STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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OPERATION JUST CAUSE: CONCEPTS FOR SHAPING FUTURE RAPID DECISIVE OPERATIONS

BY

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ABSTRACT

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In April 2000, the "Defense Planning Guidance" tasked U.S. Joint Forces Command to develop new joint warfighting concepts and capabilities. These capabilities should provide the U.S. military by 2015 the ability to defeat an enemy rapidly and decisively. Focused on winning high-end, small-scale contingencies (such as the Panama operation), "fully networked and coherent joint forces" will employ superior knowledge, precision and mobility against an enemy's critical functions to "create maximum shock and disruption, defeating his will and ability to fight." In all, Operation JUST CAUSE, conducted over a decade ago, accomplished these same results. This study will examine how Southern Command and its warfighting Joint Task Force-South (JTFSO) organized, planned, prepared, and executed joint operations that resulted in the total, cataclysmic collapse of Manuel Noriega's Panamanian Defense Force (PDF). Using the factors that provided success, the final section of this study will suggest elements that should provide a guide to developing of future concepts and structure for RDO.

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PREFACE

Much of the work on emerging concepts for future operations is surprisingly ahistorical. This study was sparked from discussions with a number of superb professionals among the USAWC Advanced Strategic Arts Program and faculty such as Colonel Michael Matheny, Colonel (Retired) Len Fullenkamp, and Professor Williamson Murray. I would also thank my faculty advisor Colonel Kevin Weddle for his professional critique and historical insights. Last and always, I thank my wife, Joyce, for her proofreading, patience and support in the writing of this study.

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OPERATION JUST CAUSE: CONCEPTS FOR SHAPING FUTURE RAPID DECISIVE OPERATIONS

> So what in the nature of the world and warfare is so different? The difference is that the world has shrunk in the satellite era and war has become extremely lethal. We also are now a force primarily based in the Continental United States. In the next ten years, we will be asked to assemble and rapidly deploy to distant target areas, fight decisively and precisely to achieve the nation's goals with a minimal loss of life, injury or damage. We will be expected to conclude operations rapidly and to redeploy to CONUS – all of these in the light of public scrutiny.[1]

Shortly before his death, General Maxwell Thurman penned the above quotation. To a great extent it reflects the way the United States wages war at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Under emerging concepts such as Rapid Decisive Operations (RDO), American armed forces, in synchronization with other elements of national power, will seek to dominate their opponents rapidly and decisively. Through the precise application of force they will aim to achieve overwhelming power against an enemy's critical weaknesses or sources or power, i.e. his "systems" in order to collapse his resistance cataclysmically. If successful, "Rapid Decisive Operations" would terminate conflict on favorable terms to the United States and its allies, while limiting violence and minimizing non-combatant casualties and collateral damage.[2]

RAPID DECISIVE OPERATIONS: OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

However, in no sense is this concept new. Commanders and heads of state have always sought to achieve overwhelming success with the least expense of time, resources and power. No nation would willingly pursue protracted, expensive conflict, when rapid, decisive, and cost-effective methods are available. As Hans Delbruck noted, of the two strategies of war, exhaustion and annihilation, the later is most usually the way stronger powers seek a rapid conclusion to conflict. They do so to not only overthrow the enemy by the most effective means, but to conserve their power for future use while minimizing the destruction which might ultimately lead to future conflict.[3] Power is infinite when used for persuasion and coercion, but finite and limited once committed to use. Thus, the United States must make judicious use and conserve its national resources in facing a diversity of complex, ambiguous threats.

Rapid, decisive operations are a method to this end. However, the concept is over a decade old. General Maxwell Thurman (Retired), former Commander in Chief of United States Southern Command, first described the challenges of future conflict in similar terms. In all, the rapid, decisive, and simultaneous military operations employed during Operation JUST CAUSE

(the invasion of Panama) provide salient lessons and challenges that are relevant to the development of the concept of Rapid Decisive Operations.

JUST CAUSE was a complex, joint operation that yielded both rapid and decisive military results. In the wake of failed diplomatic and economic pressure to remove the corrupt Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega from power, a joint force, over 20,000 strong, deployed from both the United States and Panama. It struck twenty-seven separate locations simultaneously to overwhelm its adversary. In the process, U.S. forces secured the Panama Canal unharmed, protected 30,000 U.S. nationals, and caused the total collapse of the Panamanian Defense Forces. It thereby enabled the elected government of President Guillermo Endara to assume power and re-establish democracy in Panama. Such a rapid and decisive defeat of Noriega's Panamanian Defense Force and paramilitary "Dignity Battalions" also limited civilian casualties and the destruction of property. Even more importantly, it prevented any prolonged resistance or insurgency by the dictator's "loyalists." In all, within thirty hours the Panamanian Defense Forces had been eliminated as a threat to U.S. forces; within fourteen days as a threat to the civilians of Panama. Six years after the difficulties encountered in Grenada, U.S. forces had affected major structural changes that enabled the head of the House Armed Services Committee, Rep. Les Aspin, to characterize the operation as one where the "planning was sound, ...thoroughly prepared and rehearsed, and well-executed."[4]

In April 2000, the "Defense Planning Guidance" tasked U.S. Joint Forces Command to develop new joint warfighting concepts and capabilities. These capabilities should provide the U.S. military by 2015 both the ability to defeat an enemy rapidly and decisively. Focused on winning high-end, small-scale contingencies (such as the Panama operation), "fully networked and coherent joint forces" will employ superior knowledge, precision and mobility against an enemy's critical functions to "create maximum shock and disruption, defeating his will and ability to fight."[5] In all, Operation JUST CAUSE, conducted over a decade ago, accomplished these same results. This study will examine how Southern Command and its warfighting Joint Task Force-South (JTFSO) organized, planned, prepared, and executed joint operations that resulted in the total, cataclysmic collapse of Manuel Noriega's Panamanian Defense Force. Using the factors that provided success, the final section of this study will suggest elements that should provide a guide to developing of future concepts and structure for Rapid Decisive Operations.

BACKGROUND TO OPERATION JUST CAUSE

In 1985, American-Panamanian relations began a steady decline. General Manuel Noriega, head of a narco-militaristic regime that controlled all facets of Panama, systemically violated the American Panamanian Canal treaties and harassed American nationals and military forces stationed in the Canal Zone. When the United States declared drugs a major threat to American society in 1988, a Florida federal court indicted Noriega for drug trafficking and money laundering. With this indictment, relations further deteriorated. [6]

The Regan Administration hoped that a Panamanian solution, such as a coup d'etat or election would end Noriega's rule. However, the use of both overt and covert operations to start popular uprisings and coups by assisting the opposition failed. Other measure such as negotiations, economic and diplomatic sanctions and military threats also failed, largely due to mismanagement within the administration's interagency process, bureaucratic infighting, mixed messages, and incompetency. In all, Noriega received mixed messages which led to his distrust for U.S. intentions. The dictator's defiance also strengthened his position in Panama and made him even more difficult to remove as he systemically eliminated his opposition. After he invalidated the national election of May 1989 and installed his own officials, Noriega felt immune to American reprisal. In all, American political and diplomatic failures in the mid to late 1980s resulted in confusing messages that undermined credible military threats and made the direct use of military force (to remove Noriega) more rather than less likely.

PLANNING AND PREPARATION FOR THE OPERATION

With rising tensions, Southern Command began preparing for military action. The existing plans for the defense of the canal zone and U.S. citizens, Operation BLUE SPOON, was one portion of the standard, off the shelf, set of contingency plans in the PRAYER BOOK series. BLUE SPOON envisioned that in the face of a threat to American interests, the U.S. would land military forces at Howard AFB, which would then move out to deal with conflict across the country.[7] However, emerging threats underlined that sequential operations would not be possible. With the rise in tensions in June 1989, it became clear that Noriega and the PDF aimed at maintaining power at any cost. Thus, a sequential buildup of forces over time could not occur because, "the tensions were already too high and things were already developing in ways that wouldn't make [deliberate deployment] a very feasible notion.[8]

Moreover, the replacement of the passive General Fred F. Woerner with the more aggressive General Maxwell Thurman dictated a change in plans. Upon notification in June that he would most probably assume command, Thurman initiated a series of studies and briefs in

Washington, Ft Bragg, and other locations that led him to conclude that a sequential buildup was neither acceptable nor feasible. A slow moving plan ran the high risk of interdiction/pre-emption by Noriega and Panamanian Forces who might not only block the buildup, but move quickly to seize American hostages and facilities, most critically the canal and its supporting facilities. Consequently, even before Thurman's arrival BLUE SPOON was evolving into a more rapid, complex operation focused on fixing Noriega and his henchmen. If the initial moves could strip away the leadership and command structure of the Defense Force, Noriega's troops would be incapable (and most thought unwilling) of moving against and inflicting damage or injuries on U.S. and Panamanian citizens and infrastructure.[9] Thus, from mid-1989, operations took a distinctive shift from the methodical and sequential to the rapid, overwhelming, and decisive.

THE DIRECT APPROACH: "NORIEGA MUST GO"

Inheriting a deteriorating situation, the new president decided to take a firmer approach. Following Noriega's overturning of elections in May, George Bush announced that the United States had enough of the corruption and disregard for democratic process in Panama. He proclaimed that "Noriega must go."[10] Key also was the change in SOUTHCOM's leadership: the president was sending the signal that America would take a tougher stance. During a series of briefings and discussions in Washington prior to assuming his duties as CINC, Thurman worked in conjunction with the new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Colin Powell to define American goals and objectives. These objectives would be the basis for theater level planning, and eventually became the operational guidance by the president. American objectives would be:

1. Create an environment safe for Americans
2. Ensure the integrity of Panama Canal
3. Provide a stable environment for the freely-elected Endara Government
4. Bring Noriega to justice [11]

Using these goals, Thurman began a major reassessment of the situation in September. He calculated that the enemy's center of gravity was not Noriega but the Panamanian Defense Forces' leadership, of which the general was a critical part. The head of the serpent could be removed, but the systemic corruption in the defense forces had built second and third layers of corrupt leadership would keep the snake functioning and dangerous. Unless those too were removed, the Panamanian Defense Forces would undermine any movements toward

democracy. Additionally, leaving remnants in place would provide a possible basis for an insurgency that would draw the U.S. into a protracted, Vietnam-like conflict. Therefore, decisive action required a broader approach – the decisive target would be the destruction of the Panamanian Defense Forces and its command structure.

