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Operations Economy of Forces

MSG Elvin Freeman

United States Army Sergeants Major Academy

Class # M05 – Team B

CMDCM Cain

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Abstract

Personnel procurement and organization strength plays a vital role in the principal of war “Economy of Forces”. The Department of Defense in conjunction with Congress and many other entities mandate the management of the personnel strength for the Army. Their decisions have an effect on the effective employment of the Economy of Forces concept. This study discusses some of the effects of current measures and describes how our ability to manage the employment/ deployment of Army personnel and equipment to multiple operations is somewhat limited. A brief review of our history will prove that our government is ineffective in managing our military strength as a measure to prepare for the unknown.

Following the conclusion of Operations Desert Storm and Shield, the armed forces enjoyed a short reprieve before being called into action again. The multiple deployments were carried out in midst of a transformation period. These actions were not new to the services but proved once again to be a challenge to overcome while being the police to the world. Some of these ventures were successful while others were not. Many of these challenges were unsuccessful in part due to the transition within the forces. Once again showing that our economy of force practices need to be revised in order for us to maintain a fighting force ready to meet any challenge.

### Redefining the Army's Operation Tempo and Transformation

#### *Evolution of the Joint Community*

The concept of change remains a constant in the military service. Our service members deploy to locations in the continental United States and overseas to support both humanitarian and wartime efforts. The changes our forces endure after major conflicts continue to have drastic effect on our ability to perform well when deployed. Over the last twelve years or so the United States Army as well as our sister services made drastic changes to combat the various challenges presented in the many different campaigns. Our leaders anticipated some need for change and initiated initiatives to ensure our Soldiers were ready for just about anything. Some changes, however could not be planned as various campaigns confront us with non-conventional situations which require innovative methods of warfare. One change that hurts our military but continues to be practiced is stripping our military service of much needed resources (Soldiers) at the end of major conflicts. This has and will continue to cause readiness problems if we do not learn from our mistakes and switch tactics.

One challenge that prevails in all military conflict is the number of mentally and physically qualified Soldiers available for deployment in support of the various operations. This aspect becomes an issue when our government forces our personnel strength to draw down after each major conflict. Joint operations with sister services present another challenge in today's operations. The concept of joint operations within the services has the opportunity to improve now because of the various conflicts in which we are involved. Cooperation and flexibility remain paramount in our ever evolving military. Being receptive and adaptable to change is a strength our military possess. These characteristics along with new innovative ideas continue to make us a premier power in the world.

As a premier leader in today's world, our services constantly look for ways to improve our operations. The practice of downsizing after a campaign continues to be our government's practice in an effort to heal the financial wounds of war we endure. As mentioned before, the Army underwent some drastic downsizing upon completion of Operations Desert Storm and Shield. The loss of 300,000 Soldiers and the theory of doing more with less presented a challenge to our leaders as we embarked upon the various campaigns we engaged in over the past decade or so. The transformation process involves more than downsizing, but the realignment of personnel resources presents a problem to units with the ultimate responsibility of defending our nation's freedoms.

"The military departments oversee the recruitment, training, and equipping of their men and women, but operational control is assigned to the nine unified commands" (Morris, 1996). New equipment and improved training methods to keep our Soldiers abreast of new doctrine. Maintaining the strength of our force is vital not only to the commander at the lowest level it is

important to the combatant commanders. The ever changing scenes we endure based on the will of the world's power constantly presents a welcome challenge to our leaders and Soldiers.

*Organizing and Training - Experimenting with the Force*

Our military leaders derived some innovative measures to overcome some of the obstacles we encounter in this asymmetrical war. One such method is the Army's Force XXI process. "The Army's Force XXI process involves three complementary and interactive efforts designed to reshape the current force into Army XXI, the digitized force for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" (Hanna, 1997). The first method is redesigning the operational Army; it is a major factor in force experimentation. The redesign of the divisions, more specifically the brigades, presents a great manning challenge to our leadership. The second method is changing the institutional Army. Changing the institutional training also affects the readiness of our Soldiers. Effective use of such tools as the internet and mobile training teams are tools that increased the opportunities for institutional training. It is a necessary tool to provide opportunities for our deployed Soldiers to maintain some level of proficiency on new training initiatives. The last method is integrating information technologies make the other initiatives probable. Integrating information age technologies into the force make the Army's Force XXI process possible. Tools such as the internet and global positioning systems are vital to our need to change. Our leadership effectively uses the above listed methods to help initiate and bring about some necessary change for our military services.

Globally speaking our services have embarked on many different types of operational missions. The traditional mission of a Soldier is to fight an enemy or defend a position. Increasingly our Soldiers receive tasking of a humanitarian/peace keeping missions. Both our combat arms and combat service support Soldiers received additional training in non-traditional

conflict efforts. Functioning in areas with large concentrations of noncombatants forced us to shift our methods of fighting in an effort to decrease the collateral damage we cause while conducting our missions. Changes in our basic operational missions force us to change the way we do business as a whole. Our leaders prove consistently that we are up to the challenge of adapting to any situation. Timing is a major challenge our leadership face. We must make the effort to be proactive as opposed to being reactive. Strategic forward planning will aid in further preparing our service members for pending battles. In order to effectively plan our leaders must look at our history and vow not to continue on a negative vicious cycle.

