern Iraq. Saddam Hussein still remains in power and is in a position to threaten the security and stability in the region. At the strategic level of war, this current state of affairs could very well be argued as a failure of Desert Storm to reach one of it's critical objectives. That point will be debated for years to come. This section will not attempt to prove success or failure but will identify campaign issues for strategic leaders to consider in conducting future warfare with nations or organizations with extremist leadership.

The commander's intent must describe an end state that meets the political objective. Due to the past experience in Vietnam, our generals were eager to win a decisive victory allowing a quick and speedy exit to the theater of operations. They viewed the support of insurgents in Iraq not as a way to weaken Saddam's hold on power but as an entangling operation involving U.S forces without an opportunity to exit. The U.S. could have used its territorial position in southern Iraq to gain desired concessions. It would have been an ideal time to establish political protection for the Shiite and Kurd populations. The U.S could have also attempted to rally the coalition to push for the removal of the Saddam Hussein regime. Considering the rapid pace at which operations are conduced in modern day warfare, it is imperative that strategic leaders focus on the outcome of the campaign in the commander's intent. The end state should be the central issue during the initial planning process.

There must be a plan on how to end the war. The Foreign Service officer who served as General Schwartzkopf's chief foreign policy advisor at CENTCOM confirmed in a post war interview that the military never had a plan to terminate the war.[33] Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations addresses transition as one of the four phases of a Joint Campaign. This phase should enable the commander to focus on synchronizing and integrating joint force activities to a successful conclusion, typically characterized by self-sustaining peace and the establishment of the rule of law. Part of this phase may be to ensure that the military or political threat is not able to resurrect itself.[34] Saddam's regime and the Republican Guard forces were both identified as Iraqi centers of gravity, yet they survived and have resurrected.

Combatant commanders must be versed in conducting post conflict negotiations and lay the foundation for political change within an opposing force. For a successful post war transition, the negotiations must be conducted at the appropriate diplomatic level. When attempting to arrange the Desert Storm peace negotiations at Safwan the first efforts for a meeting faltered when General Khalid pointed out that the Iraqi delegation to the summit was too junior and not befitting a meeting with the allied high command. The U.S. military leadership was originally willing to go along with the arrangement but eventually differed to General Khalid's position. Finally, the Iraq's provided a high level team to conduct negotiations.[35] However, General Schwartzkopf did not have a senior administration civilian to accompany him to provide political guidance. Bush administration officials claimed they should have provided instructions but everything was moving so fast that the process broke down.[36] The coalition was in an extremely powerful negotiating position and failed to take advantage of that situation. Military commanders responsible for post hostility negotiations must be armed with adequate political guidance and knowledge of enemy internal affairs to prevent similar mistakes in the future. Now let's examine key operational lessons that impact strategy development in the future.

The Persian Gulf War campaign strategy exploited our technological advantage over Iraq. The ultimate difference between Desert Storm and all other campaigns is the distinct advantage

our high technology systems provided. One of the greatest advantages was the new reconnaissance and surveillance capability provided by JSTARS. This allowed for the first time critical information to flow on the battlefield from sensor to shooter in near real time. The information that JSTARS provided during the ground offensive allowed the CINC to make key operational decisions at crucial moments. JSTARS detected the Republican Guard massive retreat from Kuwait City during the final hours of the ground offensive, which gave the CINC the opportunity to press the attack and destroy the Iraqi forces while they moved.[37] This technological revolution encompasses many other areas, including standoff precision weaponry, sophisticated sensors, stealth for surprise and survivability, night vision capabilities, and tactical ballistic missile defenses. The exploitation of these still-emerging technologies promises to change the nature of warfare significantly, as did the earlier advent of tanks, airplanes, and aircraft carriers.[38]

A primary concern that arose out of this technological edge is the unrealistic expectations about casualties. In the mind of the public, Operation Desert Storm created new expectations for low casualties during the conduct of warfare. In this age of live television, can commanders pursue and destroy the enemy without appearing ruthless? In overseeing offensive air and ground operations the military and civilian leadership were concerned not only about holding down civilian casualties but also about limiting the destruction of enemy combatants. This concern over bad press impacted the decision to end the ground offensive after 100 hours and electing not continue the attack on to Baghdad. In military operations like the current war on terrorism, military leaders must be willing to chase down and totally eliminate the enemy. Future leadership, both military and political, will need to prepare the public ahead of time for the necessary actions required to terminate an opposing force. The current administration has done a good job in preparing the public for the potential for high casualties during our war on terrorism in Afghanistan.

A technological key to success in Operation Desert Storm was the accuracy of the weapons employment. The next generation of weapons will primarily depend on the Global Positioning System (GPS) for guidance. During the Gulf War, the most profound change in military technology was the vast increase in useable and communicable information. This war saw the first use of GPS, which allowed units to locate their position in three dimensions by a mere press of a button. GPS allowed the ground forces freedom of timely navigation in the desert environment, which directly impacted the ability to gain territory so quickly. The technology for tapping into the GPS is widespread, easy to use and relatively low cost.[39] The Department of Defense must work to protect this technology from intrusion and jamming to ensure friendly weapons accuracy in the future.