JOINT TASK FORCE SOUTH AS THE WARFIGHTING HEADQUARTERS

In addition to this reorientation, Thurman believed he needed a simple, but effective subunified command to plan the action. His initial assessment was that his inhouse Joint Task Force-Panama (JTFPN) lacked the planning and robust warfighting capabilities need for planning an intricate operation. Additionally, both US Army South (USARSO) and his headquarters focused on the close fight of performing the routine security, political and military requirements of day-to-day operations. Thurman requested and received permission from Powell to use the Army's XVIII Airborne Corps as the planning and execution nucleus of JTF-SOUTH. That organization would focus on the preparing for the use of military force; they would focus on planing, rehearsing and command all joint forces during strike operations.[12] In addition, Thurman obtained as his standing joint Task Force commander Lieutenant General Carl W. Stiner, a seasoned, experienced warfighter, whom Thurman trusted to handle preparation and execution of the complex operation. Most important, Thurman felt the original concept of BLUE SPOON for the standup of a JTF at the beginning of operations was inadequate. In a fluid, ill-defined environment, Thurman envisioned that he might have to launch operations at short notice to meet political "triggers" and to achieve operational surprise. To execute rapid, simultaneous operations, with many dispersed, complex pieces required a headquarters that was already functional, situationally aware of both friendly and enemy forces, coherently joint capable, and ready to execute on short notice without appreciable standup or shakeout time. Consequently, he wanted a separate, detached JTF headquarters to focus specifically on developing an in-depth picture of the Panamanian threat and prepare detailed, synchronized, joint military operations to eliminate that organization as a threat.

Joint Task Force South

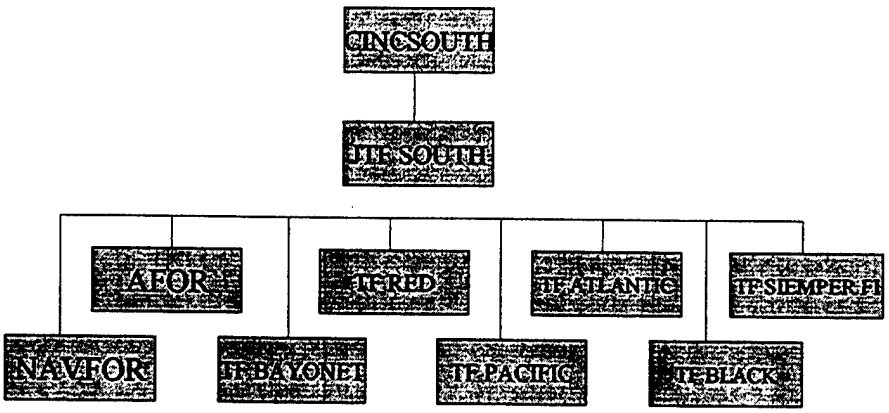

FIGURE 1: JOINT TASK FORCE SOUTH AS A SUBUNIFIED COMMAND UNDER SOUTHCOM

DEVELOPMENT OF CONCEPT FOR A RAPID, DECISIVE OPERATION

Key to Thruman's approach in this situation was the development of superior knowledge of his enemy's capabilities, dispositions and potential actions. To this end, SOUTHCOM focused on intensive intelligence and information gathering efforts. Intelligence preparation for military operations would prove to be a critical factor in overall success. Both in country and forces deploying from the U.S. developed a detailed lay-down of Panamanian troop locations and dispositions, key facilities within the canal zone, and approximate locations of major groups of U.S. nationals who might be targets for kidnapping or terrorist attacks.[13]

The information gained through SOUTHCOM Headquarters at Quarry Heights, American units training in Panama, and U.S. contacts with the Panamanian Defense Forces and government proved crucial. These sources provided in depth knowledge of terrain, road networks, and unit capabilities which then fed the planning process to select the targets and objectives. The intelligence picture further improved with the failed coup on 3 October which provided accurate information on the units loyal to Noriega, as well as the capabilities of Panamanian Defense Forces to move rapidly with air and armored forces. Among such units were the 7th Infantry Company which rescued Noriega through airmobile movements and Battalion 2000 with its armored vehicles which could move quickly to counter light infantry strikes into Panama City. Also, intelligence revealed growing numbers of paramilitary "Dignity

Battalions," which conducted pro-Noriega terror attacks. Quickly locating, neutralizing and preventing their escape and linkup with PDF elements would be critical to safeguarding Americans and preventing dispersed enemy units from building up mass.[14]

However, there were also several critical gaps in intelligence. There was a vague picture of the precise strength and locations of many of Noriega's Dignity Battalions, a shortfall that led to an under-estimation of their threat. Second, the lack of targetable intelligence on Noriega's location and activities would result in the failure to capture the Panamanian dictator early in the operation – a result which then turned the operation into a manhunt that ended in his embarrassing escape to the Papal Nuncio's residence.[15] Although these shortfalls prolonged the operation, they did not detract from its overall success. In all, American forces entering Panama on 20 December had a well-defined picture of the major enemy strengths, dispositions, and capabilities that they needed to strike in order to defeat Panamanian forces rapidly and decisively, and in the end dismember Noreiga's grip on power.

Critical to successful preparation and execution was not only the gathering of information, but the development of superior knowledge of enemy intentions. Knowledge superiority came through the selection of the right leaders, with the background, experience and intellect to interpret the myriad of information and intelligence and to develop a clear picture of the enemy and the effects intended actions might achieve. The selection of BG William Hartzog as the J3 provided an officer with such qualities and insight. Hartzog was not only experienced in the theater, with a number of prior assignments to Panama, but he had the ability to visualize the enemy's centers of gravity and key vulnerabilities and develop an integrated plan for enemy destruction. As a result, the plan for simultaneous, rapid action could promise decisive results, so much so that after receiving the briefing for the proposed operation the Joint Chiefs approved it as written.

The plan, BLUE SPOON 1-90, included two scenarios. For the no-notice, "reactive execution" scenario, based on triggers such as the seizure of hostages or threats to the canal, JTF-Panama forces already on the ground would secure key facilities, defense sites, and the housing of U.S. nationals, isolate the canal and the Panamanian Defense Force headquarters at La Comandancia from reinforcement, and prevent Noriega's escape. Air support would strike key Panamanian facilities, while special forces – under a Joint Special Operations Task Force – would capture Noriega and interdict or destroy Panamanian forces in the areas outside Panama City and Cologne. In the mean time, U.S. forces would rapidly flow through American-controlled airfields and ports to reinforce and expand operations rapidly.[16]

The more preferable "deliberate" option was the one eventually executed as Operation JUST CAUSE.[17] This scenario used overwhelming air and land forces from both the U.S. and Panamas to strike simultaneously at all critical military and political vulnerabilities. With at least sixty hours notice, joint special operating forces would conduct reconnaissance and surveillance of key targets such as Fort Cimarron, Tinajitas, Panama Viejo, and the Pacora River, while other Delta elements attempted to locate Noriega. During this same period, Forces Command would position more armor and aircraft in Panama, while Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) would prepare to airdrop over 5,000 assault troops and airland an additional 13,000 soldiers.

Special Operations forces would prepare the way. Task Force GREEN, the Army Special Mission Unit (Delta) would rescue U.S. citizens imprisoned near La Comandancia, while Task Force BLACK would protect opposition leaders. Task Force GREEN and BLUE of Army Special Mission Unit and Navy SEAL's would rescue other hostages, while Task Force WHITE's Navy Special Warfare Units would interdict enemy naval forces at three separate harbors. Finally, Task Force RED made up of the Army Ranger Regiment would make airborne assaults on key Panamanian Defense Forces concentrations removed from the Canal area, at Rio Hato in the west and at Torrijos Tocumen Airport in the east.

Following these opening moves, the operation would proceed in four phases. In the first phase, three of the four conventional Task Forces would swing into action at H Hour. In the northwest, Task Force ATLANTIC, made up of a brigade of the 7th Infantry Division (Light) with a battalion from the 82nd Airborne Division,[18] would strike the Panamanian Defense Forces in Colon and secure by air assault the Madden Dam and El Renacer Prison, both in the center of the Isthmus. At the same time, Task Force BAYONET of the Panama-based 193rd Infantry Brigade along with mechanized infantry under Task Force 4-6 Infantry would secure the embassy and other U.S. national population centers and seize key sites in Panama City and its environs, to include the Panamanian Defense Forces nerve-center at La Comandancia. Finally, the Marine infantry battalion Task Force SEMPER FI supplemented by Army military police would secure the key airhead at Howard AFB and block any enemy movements into the city across the Bridge of the Americas. This "inner ring" of strikes would secure the Panama Canal, protect Americans against Dignity Battalion retribution, and decapitate the Panamanian Defense Force's command system and security.

Closely following these strikes across the Canal Zone, Army Rangers would airdrop to seize Torrijos-Tocumen Airport. Task Force PACIFIC with the remainder of the 82nd Airborne Division would follow at H+45 minutes to relieve the Rangers. At H+90 airborne forces would airmobile

aboard helicopters to destroy the Panamanian Defense Force's strongholds at Tinajitas, Fort Cimarron, and Panama Viejo. Following these initial strikes, the remainder of the 7th Infantry Division (Light) and the 16th Military Police Brigade would deploy from the U.S. to reinforce on Day 2. In the final phase of the operation (D+3 through D+30 days) the 7th Division would relieve all airborne forces and, together with forces stationed in Panama, execute civil-military operations in support of the new Panamanian government, Operation BLIND LOGIC.[19]

Overall success depended on a joint forces effort. In support of the 23,000 man Army-Marine ground force would be over 3,400 Air Force personnel, mostly from the 830th Air Division. Their operations would be critical to success not only in providing airlift/airdrop, but also in providing electronic jamming, refueling, and most importantly precision strikes in support of ground operations in urban areas. Six F-117 stealth bombers would bomb lodgments to stun and disorganize the Defense Force while AC-130 gunships directed precision fires to prepare drop-zones, interdict counterattack, and strike specific buildings, such as La Comandancia in the midst of populated areas, where collateral damage from bombing was not acceptable. Naval forces would control sea approaches, stop all ships from entering the canal during the operation, and prevent reinforcements or supplies from Noriega's supporters in Cuba. In addition, Naval Special Warfare forces would disable the Panamanian Defense Forces naval forces and conduct special boat and countermine operations to keep sea lanes open.

With Stiner to answer questions, Hartzog provided what Joint Staff Director of Operations Lieutenant General Kelly characterized as the best operations briefings he had ever heard.[20] Armed with experience and the answers based on in depth planning, Hartzog convinced General Colin Powell that the plan was flexible and detailed enough to ensure success across a complex and complicated operation. Powell agreed on the use of overwhelming force to decimate the Panamanian Defense Forces and preclude their ability to wage a prolonged insurgency. On November 3, the Joint Chiefs approved the plan as written.

THE PLAN MOVES INTO ACTION

Rehearsals over the next six weeks reinforced understanding at all levels, perfected the eventual execution, and provided feedback for further improvements. By hostilities in mid-December, the joint force was well prepared to execute the invasion after events spiraled out of control.[21] In mid December, the Panamanian national assembly proclaimed Noriega the country's "supreme ruler" and under his direction issued a declaration of war against the United States. Marked increases in violence against Americans culminated on December 17 with the

abuse of a Navy couple and the killing of a Marine officer. These provocations presented President Bush with the imperative to act decisively.

