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This thesis applies an adaption of Richard L. Daft's strategic conversations model of communication to a case study of the communication behaviors of general officers and principal staff officers of I Marine Expeditionary Force during their planning and preparation for Operation Desert Storm. This model explains how I Marine Expeditionary Force Commanding General's facilitation of strategic conversations among subordinate commanders and key staff planners created shared experienced, shared philosophy, familiarity, and trust. Incorporation of the components of the strategic conversations model in a revision of Marine Corps doctrine will institutionalize effective communication behaviors.

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Strategic Conversations: How Effective Communication Enabled Successful Marine Corps

Planning and Preparations for Operation Desert Storm

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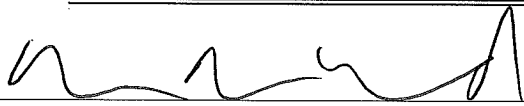
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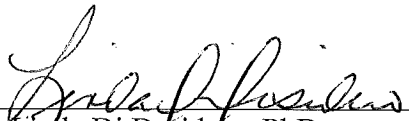
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## Executive Summary

**Title:** Strategic Conversations: How Effective Communication Enabled Successful Marine Corps Planning and Preparations for Operation Desert Storm

**Author:** Major Christopher M. Kaprielian, United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** The I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) commanding general's facilitation and encouragement of strategic conversations developed a mutual understanding of the commander's intent and subordinate unit missions, fostered initiative and ingenuity among subordinate commanders, and allowed subordinate commanders and staff to rapidly modify their plans to meet the requirements of the I MEF mission in preparation for Operation Desert Storm.

**Discussion:** Marine Corps doctrine does not reflect contemporary communication strategies, nor does it reflect the way that Marine Corps units effectively communicate during planning. This thesis uses a model crafted from a modern concept of organizational communication called “strategic conversations,” and applies the model to analyze the communication behaviors of key leaders within I MEF during their planning and preparation for Operation Desert Storm. The seven components of strategic conversations which are used to analyze communication behaviors are setting the agenda, selecting communication channels, creating an open communication environment, presenting questions to seek meaning, listening to interpret genuine meaning, discerning underlying meaning, and conducting productive dialogue.

**Conclusion:** Analysis of I MEF general and principal staff officer communication behaviors reveal that strategic conversations occurred and that they produced shared philosophy, shared experiences, trust, and familiarity among those who participated in the strategic conversations. Furthermore, strategic conversations developed implicit communication among the I MEF general officers and collective awareness of each other's intent, plans, and support requirements, which contributed to their ability to rapidly change operations plans weeks before the ground offensive of Operation Desert Storm. The model of strategic conversations serves as a viable supplement to Marine Corps doctrine in explaining effective communication within Marine Corps units.

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*List of Illustrations*

	<u>Page</u>
Figure 1. Doctrinal Model of Effective Communication.....	5
Figure 2. Spectrum of Media Richness.....	7
Figure 3. Strategic Conversations Model in a Military Planning Context.....	9
Figure 4. Doctrinal Marine Air-Ground Task Force Organization.....	16
Figure 5. Task Organization and Command Relationships, December 1990 to March 1991 .....	18
Figure 6. Spectrum of Media Richness During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm .....	21
Figure 7. Iraqi and Coalition Troop Dispositions with Obstacle Belts .....	24

*Table of Contents*

	<u>Page</u>
DISCLAIMER .....	ii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	iii
PREFACE .....	v
INTRODUCTION .....	1
Doctrinal Terms, Definitions, and a Doctrinal Communication Model .....	3
The Strategic Conversations Model .....	6
Case Study Methodology .....	9
OVERVIEW .....	11
Strategic and Operational Context .....	11
Task Organization, Command Relationships, and Span of Control.....	14
Communications and Intelligence Capabilities and Limitations.....	19
STRATEGIC CONVERSATIONS .....	22
The Mission .....	22
Commander’s Leadership in Initiating Strategic Conversations.....	24
Participant Behaviors During Strategic Conversations .....	29
Products and Outcomes of Strategic Conversations.....	33
CONCLUSION.....	38
END NOTES .....	39
APPENDIX – Planning Conference Transcript Excerpt .....	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	48

## *Preface*

During my career as a Marine Corps combat engineer officer, I have had the privilege of working for and with officers and enlisted Marines who were better communicators and planners than I. While I was pursuing a master's degree in Public Administration, I learned about communication theory and effective communication strategies in private industry and the public sector, and found that the most effective communicators and planners that I had observed in my career employed the same strategies. Marine Corps doctrine does not reflect these contemporary communication strategies, nor does it reflect the way that Marine Corps units communicate during planning. Furthermore, Marine Corps doctrine discusses the importance of using mission-type orders and commander's intent (mechanisms for decentralizing command and control) but does not describe how to communicate these in a meaningful way. When I learned about I Marine Expeditionary Force during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, I saw it as an opportunity to apply a contemporary model of communication to explain how commanders and staff effectively planned combat operations. Hence, this thesis paper is my attempt to show how a modern model of communications can describe why I Marine Expeditionary Force planned effectively during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and how the same model of communications can assist military professionals in their planning activities.