#### *Operations Involving the Force - A Painful Education Process*

The process of cataloging lessons learned has proven to be an effective tool. An intense study of our history would reveal that many of our institutional issues revolve on a repeating cycle. The draw down/build up cycle of personnel strength in the military is one such cycle our government takes us on at the end of any major conflict. We must take up the practice of looking at our history to avoid making the same mistakes. At the end of Desert Storm/Desert Shield our military services quickly fell back into a place of complacency for a short period of time. This sense of security proved to be short lived as we began to become involved in campaigns on many different fronts.

Somalia experienced mass deaths due to starvation in 1992. "The U.N. asked its member nations for assistance. In December 1992, in one of his last acts as President, George Bush proposed to the U.N. that United States combat troops lead the intervention force" (Snyder, 2001) . The request was made after an estimated three hundred thousand Somalians died of starvation due to rationing of food supplies by a controlling military clan. President Bush deployed 25,000 Soldiers on a humanitarian mission called Operation Restore Hope. After a

period of time the UN requested the number of American Soldiers be reduced and received approval; by June 1993 only 12,000 American Soldiers on the ground in Somalia.

On June 5, 1993 the tides began to turn when Aidid's soldiers ambushed and killed Pakistani soldiers while they were on a routine mission. The result of this attack was a request for Mohammad Farah Aidid's arrest by Admiral Howe. The actions after this decree resulted many conflicts to include one of the longest and bloodiest battles American Soldiers were involved in since the Vietnam War (Task Force Ranger, Battle of Mogadishu 1993). In the end, President Clinton ordered the withdrawal of all American Soldiers (complete by March 1994) and all UN support was withdrawn from Somalia by late spring of 1994.

“Operation Uphold Democracy, the U.S.-led, multinational effort to create a safe and secure environment and support the return of exiled President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to Haiti, was conducted from September 1994 through March 1996” (Pathway to Democracy, 1996). Over 20,000 service members deployed to Haiti for Operation Restore Democracy to aid the return of an official government from September 1994 through March 1996. The UN requested assistance after military leader Lieutenant General Raoul Cedras led a coup and overthrew the newly elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide seven months after his installation. The coup was short lived as Lieutenant General Cedras relinquished control prior to the arrival of American forces on 18 September 1994. The number of deployed American service members was reduced to 6,000 by Dec 1, 1994. The last American forces remained in place to provide assistance to the fragile government through February 1996 when United Nations forces received control.

The UN efforts in Rwanda differed from the previous campaigns. The United States and other countries were hesitant to interfere with the clan warfare of Rwanda especially after the

experiences endured in Somalia. Downsizing and deployment on other missions hampered the US involvement in Rwanda. The government of the United States received much criticism for their lack of involvement with the reported genocide by the Hutu tribe which resulted in the death of some 1,000,000 Tutsi clans members. The UN involvement in Rwanda was short and limited. The international community expressed deep regret after the fact, but little could be said to ease the suffering of Rwanda caused by the genocide of the Tutsi clan at the hand of the Hutus.

The Balkans campaign marked the beginning of the change in the Army's concept of war. The members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) agreed to send 28,000 NATO soldiers (including up to 4,000 American service members) to the Balkans in defense of the ethnic Albanians from the aggression of Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic. The Army faced a set of complex and ambiguous security challenges. There were no political, legal or doctrinal examples to follow for the Balkan situation. The Army's mission on this front was the challenge of applying a conventional force as an instrument of humanitarian effort and peace keeping operations.

By the time the Kosovo crisis occurred in 1999, the United States services were adept to operating as a combined and joint team. The deployment of 25,000 NATO service members (2,250 American) to Kosovo after the ethnically driven war in 1999 continues to aid in the reorganization of Kosovo. The lessons learned in joint and combined operations remain crucial even today. The United States military services provide support for various missions of which the most recent one is the Global War on Terror. We remain adept to change and our service members exceed our expectations when called upon to support the decisions of our government. All we ask for is the loyal support from the people we protect.

### Conclusion

Today's Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors and Marines stand ready to deploy to support the call of our country. All we ask for is adequate support in regards to personnel and equipment to carry out our duties. It is not too much to ask that our government officials look at past trends to ascertain whether the decision to massively reduce the services after conflict is wise. Our recent history shows that we do not have extended amounts of time between conflict and it is counterproductive to eliminate and then recruit large numbers of service members. When we do such things, it decreases our effectiveness and service members become hesitant to continue to give support to a nation that cannot effectively manage its most valued resource, the American service member.

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