General Thurman saw four options available[22] First, the U.S. could do nothing and continue to let diplomatic and economic pressure work. This option was unlikely to work, especially given the support of Noriega by Nicaragua and Cuba, as well as illegal funds from South American Drug Cartels. The second option was to use a series of special operations to seize Noreiga and his supporters. Third, the U.S. could use conventional and special forces already in country to seize the Panamanian Defense Force's headquarters and capture Noriega. However, both promised to be less than decisive; while they might have captured of Noriega and his key supporters, they would fail to eliminate the second-order of corrupt leaders, who might well seek revenge against U.S. personnel and assets. They also left open the possibility of a prolonged conflict by Panamanians who were either loyal to Noriega or spurred by nationalist impulses to resist foreign aggression. Such a prolonged "Vietnam-like" conflict would have opened the Bush Administration to both domestic and international criticism and pressure during a long campaign.

The greatest promise for decisive success was in the fourth option of using decisive and overwhelming force. A broad, comprehensive and simultaneous strike at all key enemy installations, along with Noreiga's key control and administrative nodes could cataclysmically collapse the capability and will to resist of regular and paramilitary forces, and prevent a protracted insurgency. However, the risk of failure was also high. The operation would be extremely complex in striking multiple, dispersed targets, with a joint force of over 23,000 based in Panama and the United States, and occur at night to maximize surprise and minimize collateral damage. President Bush chose the path of most promise and risk; on 17 December he ordered American forces to execute a complex, rapid, and decisive strike to destroy the Panamanian Defense Forces. D-Day would occur less than sixty hours later: 0100 hours on 20 December.

OPERATION JUST CAUSE: DEPLOYMENT AND OPENING MOVES

Upon notification, U.S. forces began final preparations by putting air and ground units in the U.S. and Panama on alert. Military Airlift Command positioned active and reserve aircraft at seven airlift sites, while flying the final ground elements into Panama. Special Operations forces, including Army Green Beret and Navy SEAL teams deployed to augment Task Force Bayonet (193rd Infantry Brigade), watch Panamanian forces, and locate Noriega. In the United States, ranger and airborne units began movements under the guise of conducting a "deployment

readiness training exercise" as CBS television broadcast footage of C-141s departing from Fort Bragg and other locations. Additional Marines from the 6th Regiment and the First Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team deployed to flesh-out the remainder of Task Force Siemper Fi. By sunset on 19 December, an overwhelming force was in motion to deal the Panamanian Defense Forces a crushing blow.

Inside Panama, Army and Marine Task Forces began moving in the Panama City and Cologne areas that comprised an inner-ring of Panamanian forces and facilities all within easy reach. Their attacks focused on eliminating the Panamanian Defense Forces' hold on major population centers and government facilities, while simultaneously destroying the centralized command eliminating from the La Commandancia headquarters in Panama City. However, success here would not be decisive. The elite, armored "Battalion 2000" and the 6th and 7th Companies of the Panamanian Defense Force were stationed outside the Canal Zone and would have to be taken down at the same time to prevent counterattacks from outlying areas or a withdrawal to fight a guerilla war. Frontal attacks by task forces in the Canal Zone could not cut off and destroy these forces, so rapid, surprise airborne and air assault operations were aimed at overwhelming the enemy before he could escape to the jungles. When Stiner arrived in Panama on 18 December to make last minute adjustments, he knew that both sets of objectives had to be taken simultaneously to fragment the enemy physically and psychologically.

SPECIAL FORCES OPEN THE OPERATION

As Stiner arrived in country, Task Force Black was moving into position. Special Forces teams watched all major Panamanian Defense Forces locations for signs of troop movements, while Delta Force elements assaulted the Carcel Modelo Prison to free captive American Kurt Muse whom Noriega had threatened to executed if the United States attacked Panama. Delta struck so quickly that the prison guards never shouldered their weapons. However, machine guns from a nearby barracks shot down the extraction helicopter and forced rescuers to escape by an armored personnel carrier brought in for support. In all, the raid lasted only six minutes.[23] Army special forces also seized control of the Pacora River Bridge and blocked armored counterattacks into Ranger drop zones around Torrijos/Tocumen Airport. As

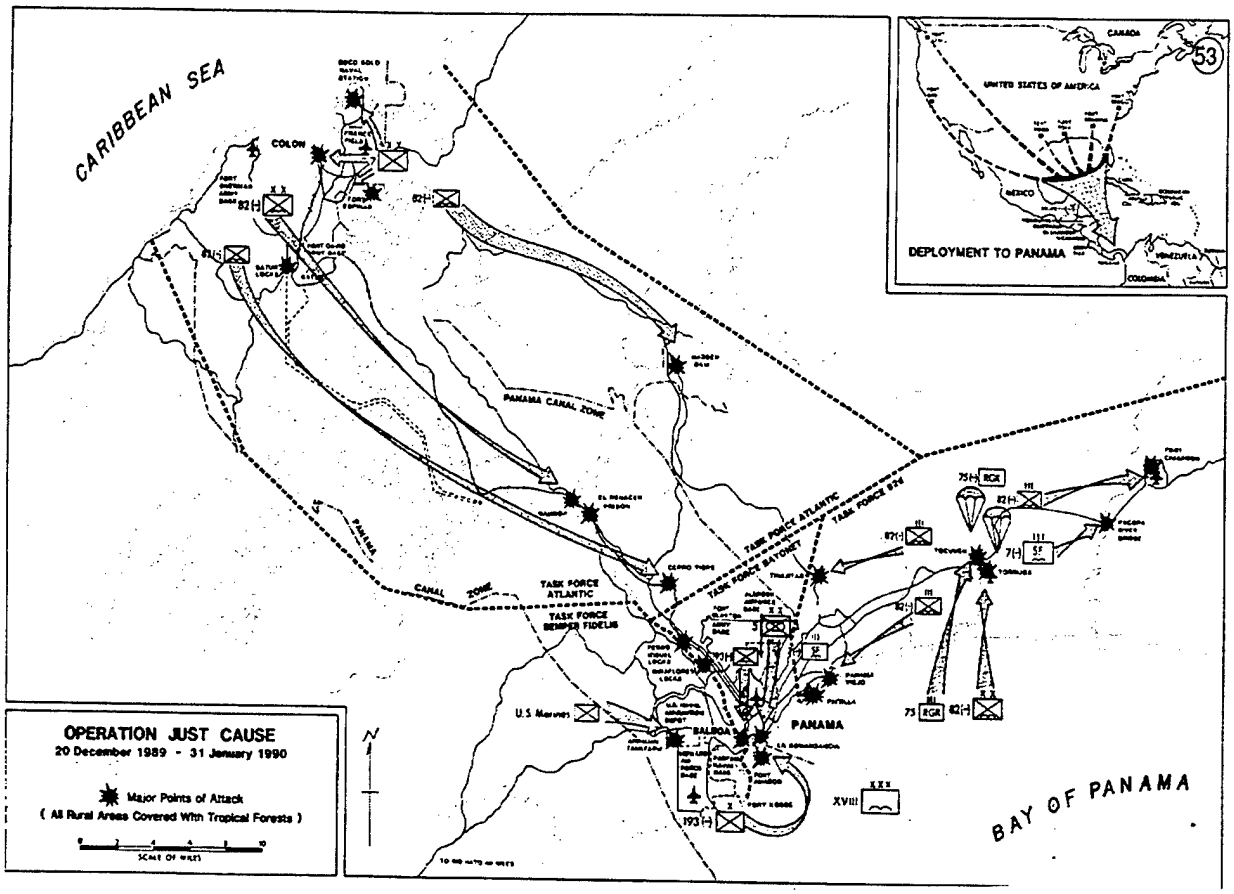

FIGURE 2. OPERATION JUST CAUSE: 27 STRIKES

armored vehicles from Battalion 2000 moved down the road to attack the airborne assault, special forces teams called in AC-130 gunship fires that decimated the first ten vehicles in the column. In response, Noriega's "elite" unit fled back to Fort Cimmaron and escaped into the jungles, offering no further resistance.[24]

In addition to setting the stage for ground forces, special operations forces focused on locating and capturing Noriega. Teams watched seven different locations and raided four places frequented by Noriega, but he avoided capture and remained on the run for the next five days.[25] However, the Navy SEAL attempt to destroy Noriega's personal jet ran into difficulty. Just before the operation, their orders were changed from destroying the plane to disabling the landing gear to prevent collateral damage if the plane exploded in its hanger at Patilla Airport. The combination of last minute changes and inaccurate intelligence proved fatal when forty-eight SEALS moved across the open runways toward the plane. While intelligence had reported only lightly armed civilian security, the SEALs met heavy fire from some of Noriega's hand-picked

security detail. After taking heavy fire, the SEALs destroyed the plane and the surrounding hanger using an anti-tank missile, but at the cost of four dead and three severely wounded.[26]

THE INNER RING: SIMULTANEOUS STRIKES BY CONVENTIONAL FORCES

As special operations forces moved at H-hour, conventional forces struck simultaneously along the inner-ring of objectives along the Colon-Panama City axis of the Canal Zone. On the Pacific side, Task Force Bayonet (centered around the193rd Infantry Brigade) advanced rapidly from staging areas around Quarry Heights and Fort Clayton through the streets of Panama City. They simultaneously struck the Panamanian Defense Forces barracks at Fort Amador, the National Departments of Investigation and Transportation, and the central nerve-center of the Panamanian Defense Forces at La Commandancia. Violent action eliminated resistance at the first three sites, with the enemy attempting to escape Fort Amador by swimming away, only to be picked up by Navy forces in the bay.

However, the fight for the Commandancia typified the fierce resistance that the Panamanian Defense Forces put up when they found themselves trapped inside Panama City. Located inside the run-down El Chorillo neighborhood, the forty-year-old headquarters was made of reinforced concrete several feet thick. Inside its walls, Dignity Battalion and Panamanian Defense Forces companies offered fierce resistance, using small arms, anti-tank, and anti-aircraft weapons to block the assault of three infantry companies of the 193rd Brigade. Fighting their way through sniper fire and road-blocks to reach the headquarters, Task Force Bayonet's infantry, supported by armored personnel carriers and Sheridan tanks, breached the outer walls but were unable to carry the headquarters. While armored forces ringed the perimeter to prevent counterattack, AC-130 gunships pounded the Commandancia with machineguns and 105mm fire that obliterated the building's third floor. Panamanian forces retreated from the main building, pursued by U.S. infantry in a house-to-house fight that continued into the afternoon. By sundown, Task Force Bayonet had eliminated resistance, but withdrawing enemy set fires that destroyed much of the El Chorillo district. Although media initially blamed U.S. forces for starting the fires with tracers, the Task Force had exercised extreme caution to limit local casualties. Throughout the fight, American commanders withheld attack helicopter, tank artillery and mortar fire to limit collateral damage and civilian casualties that could have incited popular support for the Noriega's forces.