This thesis would not have been possible without the support of the fellow Marines, civilian Marines, Marine Corps University staff, Marine Corps History Division staff, friends, and family. I would like to thank Dr. Nathan Packard, PhD, for serving as my master's thesis mentor at Marine Corps Command and Staff College. Without his counsel, encouragement, patience, and support I would not have been able to produce anything remotely resembling a product of graduate-level study. I sincerely appreciate the support of Dr. James Joyner, PhD and

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## Introduction

Despite the importance of communication in effectively and efficiently leading military organizations in combat, Marine Corps doctrine does not provide Marines a holistic and open system of communication model to explain how to employ mission tactics and commander's intent. The Marine Corps doctrinal publication *Warfighting* does describe how implicit communication can foster initiative among subordinates and principles for developing implicit communication, but it does not describe the relationship between implicit communication, commander's intent, and mission tactics.<sup>1</sup> The Marine Corps doctrinal publication *Planning* elaborates on the importance of effective communication to developing a common understanding of tasks and the commander's intent, but it does not describe the particular aspects of effective communication:

A good commander will also tap the intuitive skills resident in the staff. The degree of participation is based on the abilities of selected staff members and their individual relationships with the commander. Commanders may use members of the staff to help brainstorm a course of action or to help commanders understand their own thought processes. Because of the uncertainty of war, many times a commander can initially provide only the vaguest of ideas and intentions. In such instances, the staff can act as a sounding board for potential concepts and estimates or can help to draw out and articulate the commander's ideas... Planners should be closely linked with executors—ideally, they should be the same people—so that they can stay in touch with the constraints and realities of execution.<sup>2</sup>

An alternative model of communication is needed to understand the aspects of effective communication during planning and the meaning of the words "brainstorm," "sounding board," and "closely linked" listed in Marine Corps doctrine.

The concept of strategic conversations developed by Richard L. Daft provides a framework for facilitating the mutual understanding of tasks, the commander's intent, and the development of trust among subordinate commanders and staff. Strategic conversations refer to

people communicating across boundaries and hierarchical levels about the group or organization's vision, critical strategic themes, and the values that can help achieved desired outcomes.<sup>3</sup> This paper will test the applicability of the strategic conversations model to Marine Corps planning by applying it in a case study of I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) planning and preparations for Operation Desert Storm. The case study will demonstrate that the I MEF commanding general's facilitation and encouragement of strategic conversations developed a mutual understanding of the commander's intent and subordinate unit missions, fostered initiative and ingenuity among subordinate commanders, and allowed subordinate commanders and staff to rapidly modify their plans to meet the requirements of the I MEF mission in preparation for Operation Desert Storm.

Incorporating a new model of communication in Marine Corps doctrine that modern theory and captures the communication techniques used by successful commanders and staff during planning activities can prevent pitfalls caused by the abuse of modern communications technology. Since the end of the Gulf War, advances in command and control technologies have provided US military commanders the ability to communicate with subordinates rapidly and over large geographic distances. Digital and satellite communications, including encrypted voice and video capabilities, provide commanders the means to communicate without seeing their audience in an in-person setting. Furthermore, modern command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR) technologies provide commanders increased situational awareness or the perception of increased situational awareness, which can dissuade a commander from tapping "the intuitive skills resident in the staff," or using the subordinate commanders and staff as a "sounding board for potential concepts and estimates or...draw out and articulate the commander's ideas."<sup>4</sup> Abuse of these technologies can reduce the

collaborative nature of the planning process. While they allow a commander to rapidly derive his or her intent and validate concepts and estimates, they can also detract from developing mutual understanding, familiarity, and trust through the shared experience of planning, thereby reducing the initiative of subordinate commanders. The inclusion of the strategic conversations model in Marine Corps doctrine will enable Marines application of effective communication strategies during planning.

*Doctrinal Terms, Definitions, and a Doctrinal Communication Model.* There are several key terms used in this thesis to analyze communication behaviors of the general officers and principal staff officers of I MEF and its major subordinate commands (MSC) in their planning and preparation for Operation Desert Storm.<sup>5</sup> The first term, trust, is a component and often a product of effective leadership. It is the “firm belief in the reliability, truth, or ability of someone or something.”<sup>6</sup> In psychology, management studies, and communication studies, trust is used as a measure of the quality of a relationship. In this context, trust is a positive attribute of the relationship between commanders, peers, superiors, and subordinates. It is also related to “familiarity,” which is defined as “the quality of being well known from long or close association.”<sup>7</sup> If familiarity indicates a social bond between two or more people, then trust is a much deeper bond between people that fosters action despite personal risk.

Mission tactics and commander’s intent are also related terms used in this paper. Mission tactics and commander’s intent are the principal means by which a commander implements decentralized command and control.<sup>8</sup> It is the process of assigning a subordinate a task – a brief description of what a subordinate must do – without specifying how the mission must be accomplished. Commander’s intent is a device used to inform subordinates of the context of the tasks they are to perform, and the purpose behind the task – a description of why a subordinate

must do the task. When a commander assigns a mission to a subordinate or describes the mission of his or her command, they often use mission tactics and commander's intent to express a mission-type order – a directive that states what is to be done and why. A requirement for the effective use of mission tactics and commander's intent is trust between superior and subordinate, where the superior trusts the subordinate to act responsibly and within the limits of authority, and the subordinate trusts the superior to provide necessary resources without unnecessarily prescribing actions.<sup>9</sup> Commander's use of mission tactics and commander's intent maximizes subordinate initiative and decentralizes the execution of operations because it allows the subordinate to determine how to accomplish their task. Trust, mission-type orders (a product of mission tactics and commander's intent), and decentralized execution serve as the basic principles of "mission command," which is an aspect of a command philosophy.<sup>10</sup>