Despite the improved accuracy of our weapons and the capability for precise navigation, the military still had an unacceptable level of casualties due to fratricide. Since 1953, the U.S. Army and the U.S. Marine Corps have not lost a single combatant to enemy aircraft attack. Yet, over 20% of U.S. soldiers were killed by friendly fire in the Gulf War. There were 613 casualties from fighting: 146 American soldiers were killed in action, 35 by friendly fire; 467 were wounded, 72 by fire from friendly units.[40] We must develop technology to fix this unacceptable problem. However, until a fix can be fielded, leaders must make sure campaign plans negate the opportunity for friendly fire. Coalitions are fragile at best and fratricide among its members could easily strain relationships to the point of breaking. In a remarkably close call that might have strained American and Saudi relations, a Saudi Tornado pilot narrowly missed being shot down. The Saudi plane became separated from his companions and was identified as an enemy plane by an American AWACS. The AWACS cleared an American F-15C pilot to fire, but the pilot held off. In the past military leaders have accepted fratricide as an unpleasant part of war, but with today's technological advances leaders no longer need to tolerate current levels of fratricide. Military leaders must strive to fix this combat deficiency immediately.

The coalition's campaign strategy was ultimately successful because of the outstanding leaders who guided our forces to accomplish clearly defined and achievable objectives. The U.S. leadership had the technological advantage of satellite imagery and unprecedented battlefield intelligence from JSTARS. With multiple sources of battlefield information available, future political and military leaders will have to avoid the enticement of micro-management. A general in Washington, an admiral on a command ship or a theater commander in rear headquarters may have access to almost the same information as a forward commander, and in some cases more. Those distant commanders may succumb to the temptation to manipulate individual units in combat.[41] Washington should provide whatever support it can, including intelligence, but it should not tell the CINC how to fight. Despite the positive outcome, recent operations in Kosovo were constantly influenced from Washington and unity of command was not as evident as in the Gulf War. The key to future campaigns will be maintaining the technological edge, while at the same time realizing the limitations to this revolutionary capability.

SUMMARY

The campaign strategy used in the 1991 Persian Gulf War has had a lasting influence on Joint employment and doctrine. The campaign plan was developed around the combatant commander's vision of prosecuting the war to attain clear and concise political objectives. A highly developed, simple and executable offensive plan was implemented based on the use of decisive force. Post war negotiations and the transition to an exit strategy could have been more effective with appropriate political guidance and focus during the initial planning process. Leaders should communicate the focus on the political end state of the enemy nation or organization beginning with the commander's intent.

The campaign plan exploited our technological advantage over Iraq and led to one of the quickest military victories in history. The military had unprecedented success at the operational level of war but fell short in meeting the political objective of ensuring regional stability and security. Combatant commanders must be prepared to conduct post conflict negotiations and assist in rallying coalitions to lay the foundation for political change within an enemy government. Strategic leaders must assist in preparing the public to witness the necessary casualties to eliminate the enemy forces or leadership that caused the military response. All military leaders must strive to protect the technological edge that we presently enjoy and work to develop better weaponry and tactics in the future.

U.S. Military forces were well prepared to take on the challenges of America's first major post-Cold War conflict. Utilizing a well thought out campaign plan incorporating coalition forces, they dominated the sixth largest air force in the world in a matter of days and liberated Kuwait from the fourth largest Army in the world in a mere 100 hours. The performance of coalition forces during the Persian Gulf War of 1991 laid the foundation for the new age of joint and combined warfare.

Word Count: 6278

ENDNOTES

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[3] Dick Cheney, "Overview: The Conduct of the Persian Gulf War," in Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report to Congress, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, April 1992), x.

[4] Department of Defense, "The Air Campaign," Conduct of the Persian Gulf War: Final Report to Congress, (Washington, D.C.: U.S.Department of Defense, April 1992), 40.

[5] Ibid., 46.

[6] Cheney, v.

[7] U.S. Department of Defense, 22.

[8] Ibid., 96.

[9] Hiro, 309.

[10] Ibid., 513.

[11] U.S. Department of Defense, 131.

[12] Cheney, vi.

[13] Rick Atkinson, Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1993), 24.

[14] Hiro, 315 - 316.

[15] U.S. Department of Defense, 206.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., 208.

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[20] Ibid., 411.

[21] Eliot A. Cohen, "The Mystique of U.S. Airpower," Foreign Affairs 73 (January/February 1994): 124.

[22] U.S. Department of Defense, 125 - 126.

[23] Charles Horner, General, USAF, "The Gulf War," Interview by PBS, Frontline, 9 January 1996; available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gulf/oral/horner/1.html>. Internet. Accessed 22 January 2002

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[25] Federation of American Scientists.

[26] U.S. Department of Defense, 121.

[27] Atkinson, 272.

[28] Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E.Trainor, The General's War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf (New York: Little/Brown and Company, 1995), 313.

[29] Friedman, 366.

[30] U.S. Department of Defense, 122.

[31] Federation of American Scientists.

[32] Department of the Air Force, Air Force Basic Doctrine, Air Force Doctrine Document 1 (Maxwell AFB, AL.: Headquarters Air Force Doctrine Center, September 1997), 31.

[33] Gordon and Trainor, 461.

[34] Department of Defense, Doctrine for Joint Operations, Joint Pub 3-0 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 10 September 2001), III-21.

[35] Gordon and Trainor, 443.

[36] Gordon and Trainor, 444.

[37] U.S. Department of Defense, 236.

[38] Cheney, xii.

[39] Cohen, 112.

[40] Gordon and Trainor, 457.

[41] Cohen, 115.

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