In conjunction with these operations, the Marine-based Task Force Siemper Fi secured the area southwest of Panama City. It consisted of 600 Marines from the 6th Marine Regiment, armored vehicles from the 2nd Light Armored Infantry battalion, and the First Fleet Antiterrorism

Security Team. At H-Hour, the force secured Naval Station-Rodman, the Arraijan (Fuel) Tank Farm, and Howard Air Force Base, the critical airhead for American reinforcement and sustainment. In addition, they secured the Bridge of the Americas and blocked the Inter-American Highway to prevent enemy reinforcement from relieving La Commandancia or escaping from Panama City. The major challenge was securing the single fuel depot, the "Tank Farm," which supported all air refueling operations out of Howard AFB. Enemy compounds in and around Arraijan controlled the area, but anti-terrorism teams overwhelmed Panamanian forces overlooking the "Farm," while a company of infantry with light armored vehicles destroyed an enemy roadblock and platoon-sized compound in the town.

On the other side of the Canal Zone, Task Force Atlantic was equally successful in rapidly destroying enemy resistance. In Colon a combined force of 7th Infantry Division and 82nd Airborne[27] overwhelmed the 8th Panamanian Defense Forces Company and overcame stiff resistance from a naval infantry unit at Coco Solo. Task force elements air assaulted into the center of the canal zone to attack the barracks at Gamboa and seize the El Renancer Prison before guards could kill Noriega opposition leaders. In addition, these forces safeguarded the operating capabilities of the Canal by air assaults that secured the Cerra Tigre electrical complex and Madden Dam. The later provided the power and water essential to operation of the Canal. If these sites had been destroyed, the canal could have been disabled for a year or more.[28]

THE OUTER RING: SIMULTANEOUS STRIKES BY U.S. BASED AIRBORNE FORCES

By the next day, the simultaneous attacks by conventional Task Forces eliminated all major resistance inside the Canal Zone. Airborne assaults by the 75th Ranger Regiment and the 82nd Airborne Division ensured the final defeat of Noriega and the Panamanian Defense Forces by destroying capabilities to counterattack or continue resistance from remote areas. While the inner-ring strikes came from forces within Panama, the most challenging attacks were made by forces moving over five hours by air from three different airfields in the United States to strike within an hour of one another. Although the Ranger assaults went forward on time, incomplete

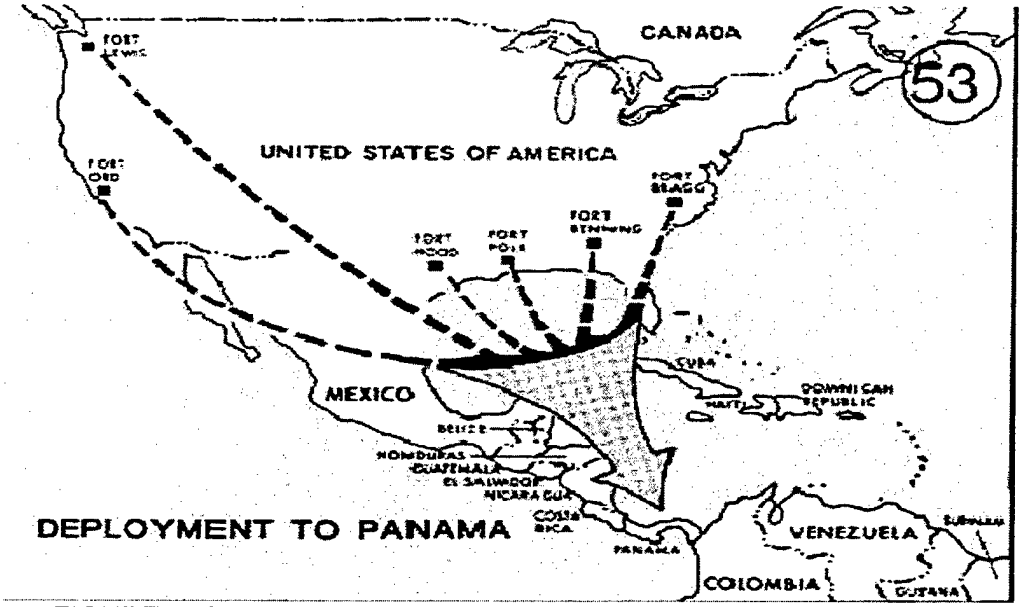

FIGURE 3. STRATEGIC LIFT OF AIRBORNE FORCES TO PANAMA

intelligence and poor weather impeded the 82nd Airborne's drops. These factors delayed night air assaults on other targets into the early daylight hours. However, leader flexibility and good training overcame many of these difficulties and provided decisive results.

The Ranger Regiment's Task Force Red (minus 1 battalion) dropped onto the airfield at Rio Hato, home to the 7th Panamanian Defense Company. Just prior to the jump, two F-117A "Stealth" bombers dropped 2000 pound bombs within 300 meters of the barracks to intimidate and disorganize the sleeping defenders. Despite this, the enemy recovered enough to direct small arms and machine gun fire at approaching C-130s. This fire forced the Rangers to jump from 500 feet instead of 800 feet to reduce exposure to ground fire. After quickly assembling on the ground, the Rangers fought their way into the barracks complex as AC-130 gunfire suppressed the Panamanian defenders. Through often facing fierce resistance, the Rangers fought through successive buildings to surround the enemy and induce his surrender after special operations personnel arrived with Spanish speakers to talk them out. An incident during the assault displayed the high level of training and restraint on the part of U.S. forces, when a young Ranger Captain leading a small squad burst into a room where over 180 unarmed trainees were huddled against the back wall. Amid much confusion and shouting in English and Spanish, neither the Captain nor the troops following him fired, thus avoiding what could have been a disastrous situation.[29]

While Task Force Red cleared the barracks, C-130s air landed additional forces from the 7th Infantry Division to reinforce the Rangers. After the fight, U.S. forces found indications that their decisive takedown of the airfield averted what could have been a more costly operation. Surrounding the airfield were four, multi-barreled Soviet-style ZPU-4 anti-aircraft guns, the same type that were so effective against slow, low-flying aircraft in Vietnam. In addition, they found forty-eight rocket propelled grenades, fifty-five machine guns, eight mortars and sixteen armored cars, all of which could have decimated Task Force Red if U.S. forces had not surprised and overwhelmed their enemy. In all, units sustained light losses of only four dead and forty-four wounded, with forty-one of these injured in the low level jump.[30] Within a few short hours at Rio Hato, U.S. forces had eliminated one of the two elements that Noriega had counted on for salvation during the October coup.

As operations unfolded on the other side of the canal, Noriega's hopes disappeared as U.S. forces dropped onto Tocumen-Torrijos Airport to the northeast of Panama City. At H-Hour, AC-130 gunfire completed their preparations of enemy positions just minutes before the 1st Ranger Battalion jumped onto the airfield. Fighting through light resistance, the Rangers capitalized on a combination of aggressive assault and psychological operations to surround Panamanian forces in the terminal and coerced their surrender. Closely following the Rangers, lead elements of the 82nd Airborne Division's Task Force Pacific parachuted onto the airfield at 0155 hours to reinforce and expand operations into other enemy strongholds east of the Canal Zone.

Unfortunately, an ice storm delayed over half of the twenty C141 transport aircraft that carried the 3300 paratroopers from Fort Bragg.[31] Heavy equipment fell on drop zones offset from the runways the into grassy areas so as not to block aircraft landing. Unfortunately, air reconnaissance and satellite photography of the drop zones failed to recognize the head-high grass, poor drainage, and soft soil that swallowed heavy equipment in mud, separated troops and delayed move-out to objectives. The combination of transport delays with problems assembling on the ground meant that Task Force Pacific had to delay operations over three hours until after the last chalks landed at 0515.[32] This meant that air assaults onto Panamanian positions at Fort Cimarron, Tinajitas and Panama Viejo were daylight attacks without the advantage of surprise and concealment of darkness and with a greater risk of casualties. After taking losses to AC-130 gunfire directed by special forces elements, Battalion 2000 scattered and the air assault into Fort Cimarron went in unopposed. However, the 0700 assaults onto the Panamanian company at Tiajitas and cavalry squadron at Panama Viejo met fierce resistance. Intense fire damaged several helicopters as the 2nd Battalion, 504 Airborne Infantry assaulted from two landing zones around the Cuartel.[33] As the battalion cleared the area, Defense Forces

and the local Dignity Battalion fought on throughout the day. Nine cars were stopped or destroyed as they attempted "drive by" attacks with automatic weapons, while paratroopers destroyed a PDF V300 light armored vehicle with an AT-4 light anti-tank round. [34]

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF AIR FORCES

Although Just Cause was an Army-centric fight, air forces were essential in providing strategic transport for the airdrops and reinforcements, as well as the firepower, observation, and command and control capabilities critical to the success of ground operations. As in every conflict since Korea, U.S. forces enjoyed air superiority, with the ability to use the air as an unchallenged platform for mobility and fires. Navy fighter "caps" from offshore carriers protected troop transports against interdiction from Cuban or Nicaraguan aircraft. Complex, well-orchestrated air operations that integrated strategic lift for air drops and supporting suppressive fires in an extremely limited airspace (the size of that over Washington, D.C.) were critical to projecting decisive force. Military Airlift Command, using C-130s, C141s, and C-5s, supported by Strategic Air Command tankers, lifted 9500 troops for a rapid buildup. A total of eighty-two aircraft from twenty-seven units at twenty-one bases flew 3,500 miles to drop over 3,700 paratroopers with heavy equipment into drop zones at night, all synchronized within one hour's time. In all, over 7,000 troops arrived at H-Hour. In addition, total of 274 subsequent sorties completed the rapid buildup of over twenty-four battalions by the end of the first day and provided the capability to backhaul casualties and evacuate civilians.[35]

Air support was critical in providing more to the joint force than a ride to the fight. Because ground units operated in urban areas and lacked artillery, gunship fires provided critical precision fires that avoided fratricide and kept civilian casualties low. C-130 "Spectar" gunships along with fighters and Army attack helicopters supported the initial airdrops and urban operations, often within only a few hundred yards of U.S. troops.[36] Such precision firepower enabled Thurman and Stiner to limit weapons effects and reduce Panamanian casualties without significantly raising U.S. casualties. They felt the "measured application of force" would preclude stiffening resolve or inciting resistance among the Panamanian Defense Force and populace. For example, Stiner decided to direct F-117 bombing strike near and not on the barracks at Rio Hato to induce the Panamanians to surrender instead of retreat into the jungles. Likewise, U.S. forces substituted highly accurate AC-130 gunship fire for artillery in urban areas. Through this they limited destruction and civilian casualties that would have fueled support for the Dignity Battalions. In all, the use of precision fires paid off: when faced with focused

destruction the Panamanian Defense Forces chose to surrender rather than fight because the populace distanced themselves from supporting their fellow countrymen.[37]

TRANSITION TO STABILITY OPERATIONS: A FAILURE TO PREPARE

Just Cause proved once again the old axiom of military operations that a military force "performs well what it plans and rehearses in depth." While intensive rehersals by Joint Task Force South produced highly successful combat operations, planning and preparation shortfalls ensured difficulties in the transition to stability operations. As the Panamanian Defense Force disappeared, with it disappeared the iron grip that had kept order and suppressed opposition and crime. Rioting and looting filled the streets, while residents of the Chorillo barrio, burned out of house and home, needed urgent supplies and assistance. SOUTHCOM secured and supported President Endara's moves to establish a government, but he assumed control of a bureaucracy dominated at all levels by Noriega's PDF cronies. After twenty-two months of contingency planning, there was no coherent plan or civil-military operations task force deployed to assist the transition to a new government as the old regime fell. Neither SOUTHCOM nor the XVIII Corps prepared for the transition, the breakdown of social order, and the temporary escape of Noriega.