Developing Marines' ability to communicate implicitly is a component of the Marine Corps's philosophy of command and is founded upon the development of a shared philosophy and shared experiences. Implicit communication is defined as communication "through mutual understanding, using a minimum of key, well-understood phrases or even anticipating each other's thoughts."<sup>11</sup> *Warfighting* describes four principles for developing Marines' ability to communicate implicitly:

First, we should establish long-term working relationships to develop the necessary familiarity and trust. Second, key people—"actuals"—should talk directly to one another when possible, rather than through communicators or messengers. Third, we should communicate orally when possible, because we communicate also in how we talk—our inflections and tone of voice. Fourth, we should communicate in person when possible because we communicate also through our gestures and bearing.<sup>12</sup>

Developing Marines' ability to communicate implicitly within an organization, particularly those assigned to an operational planning team, allows them to anticipate the thoughts of their

commander and rapidly communicate with those with whom they have shared the same experiences. Figure 1 is the author's interpretation and depiction of these communication principles within a model of communication. This model demonstrates the doctrinal linkage between principles of effective communication employed by commanders and the ability to communicate implicitly.

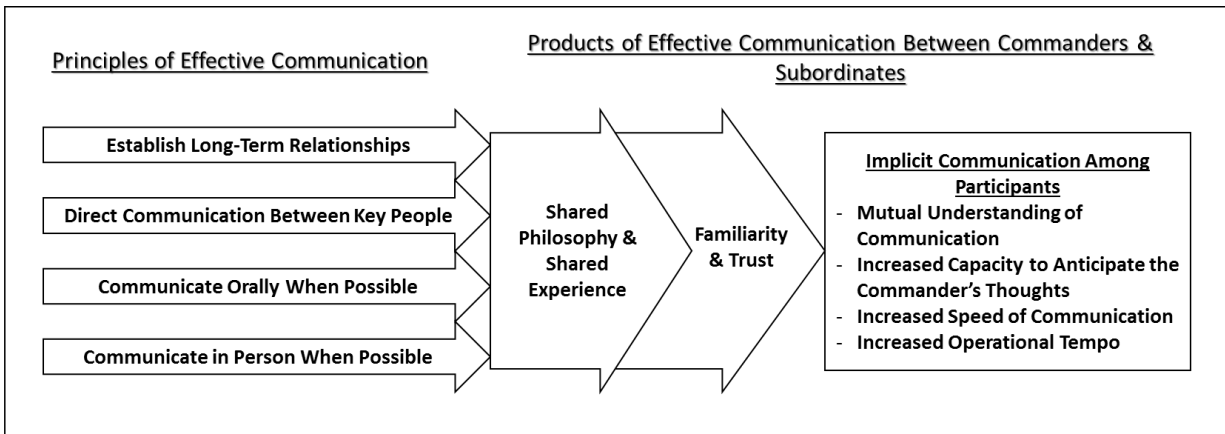


Figure 1. Doctrinal Model of Effective Communication

There are several problems with the doctrinal model of communication. First, this model of communication assumes that the commander is capable of establishing long-term working relationships with those that they will command. Commanders are routinely faced with leading new subordinates in times of crisis and have done so effectively without the precondition of a long-term working relationship. Common doctrine, professional military education experience, uniforms, and other shared aspects of a military organization's culture establishes credibility and trustworthiness between individuals who do not have pre-established relationships and facilitates implicit communication.<sup>13</sup> Second, this model is commander-centric, framing effective communication regarding actions initiated by the commander. Studies in communication openness describe effective communication as the reciprocal exchange of interpersonal messages

between supervisor and subordinate – both take turns in being the sender and receiver of messages, thereby shaping each other’s perceptions, understanding, and beliefs.<sup>14</sup> The doctrinal model of communication does not explain the nature of this dynamic exchange of messages. Third, the focus of practicing effective communication principles or techniques should not be limited to developing the capacity for implicit communication. Effective communication within an organization can produce greater results than what doctrine currently describes. The integration of the strategic conversations model in this construct provides a realistic conception of organizational communication and will be used to describe the planning and preparation activities of the I MEF general officers and staff members in their preparation for Operation Desert Storm.

*The Strategic Conversations Model.* The strategic conversations model serves as an alternative to the doctrinal model for understanding human interactions during productive communication. Daft provides seven components of strategic conversations, three of which are the leader's responsibility and four that involve all participants.<sup>15</sup> The leader is responsible for setting the agenda, selecting communication channels, and creating an open communication climate. In setting the agenda, the leader determines the time, location, participants, and key strategic themes linked to organizational success. The leader selects the communication channels for strategic conversations including the forum (i.e. town hall settings, working groups, etc.) and the medium (e.g. electronic surveys, teleconferencing, in-person, etc.) for conducting strategic conversations.<sup>16</sup> Media have different degrees of richness, meaning the degree to which they leverage different learning styles and facilitate the other components of strategic conversations. Media richness is an important consideration of channel selection because different media may rapidly transmit messages while simultaneously inhibiting shared

experience and understanding. For example, a commander's provision of intent and mission-type orders via written correspondence provide explicit detail less likely to be lost in transmission, but this media does not avail the commander to questioning by his or her subordinates that seek genuine meaning. Figure 2 is an adaption of Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel's graphic depiction of the spectrum of media richness, accounting for the different media available to most leaders in US military units.<sup>17</sup> The third component is creating and sustaining an open communication climate. This component is initiated by the leader but requires emulation by all participants of strategic conversations. It involves "sharing all types of information through the organization, especially across function and hierarchical boundaries."<sup>18</sup> This may involve lateral communication and planning among peers or the inclusion of people not assigned to the same unit.