In essence, both headquarters underestimated the complex threat that would emerge as the Panamanian Defense Forces dissolved and devoted little preparation for civil-military operations. Throughout the final three months of intensive planning, Thurman thought the stabilization phase would be "the least of my problems" and focused entirely on "putting together the campaign plan for Just Cause and ...not spend[ing] enough time on the restoration."[38] SOUTHCOM's Director of Policy and Strategy (J5) completed some contingency planning, but Thurman saw the Army Reserve's 361st Civil Affairs Brigade playing only a transitory role in civil operations. After Noriega's hold was broken, Thurman saw the U.S. Embassy assuming primary responsibility for assisting a functioning Endara government.

This approach was unworkable. First, success in Just Cause depended on totally dismantling the Panamanian Defense Forces, but made no provisions for organizing governmental administration and security once the Defense Force disintegrated. In retrospect, Thurman acknowledged that the depth of civil government corruption "was not well understood" and that its broad reach "complicated the restoration of government ... and hampered a cogent post-conflict resolution approach."[39] Second, in order to maintain operational security and maintain surprise, little pre-operations planning ever moved outside military channels. Consequently, there was little coordination with the State Department or U.S. Embassy for the

agencies to assume the restoration mission. Therefore, there was no broad, interagency approach to follow military victory with political and economic support for rebuilding Panama.[40]

As a result, civil-military operations became the only tool for establishing a functioning government and were an ad-hoc, Army-led program at best. Third, there was no military organization given primary responsibility to plan or execute civil-military operations. Initially, SOUTHCOM J5 took responsibility, but on 12 December, only days before the operation, Thurman gave U.S. Army South the lead since it would provide the residual forces in country after XVIII Corps redeployed. The result was confusion: on 20 December the final version of Blind Logic went to the JCS for approval as violence and disorganization gripped Panama. Compounding the lack of planning was the fact that no specialized, trained forces executed the operation to restore a functioning government. The plan depended on presidential authorization to call-up reservists of the 361st Civil Affairs Brigade. When the President refused a call-up, Thurman formed an ad hoc Civil-Military Operations Task Force out of the SOUTCOM J-5 and detailed it to the Embassy (reduced to only forty-three personnel during the crisis) to expedite establishment of the government. Eventually, a civil-military task force formed around the 361 CA Brigade, which used short-term volunteer civil affairs reservist who arrived after Just Cause was already underway. [41]

This was too little and too late to prevent the anarchy in the streets. American forces transitioned from combat to stability operations but were unable to prevent looting that caused between $500 million to $2 billion in damages to the commercial districts of Panama City.[42] Bolstered by the 16th Military Police Brigade and the 7th Infantry Division reinforcements, American forces across the country gradually subdued the crowds and secured the 142 sites that provided the city's sanitation, power, water, telephones, and other public services. U.S. forces reinstated order after what Panamanians called "three days of anarchy." [43] Concurrently, U.S. forces reformed and retrained a national police force to maintain public order, re-established public services, and planned for rebuilding the infrastructure and an economy wrecked by years of graft and corruption.

A number of ad hoc organizations hastily stood up to deal with the collapse of government and security. U.S. Army South, under Major General Marc Cisneros, organized the U.S. Forces Liaison Group to advise, train and equip a police force out of the remnants of the Defense Forces. Unlike Thurman, Cisernos saw the looting and destruction as an immediate, vital concern that had to be remedied before violence cycled out of control and complicated conflict termination and withdrawal.[44] The Liaison Group quickly vetted, trained, and returned a workable police force to the streets where they re-established basic police functions by the end

of January. Building upon the J-5's hasty work, on January 17 SOUTHCOM created the U.S. Military Support Group (USMSG) to "conduct nation building operation to ensure democracy, ... and professional public services ...."[45] This group headed by Latin-American specalist Colonel James Steele formulated a strategy for restoring basic government, security, and services, and orchestrated joint military support for the U.S. Embassy in rebuilding Panama. By the end of January, civil-military efforts were taking shape and security returned to the point that U.S. military forces could redeploy to the United States.

Operation Just Cause accomplished the total, decisive defeat of the enemy and set the conditions for the return of freely-elected government to Panama. By the time the early morning news began coverage on 20 December, U.S. forces had taken all primary objectives. Initiated less than sixty hours after the President's decision, JUST CAUSE accomplished a coordinated, highly complex series of missions during darkness by utilizing well-integrated joint forces in a swift, precise manner. In less than forty-eight hours of operations, joint forces destroyed or captured strategic positions across the breadth of Panama, dismembered the Panamanian Defense Forces, broke the control of dictator Manuel Noreiga, installed a previously elected Panamanian Government, and mopped up remnants of the "Dignity Battalions" and stray Panamanian Defense Forces. Although ill-prepared for the transition to stability and civil-military operations, U.S. forces adapted to emerging security and nation-building challenges quickly. Critically, given U.S. concerns, a continued, lingering insurgency which would have fixed international attention and tied down U.S. forces to a protracted conflict did not emerge. In military terms, JUST CAUSE was truly rapid and decisive in bringing the total, systemic collapse of enemy resistance.

LESSONS RELEVANT TO RAPID DECISIVE OPERATIONS

Future Rapid Decisive Operations (RDO) will seek the same type of results. The April 2000 Defense Planning Guidance tasked United States Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) to develop joint warfighting concepts and capabilities that would enable U.S. forces to conduct rapid decisive operations across a broad spectrum by 2020. Operations (such as those fought in Panama) will focus on winning a "high-end, small scale contingency" that achieves:

> rapid victory by attacking the coherence of an enemy's ability to fight. It [will accomplish] the synchronous application of the full range of our national capabilities by a fully networked and coherent joint force in timely and direct effects-based operations against the adversary as a system of systems. Rapid Decisive Operations employ our asymmetric advantages in knowledge, precision,

> and mobility of the joint force against an adversary's critical functions to create maximum shock and disruption, defeating his will and ability to fight.

While the United States will use all elements of national power in a synchronized manner to influence or deter, military forces will conduct "powerful, overwhelming, unrelenting combat operations to rapidly [sic] achieve our strategic objectives." Operations will be "rapid" by accomplishing campaign objectives in days or weeks rather than months, and without an extensive buildup of forces. They will be "decisive" by destroying the coherence of the enemy's ability to fight by striking his critical functions from dimensions and directions against which he has no counter. The objective will be to rapidly break an opponent's will to fight and, as necessary, destroy his ability to conduct coherent operations. Key "enablers" within Rapid Decisive Operations will be obtaining and maintaining knowledge superiority, conducting well-focused effects-based operations, and employing coherently joint and fully networked forces for synchronized action.

The successes and shortcomings of Operation Just Cause provided many insights for charting a future course. However, historical assessments have been confusing and misleading. Critics of the operation noted that Just Cause was a "special case," where SOUTHCOM and Joint Task Force South enjoyed advantages that would never be possible in future contingency operations. The United States had been in Panama for over eighty years with military forces, thereby developing an extensive knowledge of the area and the threat. Second, approximately half the operational forces were already the country where they trained and prepared extensively. Third, planners and leaders enjoyed good intelligence, extensive planning time and in depth reconnaissance, all of which produced a detailed plan that was well-rehearsed and constantly updated across all components. Moreover, the operation was not without fault, as shown in the rough transition to stability and civil-military operations. Major planning and preparation shortfalls threatened to turn military success into slow, indecisive reconstruction operations, while chaos reigned and the Endara government struggled to establish control over Panama.

On all counts, true. However, these criticisms also reveal a number of key elements that must be present, if U.S. forces are to conduct future rapid, decisive operations. Regardless of how they were obtained, the elements that led to decisive success will be the same elements that must be present in future rapid decisive operations. Without the ability to replicate success in these areas through knowledge-centric operations, well-calculated effects based operations,

and superior strategic deployment, future operations will have little chance of attaining the level of success achieved in an operation conducted over a decade ago.

THURMAN'S ASSESSMENT: FIVE CRITICAL FACTORS

Many of the factors that enabled successful rapid and decisive operations in Panama mirror those demanded in future rapid decisive operations. In Thurman's post-operations analysis entitled "Simultaneity," the general argued that success rested on

> ... the use of superior military force in very precise applications against an enemy in order to achieve overwhelming power at all potential "centers of gravity" or sources of power within a very short time span in order to collapse resistance cataclysmically. This confines the violence of the conflict in time and space and permits rapid conflict termination on favorable terms with minimum collateral damage and minimizes casualties.[46]

He noted that forces achieved overwhelming mass even though they were geographically dispersed: "actions whose effects were concentrated to achieve a specific aim ... [such as] to paralyze the enemy's decision process and create indecision"[47] provided overwhelming power against an adversary. The application of "focused mass" through the "concentration of force in time and space...[generated] simultaneous effects which combine[d] to create overwhelming and focused power relative to enemy sources of power (i.e. their centers of gravity)."[48] In focusing force at these critical vulnerabilities, limited force achieved decisive effects with "minimum collateral damage and rapid decisive conflict termination, both very important in any use of military force today."

In all, Thurman and Hartzog's "simultaneity" concept spoke dramatically to concept developers about what rapid decisive operations must be. Many of the factors that enabled success in Panama must be present in the future to move past sequential, incremental approaches to achieve rapid, decisive results through the focused, simultaneous use of force. In their assessment, they noted there were five essential conditions for rapid and decisive success: 1) good intelligence, 2) clearly articulated, broadly supported, and universally understood end states, 3) the opportunity for creating surprise, 4) sufficient force of the right types, and 5) decisive leadership.

REQUIREMENT FOR GOOD INTELLIGENCE

First, good intelligence was the cornerstone to identifying the enemy center of gravity and key vulnerabilities, i.e. " the places, people, weaponry, information nodes or conditions that if controlled take away the enemy's flexibility,"[49] that, if decisively engaged, provided decisive results. An in-depth and critical analysis identified the Panamanian Defense Forces' leadership

and not just Noriega as the enemy center of gravity because corruption was so widespread that removing only the head would not disable the system that controlled Panama. More importantly, SOUTHCOM's detailed analysis of the enemy system – its leaders, locations, capabilities and tendencies - developed a reasonably accurate picture of the enemy's system and key nodes. This detailed picture was very similar to the future baseline required for an "Operational Net Assessment." This initial assessment drove specific targeting and determined which leaders and units had to be destroyed or defeated in the initial, simultaneous strikes. In all, SOUTHCOM's net assessment was accurate and drove specific strikes. Amid the myriad of possibilities, the twenty-seven chosen for destruction completely disorganized and dismembered the Panamanian Defense Forces will and ability to resist in a coordinated fashion.

However, the price for this level of clarity was time and preparation in developing the operational assessment. SOUTHCOM required months for intelligence collection and analysis, much gathered through third party discussions with Panamanian leaders or through physical reconnaissance by planners who drove or flew objective areas. National intelligence such as imagery and electronic listening provided critical information on objectives, areas and communications between key leaders, but much was derived on a "pull" basis through specific requests to agencies. In all, the process of developing the picture was an extensive, manual process.

In future environments where time is short and direct access not possible, intelligence planners and analysts must have ready access to a interconnected, multi-agency/source data base. Such data bases must reduce the need to manually search for specifics by providing a well-cataloged system that groups imagery, electronic (to include cellular phone and internet monitoring), and human intelligence in subject/topic based categories, and which can be searched readily from dispersed locations. In addition, the system must provide analysts the ability to compare assessments of enemy strengths, vulnerabilities, and systems structure with subject area experts in other agencies or the academic community who are knowledgeable of the culture, background, and tendencies of the key actors and organizations. The system which supported the Panamanian invasion was time and effort intensive; future system must interconnect analyst with the full spectrum of sources across multiple disciplines/mediums and allow them to collaborate from dispersed locations to achieve and maintain a common intelligence picture. This picture must extend to the interagency to facilitate policy formulation that will enable civil-military planning and an effective transition to the stability phase of operations.

Knowledge superiority in both enemy and friendly force capabilities was also a powerful enabler during Operation Just Cause. Throughout the planning, rehearsal, and refinement process, units provided feedback constantly to joint planners on their capabilities, challenges and difficulties that were used to refine and improve synchronization. By D-Day, Joint Task Force South had developed and implemented a simple command and control process whereby units avoided routine, time-phased reporting and submitted only final mission accomplishment or challenges that required additional support. In all, joint forces obtained basic levels of "Knowledge Superiority," the level of specific knowledge of enemy and friendly factors, that enabled widely-dispersed, but precise, focused applications of force.

DECISIVE END STATE

The second essential for success was clearly articulated goals for the use of force. Before operations begin, Thruman felt there must be "clearly articulated, broadly supported and universally understood endstates" for the use of force. By beginning with the end in mind, political and military leaders possessed both a "guidepost and rally point" for sustaining the will to act decisively throughout the operation. To achieve rapid, decisive and simultaneous action, all leaders had to have:

> a clearly-articulated vision of the "day after battle...articulated in some detail and commonly held by national, theater and tactical leaders...[which] must be consistently reviewed and, if still valid, defended throughout the execution. Ever-changing conditions pressure leaders, commander and warriors at every level that could lead to unwarranted changes and the loss of simultaneity. In this case it was useful to frequently review the concept against the intent of the national command authority.[50]

Thurman had observed how badly the Regan Administration had bungled its attempts to persuade and coerce Noriega to leave power. The U.S. had sent a series of disjointed and confusing signals which convinced the dictator that America lacked the resolve to act and may have encouraged even more boldness on his part.[51] Following Bush's lead, the administration took a more coordinated and consistently hard-line approach that "Noriega must go," under which the interagency process moved in support of the commander in chief. In addition, the Secretary of Defense and Chairman united in supporting decisive, unified military action and supported Thurman and Stiner's approach of rapid, simultaneous, and overwhelming force as the path to success.

In all, successful rapid decisive operations and precise effects-based operations originate and be sustained from a similar basis – common goals that are well thought out, properly articulated, commonly understood and broadly supported at all levels of planning and

execution. Equally important must be the will to stay the course to generate and achieve the violent, sometimes controversial effects that will cause an opponent's capitulation. Amid critique and criticism by media, domestic politicians and diplomats on the international stage, political and military decision makers, particularly in the interagency process, must work in unison and be willing to endure short-term criticism and second guessing in order to achieve success. Without these two elements – clear intent and perseverance – employing all elements of national power will not produce decisive, synergistic effects when one or two elements decide in mid-stream to alter their course.

Critical to success will be the development of effective systems that tie together political policy and objectives with military planning and execution. Better organization and procedures must come from a interagency process to deal with the complexities of quickly reaching and articulating objectives. The Clinton Administration attempted to articulate a workable interagency process for "Complex Contingencies" through Presidential Decision Directive 56, and the current Bush Administration continues to try to harness the process. However, both efforts have met with little success. The problem is not one of guidance, but one of unity of purpose: the interagency process must provide *timely parameters and guidance* for the effects desired, and then *persevere* in exercising national power in a coherent, focused and determined manner. Key will be the linkages and lines of communications between the interagency, joint and unified command staffs. There must be continuous dialogue and feedback exchanged between actors and policy makers, supported by common situational awareness links, to tie the interagency process to the joint and unified command staffs in planning and synchronized execution. The most difficult obstacle to overcome will be the interagency culture of cautious calculation, followed by conference and consensus building, prior to arriving upon policy. Without timely, clearly articulated guidance and ongoing, accurate reassessments, operations will have little chance of being either rapid or decisive. Future conflicts must move beyond the traditional Moeltkean paradigm of politics, followed by military action, to achieve a decision that can then be handed over to policy makers after the fight is finished. Future situations will demand talking and fighting nearly simultaneously so the actions of one generate the effects that enable the actions and achieve the purposes of the other. As Thurman noted, decisiveness came not only through rapid military action that eliminated a corrupt and oppressive regime but from the effects these operations created through removing the threat of violence and retribution that would have strangled future democratic progress in Panama.

OPERATIONAL SURPRISE

A third critical factor in Just Cause was achieving surprise that enabled success, while reducing risk and loss of life. Although Thurman noted that "surprise was increasingly difficult in the satellite age" amid the mass of instantaneous media reporting, both operational security and deception remained key factors in carrying out strikes in a manner that the enemy would not anticipated or could not counter without significant preparation.[52] Tight security among deploying units, night movements of equipment and night assaults involving airborne forces from over 6,000 miles away achieved overwhelming surprise at a time when the enemy was most likely to be away from their posts and least prepared. No preparatory bombing and no visible, methodical buildups meant the enemy was unprepared for the decisive blow. Deception played a key role as well. Extensive troop movements throughout the country and "routine," large-scale combined arms training in the United States served to desensitize the enemy to American capabilities and dispositions. In all, the Panamanian leadership knew the U.S. had the overwhelming capability to act but was misled by its own misperceptions and misreadings of U.S intent.

The same will be true for rapid decisive operations in the future. Enemies are beginning to recognize patterns in U.S. operations, such as bombing strikes and the use of Naval and Marine forces for the opening phases, asymmetric action through special operations or direct ground strike. While the United States may "signal" potential opponents through options such as deploying forces for training in areas adjacent to a crisis region, such forces must be ready to transition into rapid, focused and lethal joint operations. Deception through false signals and information operations will dissuade and confuse an enemy on the focus of U.S. operations. Extensive communication and media monitoring will reveal how and what sources the enemy will use to develop its perceptions of American intent, thus identifying the critical nodes that information operations will use to coerce, persuade or dissuade the enemy as to U.S. intentions. In all, tactical, operational, and strategic surprise, through deception and security, will be key enablers for achieving perceptual effects and impairing the enemy's situational awareness to facilitate rapid decisive operations.

TAILORED JOINT FORCES

A fourth factor that Thurman noted was that rapid, decisive and simultaneous operations required "sufficient forces of the right sort to do the job – overwhelming, prepared to operate jointly, well rehearsed, [and employable in a] timely [manner]." Critics of JUST CAUSE pointed to the fact that over half the troops in the operation were already in country at the start of the

operation. However, this ignores the key fact that the decisive strikes against the elite units of the Panamanian Defense Forces – at Tocumen-Torrijos and Rio Hato – came from bases in the United States. Forces located outside the isthmus provided air, naval and special operations support (and superiority) such as the F-117 and AC-130 gunships operating from the United States. Over 7000 soldiers who struck at H-hour came from six U.S. bases using 182 sorties of heavy lift aircraft, supported by an extensive in-flight refueling effort. Within twenty-four hours, over 13,000 additional soldiers were in country, providing the rapid buildup of forces that enabled a rapid consolidation and transition to stability operations.[53] Following were sustainment flights that evacuated wounded and brought in time-critical supplies. In all, superior strategic agility and interoperability of U.S. forces generated a significant element of decisive force for Just Cause.

The quantity and availability of strategic lift was critical to rapid, simultaneous success. However, over the last decade American forces have lost the capability to conduct such a rapid strike due to the deterioration of the lift capabilities. In 1999, the AUSA study of strategic mobility noted that the ability to transport military forces rapidly across intercontinental distances was at severe risk due to a combination of aging fleets, retirement of C-141s (which was a backbone of deployments in the 1990s) and less than adequate procurement of replacements (with only one C-17 for every two C-141s retired).[54] A major concern for future rapid decisive operation will be the numbers and availability of airlift to support rapid strikes such as these. The opening phases to secure access and lodgments through asymmetrical airborne and airland strikes will be lift intensive. Additionally, rapidly landing an Army Interim Brigade Combat Team behind the airborne forces will be critical in areas with light armored threats (such as with the Battalion 2000 in Panama) to add medium armored vehicles and infantry strength rapidly to the fight. However, these viable and valuable options are dependent upon strategic airlift to mass forces rapidly. The continued degradation of strategic lift will eliminate options such as Just Cause and force more deliberate, predictable options.

The key to success in Panama was not only rapid deployment but the use of all capabilities in a synchronized, effective action – what future concepts call a "coherently joint force." The rapid, effective joint operations of Just Cause came from hard, battle-focused training across all services in the 1980's. For Army forces, intensive small unit training at the National Training Center and Joint Readiness Training Center produced both highly effective ground forces and leaders capable of facing rapidly changing, complex situations and developing adaptive, mission-focused results. Navy, Air Force and Marine units and leaders were developed through similar large-scale, demanding training experiences within their own services. In essence, the

force which fought Operation Just Cause had already faced similar situations before in both field and simulations training. Leaders at all levels, across all services, were prepared for a complex, adaptive fight. Forces honed their capabilities through intensive rehearsals, many joint in nature, to ensure Joint Task Force South was fully prepared. The feedback process was also key, with each rehearsal producing lessons to both components and planning headquarters that fed their reassessment and revisions of plans.