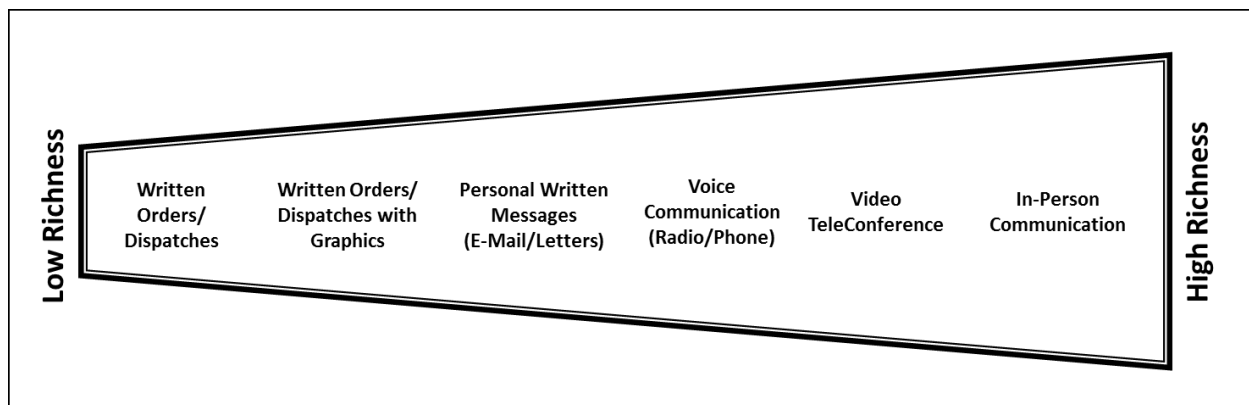


Figure 2. Spectrum of Media Richness

The next four components are championed by the leader of strategic conversation but must be performed by all participants. First, all participants must ask questions to initiate the free flow of information and gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions and ideas of each other, and of the issues established in the agenda. Second, all participants must focus and listen

to messages provided by other participants to develop an understanding of a message's genuine meaning. Third, participants must discern "unarticulated messages hidden below the surface of spoken interaction."<sup>19</sup> While questioning and listening reflect the transmission and receipt of messages, discernment requires the recognition of cues to interpret true meaning. Discernment is necessary when participants of strategic conversations are from outside the normal hierarchy of an organization (e.g. different branch of service within the US Department of Defense, a foreign country military, etc.) and use or interpret the use of terminology with a different meaning. It is also important in formal and structured organizations where subordinates may be reluctant to provide valuable input in a planning process that contradicts senior planning participants. In this type of planning environment, the senior planning participant or the leader of strategic conversations must recognize behaviors indicative of reluctance or apprehension and encourage communication.

The fourth component is productive dialogue, which is defined as the joint activity between at least two participants who are open to being influenced and engage in a turn-taking sequence of message exchange that aims to fulfill a collective goal.<sup>20</sup> Dialogue is different from discussion because participants neither seek a monopoly of ideas nor communicate with the intent to compel or convince. In dialogue, participants reflect on the messages, their true meaning, and how they relate to their perceptions. Applying the components of strategic conversations produces more results than what is described by the doctrinal model of communication (see Figure 3). Strategic conversations facilitate collective learning among participants, including the leader of strategic conversations and participants that will lead other elements of an organization. Through strategic conversations, participants develop a shared philosophy on the strategic themes identified by the leader. In the military planning context, the

shared philosophy includes the commander’s intent, which may evolve through dialogue. It also produces shared experience, familiarity, and social closeness.<sup>21</sup> These are the same products described in the traditional communication model, which provide the foundation for familiarity and trust between the participants of strategic conversations. Furthermore, strategic conversations during planning create more benefits than implicit communication. As this case study will demonstrate, strategic conversations also produce an improved ability to anticipate participant support requirements, reduce time for participants to observe and decide on actions that are nested within the commander’s intent, and facilitate initiative and creativity.