Joint rehearsals were integral to success and warrant consideration in future training approaches at the combat training centers. Most training centers continue to be service-centric, i.e. focused on a single service with a few joint add-ons. Simply a naval gunfire liaison officer or a tactical air control team to Army training does not make it "joint," and consequently does not contribute to mutual understanding and interoperability across services. The extensive inter-service planning and rehearsals prior to this operation illustrates the success that can be, and must be, achieved in the future. Consequently, joint focus should be an integral part of training center approaches across all the services. In the future, with compressed time sequences for rapid and decisive action, forces will not have the extensive preparation time found here to build and solidify joint interoperability. Units fought effectively in the joint arena at battalion and brigade levels because they trained that way. Future forces must be trained to the same or better levels on a recurring basis to be ready on short-notice.

The linchpin of success in effectively launching 20000 soldiers from over a dozen locations, via air and ground to strike *simultaneously* twenty-seven dispersed locations was built on the high level of training among each of the service components, combined with the familiarity and teamwork produced through extensive rehearsals. No matter how sophisticated and capable equipment may become, effectiveness will rest upon the ability of soldiers, marines, sailors, and airmen to operate the equipment as well as to envision and achieve the intent their leaders. No matter what else may change, rapid decisive operations will ultimately depend on an extraordinarily high level of leader, unit, and staff competence that is produced through realistic, demanding, and increasingly joint training.

DECISIVE LEADERSHIP

A fifth factor that Thurman noted was the requirement for decisive leadership at all levels. "Leadership that understood not only the explicit order but the implicit challenges; who were able to persevere regardless of the vagaries of rapidly changing conditions" enabled decentralized, aggressive action to achieve the objectives selected.[55] Across twenty-seven different objectives at H-hour, leaders acted in unison based on their leader's intent and not on

incremental instructions. In the future greater connectivity and communications capabilities will enable senior leaders to see the same picture as the small unit leader at the forward edge of the battlefield. However, greater awareness should not mean more centralized direction of those at the point of the spear. Rapid, decisive results in Panama rested on every member of the joint forces knowing and performing their duties simultaneously. Tactical level commander accomplished the close fights, while the Joint Task Force commander ensured synchronization and CINCSOUTH dealt with political-military challenges: simultaneous actions across all levels produced the "self-enabling" operational results needed across a complex operation. Future concepts must capitalize upon and not constrain simultaneous action: while forces are networked and become more situationally aware, they must still focus on decentralized, intent-based decision making by leaders in contact with the challenges. Senior leaders must resist the temptation of controlling battle through "squad leaders on a wire"; the ability to see more should not lead to the temptation to directly control more. *In all, operations in Panama were successful across a vague, complex and dispersed battlefield in which simplicity of command and control, mission based orders and decentralized decision making by leaders on the spot proved the measure of success.* Future knowledge-centric capabilities must focus on enhancing and not replacing such a process.

JOINT TASK FORCE SOUTH AS A SEPARATE WARFIGHTING HEADQUARTERS

A final key element of JUST CAUSE's rapid success was the establishment of a Joint Task Force well in advance of the execution date for the operation. While SOUTHCOM and U.S. Army South focused on the crisis unfolding in Panama, Thurman needed a subunified headquarters separate from SOUTHCOM that could focus on the planning and execution of strike operations. Establishing Joint Task Force South early on enabled focused, synchronized, joint planning across four separate major headquarters. The Joint Staff in Washington worked policy and strategy among the interagency while specific strategic planning at SOUTHCOM focused on containing the crisis in Panama. The XVIII Airborne Corps as Joint Task Force South accomplished campaign planning and coordination among the components and the Joint Special Operations Command. U.S. Army South's Joint Task Force Panama at Fort Clayton accomplished in country planning, preparations and operations leading up to the invasion. Finally, the air component at 830th Air Division and Twelfth Air Force completed planning for airlift and close air support.[56] In all, a complex plan was coordinated among a number of dispersed sites and constantly updated to take advantages of lessons learned from rehearsals as well as intelligence on the constantly changing Panamanian Defense Forces threat.

Simultaneous planning and coordination from dispersed locations was very similar to the Rapid Decisive Operations concept of distributed, integrated planning. However, continued synchronization and common awareness came only through extensive planning time, travel and face-to-face contact. Future contingencies will not allow the luxury of extensive time, so future planning must be done to the same level of precision, but on more compressed time sequences and without extensive travel and physical reconnaissance. During preparation for Just Cause, Hartzog observed that synchronization and concurrent planning with the Joint Staff in Washington was almost non-existent:

> To my knowledge there was no significant planning about that operation that went on in Washington anywhere. I believe that all of it was done, its's fair to say, in Panama and Fort Bragg and that it was briefed to Washington for approval. There were a considerable amount of briefings that were given in Washington to make Washington familiar with all the parts of it and to seek their approval. That, in fact, was one of the great processes; the whole way that thing was done.[57]

While the lower headquarters enjoyed significant latitude in planning, this lack of situational awareness in Washington led to sequential and not simultaneous planning between the Joint Staff and the forward headquarters. This approach to sequential development of objectives and proposed effects, followed by briefings to attune Washington to the plan, and then revising the plan based on guidance significantly increased the friction and time needed to gain guidance and approval.

Prior detailed preparation at all levels provided success, but as operations moved past the first forty-eight hours, both SOUTHCOM and Joint Task Force South began to run into the frictions of American hostages, large-scale civil disturbances, and Noriega's taking refuge in the Papal Nuncio compound. Media and diplomatic pressures in Washington caused divergence in approaches with Thurman and Stiner who continued a hard-line approach. The most famous instance was Thurman's use of rock music for psychological operations against Noriega in the Nuncio residence – an action that resulted in embarrassment in Washington and Powell's order to Thurman to cease this tactic.[58] Also indicative of the divergence in perspectives amid a fast-moving situation were the civil disturbances and rioting, which erupted as former Dignity Battalion members dispersed among the populace. Situational awareness in Washington suffered as policy makers in Washington dealt with national and international media through sparse reports, partial dispatches, and CNN-live reports. Disconnects also inhibited dynamic and proactive planning. As SOUTHCOM and Joint Task Force South became immersed in the close-fight, staff officers were unable to get ahead of operations to conduct an operational net reassessment to drive future force requirements for emerging civil-military challenges. Since the

Joint Staff was separated from the situation, it lacked the specific situational awareness to feed the interagency synchronization process and allow Washington to anticipate future policy and force requirements during the stand-up of the Endara government.

These are not indictments of SOUTHCOM or Joint Task Force South, but are a fact of life in fast moving operations. Units must deal with the "here and now" to ensure effective execution and take chances with the future. However, the forces and policies future success depended upon had to be anticipated and coordinated simultaneously - rapidity depends on this non-sequential approach. However, better situational awareness tools that did not require "push to talk" technology would have provided a Common Reference Operational Picture (CROP) and enabled the Interagency process to be more proactive. Future planning tools must provide integrated situational awareness and collaborative planning nets using secure communications to tie together military headquarters with the interagency. In place of face-to-face coordination, lower-level VTC and interneted collaborative tools with networked white-board capabilities will allow planners to discuss alternatives without time-consuming travel. Equally important is integration into this of real time intelligence and media perspectives fuse fact and perceptions about events as they are unfolding in order to gauge the success of operations and the effects they generate.

CONCLUSIONS

Operation Just Cause demonstrated that the Army has a critical role to play in Rapid Decisive Operations. Although in recent years the Army has been relegated to "large" missions such as major theater conflicts in Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and "long" missions such as peacekeeping and humanitarian support in Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo, while the other members of the joint force to deliver precise, rapid and decisive defeat upon adversaries in Kosovo and Afghanistan. However, these missions were only successful when there was time for effects to become decisive, and where bombs and small packets of special operations forces supplemented the direct actions of surrogate forces such as the Kosovo Liberation Army or Afghan fighters. These surrogates assumed the ground force role and presented a direct, viable threat that showed defeat would follow the bombs and cruise missiles if the enemy did not yield.

Operation Just Cause also showed that dominant maneuver, applied in a coherently joint, overwhelming and focused manner, could achieve rapid, decisive results in medium to small-scale contingency situations. Through Ranger, Airborne and emerging Interim Brigade Combat Team forces, the Army will have the capability to execute long-range, precision strike operations to deliver forces against an adversary, followed by rapid reinforcement to build and

sustain an overwhelming force. Army forces can and will provide short-term, broad scale expeditionary warfare capabilities in littoral areas as well as in a diversity of inland terrain and population areas, utilizing precision maneuver and fires where the pure destruction of enemy infrastructure and facilities will not produce decisive results. Lastly, Army forces will provide the ready, in-place capability to quickly stabilize conditions and support establishment of a favorable government through sustained civil-military operations. As Operation Just Cause illustrated, Army forces can provide future Rapid Decisive Operations with the full range of capabilities to create a larger, potent, and overwhelming joint force that optimizes the capabilities of other services. Additionally, Army forces at the center of a coherently joint operation will provide overwhelming land-centric strikes, followed by the immediate capabilities for complete, continued domination of an adversary's territory, major population centers and resources. These contributions create decisive effects beyond physical destruction of infrastructure which are less a factor in under-developed regions. Army forces focused on dominant, decisive maneuver present the enemy with the possibility (and eventual reality) of total defeat and replacement of their regime.

Concept developments must focus on retaining the best of the old as well as finding new capabilities that were lacking during Operation Just Cause. Hard, battle-focused, joint training that develops flexible and adaptive lower-level leaders who act on intent and not instructions must remain the centerpiece of future developments. In all, it was "the quality of the boys and not the toys" that provided rapid, decisive victory in Panama, and it will be so in the future. In turn, the structures enabling Rapid Decisive Operations must be shaped around the imperative to enhance and empower timely, focused planning and decision-making that is distributed, decentralized and simultaneous at all levels. Second, as Thurman noted, simultaneous operations will not fit all situations. Rapid decisive operations will not be a "one size fits all" remedy for smaller contingencies, and must be centered around a focused, demanding intelligence and policy assessment and reassessment process which indicates that rapid, decisive operations provide the greatest likelihood of success given the time, place and situation presented for the United States, its coalition partners, and the enemy. Thurman's five criteria for successful "simultaneous operations" – accurate intelligence, well-articulated and broadly supported end-states, the opportunity for surprise, sufficient joint forces of the right type, and decisive, focused leadership – are excellent guidelines for assessing whether decisive operations are a feasible, suitable and acceptable method for employing national power.

Finally, rapid decisive operations will not be low-risk warfare. Throughout much of the last decade the Clinton Administration committed U.S. forces to a variety of valuable but resource-

consuming peace keeping missions, most often with imprecise or unclear guidance on the end-states desired. Through these operations, the Army acquired a penchant for casualty avoidance and risk aversion. During peace operations where end-states are often vague or articulated in terms of "maintaining a safe and secure environment" and "forwarding the process of peace and development," operations revolved around cautious, calculated actions which focused heavily on reducing the risk of injury to American servicemen so as not to subject the mission to congressional scrutiny or media criticism. This process and mindset runs directly counter to that required for decisive operations. A redesigned interagency process must provide clear and concise guidance for the use of national, and most specifically military, power. In turn, military force must be focused on accomplishing the overwhelming defeat of the enemy through dominant, decisive land operations, and not on producing calculated, low-risk operations. Where the President and the nation demand rapid and decisive results, the Army must plan, prepare and act quickly to provide rapid and decisive victory.

Word Count: 13,012

ENDNOTES

[1] General Maxwell Thurman and LTG William Hartzog, "Simultaneity" (unpublished draft), Maxwell Thurman Papers, Military History Institute, Box 217, 16.

[2] Thurman, "Simultaneity," 17; U.S. Joint Forces Command, "A White Paper for Rapid Decisive Operations," U.S. Joint Forces Command: J9 Joint Futures Lab (January 2002), 2-4.

[3] Peter Paret, ed., Makers of Modern Strategy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 341-342.

[4] Honorable Les Aspin, Operation Just Cause: Lessons and Warnings in the Future Use of Military Force (U.S. Congress: House Committee on Armed Services, January 12, 1990), 3; Maxwell Thurman Papers, "Just Cause," Military History Institute, Box 217.

[5] USJFCOM, "White Paper," 3-5; U.S. Joint Forces Command, "Executive Summary: A White Paper for Rapid Decisive Operations" (U.S. Joint Forces Command: J9 Joint Futures Lab, January 2002), 1.

[6] Eytan Bilboa, "The Panama Invasion Revisited: Lesson for the Use of Force in the Post Cold War Era," Political Science Quarterly 110, no. 4, 539; Walter LaFeber, The Panama Canal: The Crisis in Historical Perspective (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 42-47.

[7] Major General William Hartzog, Oral History Program: Just Cause (Fort Clayton, Panama: History Office, Headquarters, U.S. Army South),7; Ronald H. Cole, Operation Just Cause: The Planning and Execution of Joint Operations in Panama, February 1988-January 1990 (Washington: Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1995), 12-25.

[8] Hartzog, Oral History, 7-8.

[9] Ibid. Hartzog noted that the shift away from the "gradualist approach" had already begun under Gen Woerner in June, in response to rapidly deteriorating events; in all he appraised the change, brought new urgency under Thurman, as "a revolution within and evolution." On the threat, Hartzog noted that "we never felt the PDF was an enemy of the United States Military. It's only that Noriega and his immediate henchmen were the problem." Thus, the threat was not the force but its corrupt and anti-American leadership. Same is echoed in Thurman's assessment in his personal notes from the period in Maxwell Thurman Papers, "Just Cause/Urgent Fury- Notes." Military History Institute, Box 217.

[10] "Lead-Pipe Politics," Time, 22 May 1989.

[11] General Maxwell Thurman, "Brief Given to National Defense University, January 31, 1990: Operation Just Cause – Mission Accomplished, " Thurman Papers, "CINC SOUTHCOM-Just Cause," MHI, Box 217; Execute Order, CJCS, 182325ZDec89, Thurman Papers, "CINCSOUTHCOM-Just Cause," Box 217, MHI.

[12] This was not meant to be a condemnation of USARSO who formed the nucleus of JTF-Panama, but they were concerned with the day to day security, training and stability within the

country, especially given the increased tensions and buildup of U.S. forces in country. JTF-South would be able to stand-back from the situation and focus on the planning and synchronization of such a complex operation, without alerting the enemy to U.S. intentions. Cole, 9-17. Major General Marc Cisneros, Commander U.S. Army South, takes the opposite opinion (that JTF-SO came too late to the fight to be fully functional), but does not acknowledge the workload and diversity his small headquarters suffered under. David Adams, "An Overlooked Hero and the forgotten Victims" New York Times, December 21, 1999, 1-4.

[13] Just before the invasion, a PDF informant reported that Cuban advisors assisted the PDF in forming a 250 man militia force to terrorize and possibly kidnap U.S. citizens living in the canal zone with the idea of pre-empting U.S. military action and discrediting the Bush Administration. Subsequent attacks on U.S. servicemen, to include the killing of Lt Paz on December 17, 1989 tended to confirm these reports. Michael E. Seitz, "Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence Factors," in Bruce Watson and Peter G. Tsouras, eds. Operation Just Cause: The U.S. Intervention in Panama (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 105-114.

[14] Robert R. Ropelewski, "Planning, Precision, and Surprise Led to Panama Success," Armed Forces Journal International (Feb1990), 25-26.

[15] "The Architect of 'Just Cause'," Army Times, 12 March 1990, 18; Bruce B. Auster, "Military Lessons of the Invasion," U.S. News and World Report, January 8, 1990, 22-24.; Seitz, "Command, Control, Communications," 109-110.

[16] Thurman Brief; Cole, Operation Just Cause, 20.

[17] Cole, 20-21.

[18] The battalion, 3/504 Airborne Infantry, was one of the units rotating through the Jungle Operations Training Center at Ft Sherman; it would not drop along with the remainder of its regiment but remain under control of the 7th ID(L) throughout. Dennis Steele, "Operation Just Cause," Army, February 1990, 41; Cole, 21; Thomas Donnelly, et al., Operation Just Cause: The Storming of Panama (New York: Lexington Books, 1991), 236-267.

[19] Cole, Operation Just Cause, 21.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Donnelly, et al, Operation Just Cause, 93-97.

[22] Thurman Brief to NDU ; Cole, Operation Just Cause, 28.

[23] Donnelly et al, 130-159; Lorenzo Crowell, "The Anatomy of Just Cause," in Bruce Watson and Peter G. Tsouras, eds. Operation Just Cause: The U.S. Intervention in Panama (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 84-85.

[24] Donelly, et al, 122-130.

[25] Crowell, "The Anatomy of Just Cause," 84. Special Operations teams were watching a total of 7 sites that Noriega had been known to frequent, but his mistress later said that he was actually in a hotel outside the Torrijos Airport when the Rangers made their assault. Although he was not captured initially, the combined actions of special forces ensured that he had no way of escaping the country.

[26] Crowell, "The Anatomy of Just Cause," 87. This also exposed a problem in depending on air evacuation for the wounded. As the SEAL's were pinned-down, they were unable to evacuate their wounded for several hours until relieved by elements of the 82nd Airborne.

[27] This element of the 82nd was initially deployed for training at the Jungle Operations Training Center and did not jump in the airborne assault with the remainder of the division.

[28] Crowell, "The Anatomy of Just Cause," 89.

[29] Ibid., 90.

[30] Ibid.; Donnelly, et al, 192-213.

[31] Crowell, 91. The departure airfield at Pope AFB had only enough de-icing equipment to handle six aircraft at a time. The troops loaded the aircraft on time, but sat waiting while aircraft were de-iced and the aircraft were launched in several serials, with all drops finally completed just before dawn at 0515.

[32] Dennis Steele, "Operation Just Cause," Army, February 1990; 41.

[33] Crowell, 91. The late arrival of Task Force Pacific forced a daylight assault that made the helicopters very vulnerable to ground fire; most of the 45 helicopters hit by hostile fire during the operation were hit during daylight operations on the first day.

[34] Daniel P Bolger, Death Ground: Today' American Infantry in Battle (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1999), 48-60; USAWC Department of Strategy, Planning and Operations, "Case Study: Operation Just Cause, Panama, 1989" (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2002), 27.

[35] Institute of Land Warfare, Strategic Mobility and Responsive Power Projection (Washington: Association of the United States Army, December, 1999), 1-3; Crowell, 75;Norris Lyn McCall, "Assessing the Role of Air Power," in Bruce Watson and Peter G. Tsouras, eds. Operation Just Cause: The U.S. Intervention in Panama (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 115-121.

[36] Crowell, 75-81.

[37] Ibid., 81.

[38] Richard H. Shultz, In the Aftermath of War: U.S. Support for Reconstruction and Nation-Building in Panama Following Just Cause (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1993), 16.

[39] USAWC, "Case Study: Operation Just Cause," 28; Shultz, In the Aftermath of War, 16-19.

[40] USAWC, "Case Study: Operation Just Cause," 44. In all, there was little non-military involvement in the pre-intervention planning process. The Secretary of Defense was undoubtedly briefed on the plan, but it remains unclear as to whether the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy or the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict (both charged by Goldwater-Nichols to review military planning) were involved in the planning process. Additionally, there is no indication that any non-Defense Department agencies, particularly State Department, had enough knowledge of the operation to do their own contingency planning. In all, there is no indication in developing a rapid and decisive military option that the interagency process was energized to develop a plan for following military victory with political-economic action to emplace and support a new Panamanian government that replaced Noriega and the PDF.

[41] Shultz, In the Aftermath of War, 15-22; Cole, 66-67. First civil affairs reserve personnel did not arrive until 6 days after the start of the operation; 25 civil affairs reservists arrived on 26 December, with 120 more on 1 January 1990 and 155 on 15 January 1990. However, the key here is that most were reservists, on short tours of duty (30 days or less) which led to a problem of "revolving door" forces that were constantly transitioning through, thus inhibiting any capability for civil-military operations to develop continuity or build relationships with the Endara government.

[42] Representative Les Aspin, Operation Just Cause: Lessons and Warnings in the Future Use of Military Force, U.S. Congress: House Committee on Armed Services, January 12, 1990, 7-8.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Major General Marc A. Cisneros, Oral History Program: Just Cause (Fort Clayton, Panama: History Office, Headquarters, U.S. Army South, June 12, 1990), 9-13; . David Adams, "An Overlooked Hero and the forgotten Victims" (New York Times: December 21, 1999), 1-4.

[45] Shultz, 33; John T. Fishel, "The Fog of Peace: Planning and Executing the Restoration of Panama" (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, Army War College, 1992), 7.

[46] Thurman, "Simultaneity," 18.

[47] Ibid., 4.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., 8, 18.

[50] Ibid., 16-17.

[51] Gilboa, "The Panama Invasion Revisited," 539-560.

[52] Thurman, "Simultaneity," 21.

[53] Institute of Land Warfare, Strategic Mobility and Responsive Power Projection (Washington: Association of the United States Army, December, 1999), 1-4.

[54] Ibid., 7, 18-19.

[55] Thurman, "Simultaneity," 14.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Hartzog, Oral History, 8.

[58] Cole, 57-63.

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