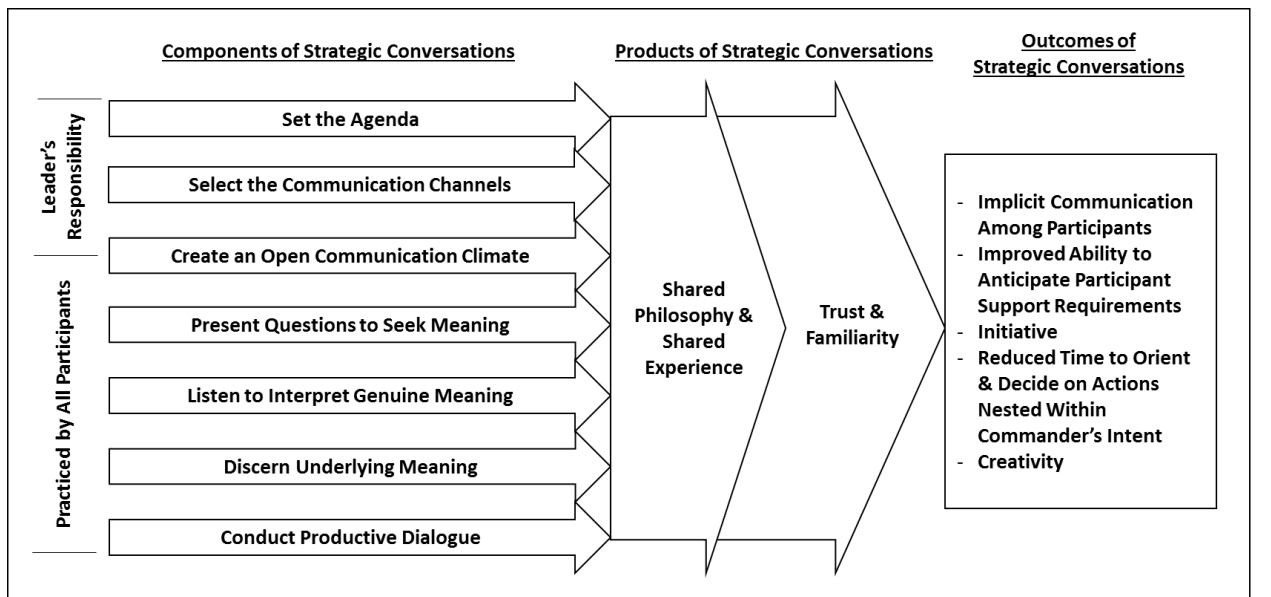


Figure 3. Strategic Conversations Model in a Military Planning Context

*Case Study Methodology.* This paper will utilize the model of strategic conversations to analyze the communication behaviors of the I MEF general officers and key staff members to demonstrate that strategic conversations allowed I MEF MSC commanders to rapidly and effectively change their plans weeks before the initiation of the ground offensive during Operation Desert Storm. This analysis seeks to answer three essential questions: Did I MEF and

MSC leadership demonstrate and facilitate behaviors consistent with the strategic conversations model, did strategic conversations occur, and did those strategic conversations achieve the positive outcomes presumed in the model? I MEF communication behaviors is analyzed in four separate steps. First, there is a review of the operational and tactical context including where, when, and under what conditions the I MEF and MSC leadership conducted their planning and preparations for Operation Desert Storm. Second, the I MEF commanding general's methodology for setting an agenda and selecting communication channels for planning will be assessed against the first three components of the strategic conversations model. Third, the communication behaviors of the I MEF leadership and key staff officers will be analyzed according to the remaining components of the strategic conversations model. The last part will discuss correlations between strategic conversations and behaviors consistent with the products of the strategic conversations model (e.g. implicit communication among participants, initiative, creativity, etc.).

The analysis of communication behaviors draws upon multiple sources. Paul W. Westermeyer's definitive account, *U.S. Marines in the Gulf War, 1990-1991: Liberating Kuwait*, provides a comprehensive review of the strategic and operational context of the Gulf War and a thorough account of I MEF's tactical actions during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The monograph *U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf: With the I Marine Expeditionary Force in Desert Shield and Desert Storm* by Colonel Charles J. Quilter II, other Marine Corps History Division monographs in the same Persian Gulf series, and secondary sources supplemented the historical context for this analysis. Stenographer transcripts of I MEF CE staff meetings, Marine Corps Oral History Program interviews conducted with the general officers and key staff members of I MEF, and other interviews published in military journals served as the primary

sources for analyzing communication behaviors. The interviews also served as the primary source for correlating the presence of strategic conversations with positive products from them.

## Overview

*Strategic and Operational Context.* When Saddam Hussein initiated the invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, he set in motion a whole-of-government response by the United States and a response from European and Middle-Eastern coalition partners that would lead to one of the shortest and most decisive coalition victories in modern warfare. To most Americans and the Department of State, the invasion was unexpected. Iraq and Kuwait had a history of tension stemming from territorial disputes over the Basra region after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Tensions increased in 1990 with the reduction of oil prices by Kuwait and other members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries. Oil price reductions caused a decline in Iraq's export revenues. Despite the dialogue between Iraq and the US, Saddam Hussein's invasion caught the international community and Kuwait by surprise.<sup>22</sup> In less than one day, the Iraqi military occupied and seized key industrial and government centers in Kuwait.

Two days after Iraq invaded Kuwait, staff officers from I MEF departed for Tampa, Florida, to participate in US Central Command's (USCENTCOM) contingency response planning. The four strategic policy objectives approved by President George H.W. Bush were clear, concise, and consistent throughout the planning and execution of operations: promote security and stability in the Gulf region, achieve the unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, restore Kuwait's legitimate government, and protect American citizens abroad.<sup>23</sup> To achieve the first national policy objective, USCENTCOM developed the plan for Operation Desert Shield, which directed the deployment of military forces to Saudi Arabia and the execution of defensive operations to protect Saudi Arabia's sovereign territory from Iraqi incursion. The 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), one of the Marine Corps mid-sized

Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTF), was designated as the first echelon to deploy in support of Operation Desert Shield, followed by I MEF as the main Marine Corps force in the theater of war.

During Operation Desert Shield, Marine Corps forces secured objectives that were part of a USCENTCOM-led annual planning exercise. USCENTCOM's annual Exercise Internal Look had a significant effect on preparing service component commands (e.g. US Army Forces Central, US Air Forces Central, etc.) with planning its concept of operations during Operation Desert Shield. Exercise Internal Look historically focused on fighting Soviet Forces during the Cold War. General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander-in-Chief, USCENTCOM (USCINCCENT) demonstrated foresight by directing the adjustment of the scenario to reflect tensions in the Middle East.<sup>24</sup> It focused instead on liberating Saudi Arabia from an Iraqi invasion and required US Marine Corps Component Central Command (USMARCENT) to provide forces for securing port and industrial complexes in Saudi Arabia's eastern province.<sup>25</sup> The securing of the Port of Jubayl and oil fields during the exercise were the same tasks issued to I MEF during Operation Desert Shield.<sup>26</sup> The exercise planning conducted by staff members of the I MEF CE directly contributed to I MEF's combat readiness and rapid planning and execution of reception, staging, onward movement, and integration of forces using air and sea transport.

Between August 14 and August 20, 1990, Marines of 7th MEB landed at Dhahran, Saudi Arabia and assembled sufficient combat power to defend the Port of Jubayl. The MEB's execution of defensive operations marked the beginning of Marine Corps participation in Operation Desert Shield. Although this operation is not the focus of the case study, it is important to note that the buildup of I MEF's combat power in the theater of war continued

through December during Operation Desert Shield. Between August and December, I MEF conducted defensive operations in zone without becoming decisively engaged with Iraqi ground forces, expanded its area of operations, and facilitated training with coalition units assigned to Joint Forces Command East (JFCE). Training provided to JFCE was critical to developing the warfighting capabilities, interoperability, and trust of coalition forces. I MEF would later become dependent on its coalition partners during USCENTCOM's transition from the defensive operations of Desert Shield to offensive operations of Desert Storm on January 16, 1991.

*Task Organization, Command Relationships, and Span of Control.* The task organization and command relationships of I MEF provide valuable context when assessing the I MEF commanding general's span of control and the communication channels available during planning. Span of control refers to a commander's number of direct subordinates. Although Marine Corps doctrine does not prescribe a limit to the number of subordinates, it states that:

[A] greater number means greater flexibility—three subordinate units allow for more options and combinations than two, for example. However, as the number increases, at some point we lose the ability to effectively consider each unit individually and begin to think of the units together as a single, inflexible mass.... Narrowing span of control—that is, lessening the number of immediate subordinates—means deepening the organization by adding layers of command. But the more layers of command an organization has, the longer it takes for information to move up or down.<sup>27</sup>

If a greater number of subordinates reduces the commander's ability to consider each unit individually, then it also reduces the commander's ability to centralize control of operations.

With a greater number of subordinates, the commander is dependent on the professional abilities of his or her subordinates to accomplish their tasks and has less interaction with them.

Narrowing the span of control increases the commander's ability to communicate with his or her subordinates, but it also increases the ability of the commander and staff to centralize the execution of operations. Therefore, the task organization and command relationships can

indicate if a commander can centralize the control of his or her subordinates' operations, and his or her ability to communicate in-person with subordinates.

The span of the I MEF commanding general's (CG) control during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm was larger than what was prescribed by Marine Corps doctrine.<sup>28</sup> The Marine Corps scales its MAGTFs to meet operational requirements. In the 1990s, MAGTFs consisted of a CE (or headquarters), ground combat element (GCE), aviation combat element (ACE), and combat service support element (CSSE). They ranged in size from a MEF, the largest MAGTF, a middle-sized MEB, and a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), the smallest MAGTF. Figure 4 is the author's depiction of the doctrinal task organization, relative scale, and composition of a MAGTF during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, which provides a visual base for comparison to the task organization and command relationships of I MEF. During the Gulf War, I MEF grew to become the largest MAGTF to maneuver during combat operations since World War II and consisted of up to five MSCs. It took I MEF four months to aggregate the combat power used during Operation Desert Storm, and it became the largest MAGTF to assemble since the Vietnam War.<sup>29</sup>

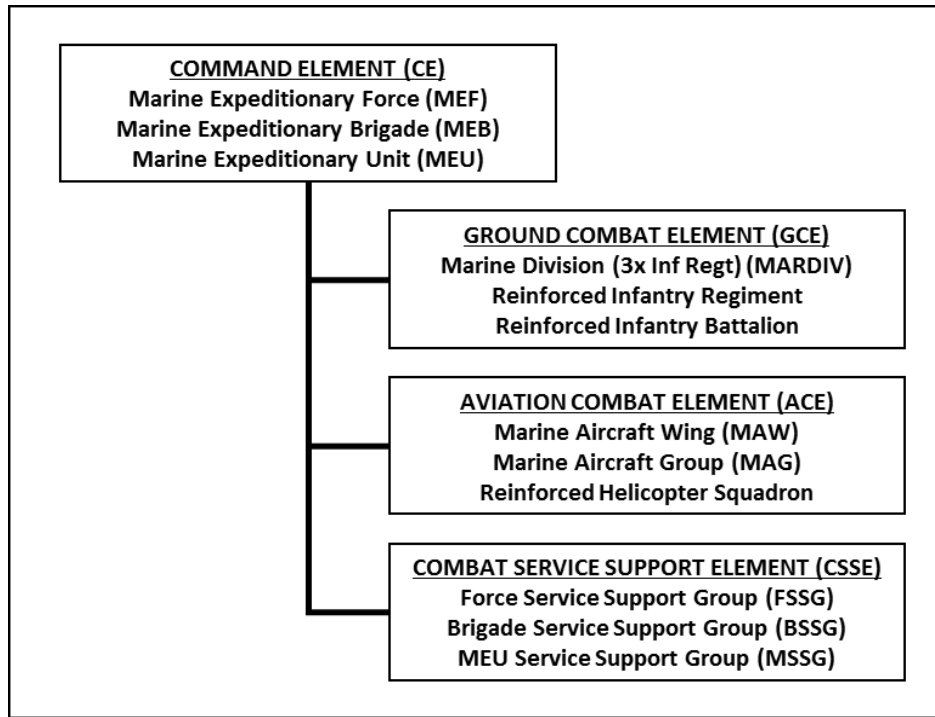


Figure 4. Doctrinal Marine Air-Ground Task Force Organization

The process of aggregating forces in Saudi Arabia and the final task organization of I MEF for Desert Storm had several implications regarding the management and leadership of the force and the familiarity of the commanders during I MEF planning activities. I MEF's entry into the USCENTCOM theater of war required the initial deployment of 7th MEB, followed by the absorption of the 7th MEB and its elements into the MEF as more forces arrived in Saudi Arabia in support of Operation Desert Shield. The merging of large organizations in a short period was a complicated managerial task that required reconfiguring methods of communication and the administration of the staff. The compositing of large units also created leadership challenges. The 7th MEB was manned, trained, equipped, and led to fight as a cohesive unit. Breaking up 7th MEB and absorbing the CE into the I MEF-CE challenged the 7th MEB's group identity and created tension among the staff officers. The tension between the MEB and MEF staff officers was noticed among the MSC commanders even months after they had merged.

Brigadier General Charles C. Krulak, the Commander of Direct Support Command during Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield, remarked that “what had happened between 7th MEB and the hard feelings that were between 7th MEB and I MEF had so ingrained itself into the minds of Jim Brabham and [me] that we were determined not to repeat that and worked hard to insure an excellent working relationship.”<sup>30</sup> Managing the internal conflicts among the staff would continue to be a leadership challenge of Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, I MEF Commanding General (CG), and would cause him to rely on his subordinate commanders and a core of principal staff officers to plan offensive operations for Operation Desert Storm.

The I MEF task organization and its command relationships in the months before Operation Desert Storm indicate a very wide, flat, and complex system. Figure 5 is the author's depiction of the I MEF task organization and command relationships from December 1990 to March 1991. Lieutenant General Boomer and his staff exercised operational control over five MSCs and six major subordinate elements subordinate commands during Operation Desert Storm, which is significantly larger than the doctrinal task organization depicted in Figure 4 and could function effectively only through decentralized command and control. This organization was much larger than Marines had been trained and educated to lead and manage. The I MEF commanders and staff received little guidance from doctrine on how to effectively command and control a MAGTF similar in size to a US Army Corps. External coordination requirements exacerbated the challenges of commanding this organization. The Commanding General, I MEF assumed the dual responsibility as the Commander, USMARCENT. This required Lieutenant General Boomer and the I MEF staff to provide their own administrative support, theater-level logistics coordination and sustainment, and capability reach-back coordination. This additional duty also required Lieutenant General Boomer to advise General Schwarzkopf on the most

effective means of employing the Marine Corps capabilities. Lieutenant General Boomer would devote his time to meeting with General Schwarzkopf in Riyadh, talking to General Schwarzkopf over a secure phone, and leading his unit from I MEF headquarters in northern Saudi Arabia. The cumulative effects of these internal and external requirements on Lieutenant General Boomer's span of control explain the dependency on non-hierarchical aspects of strategic conversations during the planning and preparation for Operation Desert Storm.

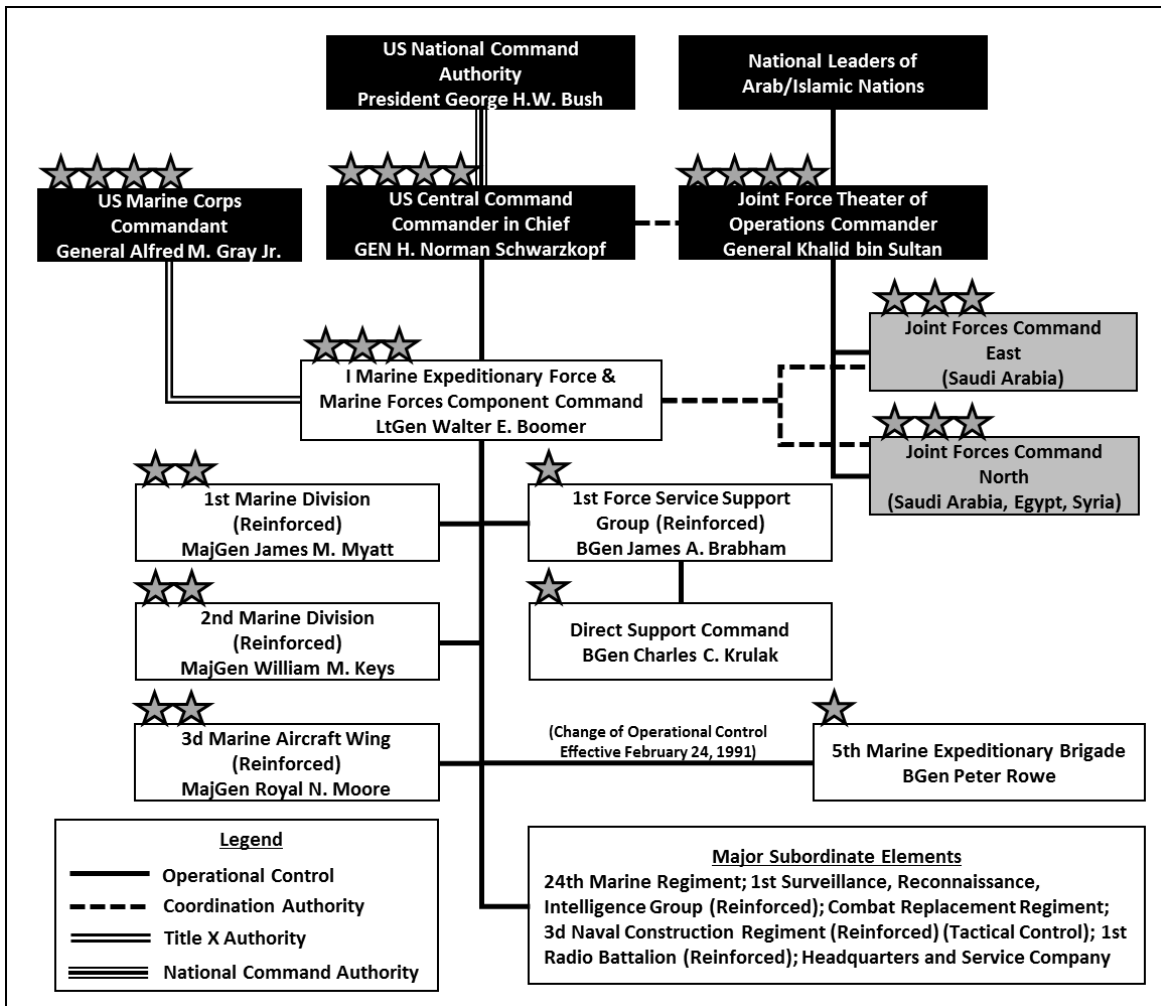


Figure 5. Task Organization and Command Relationships, December 1990 to March 1991

*Communications and Intelligence Capabilities and Limitations.* The capabilities and limitations of communications and intelligence collections and reporting technologies available to the I MEF CE provides context for understanding the use of various communication methods available to Marines while planning Operation Desert Storm. During the Gulf War, I MEF had very limited data communications capabilities and no virtual collaboration capabilities or internet based technologies. I MEF did possess computers, but they had limited data storage, were only used for limited word processing, and could only share information using transportable floppy disks.<sup>31</sup> The communications architecture for the MEF and MEB CE was limited to radio, wire/telephone, and voice satellite communications. In garrison, Special Security Communication Teams were responsible for providing basic network communication capabilities for the MEF Command Center using the World Wide Military Command and Control System (WWMCCS) and Defense Special Security Communications System (DSSCS). The WWMCCS and DSSCS provided a means of transmitting and receiving basic data transmissions including special intelligence communications, critical communications, or other messages with echelons of command above the MEF.<sup>32</sup> These capabilities were replicated using a series of encrypted tactical radio, wire, and satellite communication assets. Ultimately, if the commanders or staff members needed to communicate with each other, it would be over the phone, radio, or in-person.

During the Gulf War, USCENTCOM integrated intelligence collection, reporting, and targeting technologies through a communications network. This network relied on satellites with Key Hole electro-optical and signals collection capabilities and aircraft equipped with targeting systems. The satellite systems were national assets that provided critical collections capabilities to USCENTCOM during the planning for Operation Desert Storm. The high demand of these

systems limited their utility in supporting I MEF information requirements.<sup>33</sup> Aircraft equipped with electro-optical target acquisition equipment provided collections capabilities but were of limited use during the early planning stages of Operation Desert Storm because a majority of the sorties attacked strategic targets in Iraq and northern Kuwait, not targets located in southern Kuwait and I MEF area of operations. Difficulty in obtaining imagery products and intelligence created information gaps during I MEF's planning, which increased the I MEF commander's and staff's uncertainty regarding enemy force dispositions. I MEF commanders and staff were forced to work collaboratively to evaluate the operating environment.

The communications and intelligence technologies provide fewer media capabilities than what is available to the US military today. The lack of data communications capabilities required planners to share information either using voice communication technologies or in person (see Figure 6). The capabilities available also limited Lieutenant General Boomer to selecting communication channels that involved in-person and voice communication during the planning for Operation Desert Storm. It also meant that power point presentations or other virtual collaboration and communication tools could not supplant the rich, social interaction of in-person communications. Ultimately, the limited media options available to the I MEF leadership led to a reliance on in-person communication, which contributed to developing shared experiences, a shared philosophy, familiarity, and trust among the participants of strategic conversations.

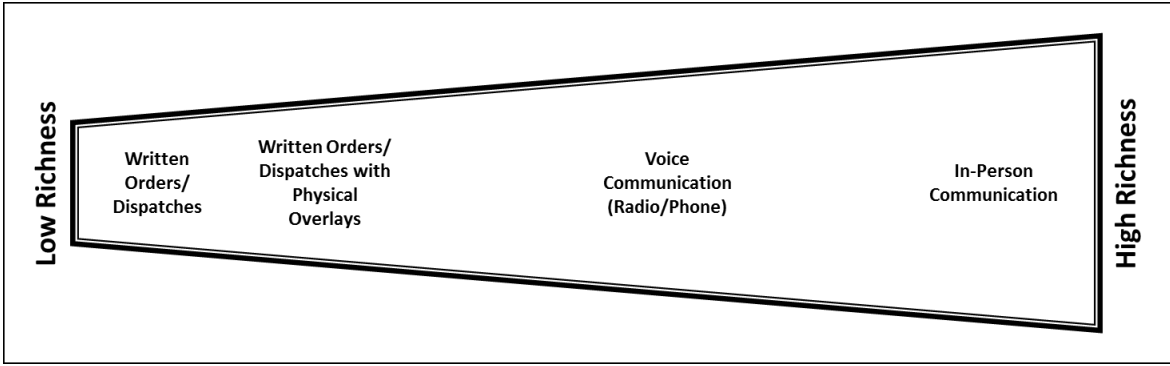


Figure 6. Spectrum of Media Richness During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm

## Strategic Conversations

*The Mission.* In October 1990, USCENTCOM and its service component commands began planning offensive operations for liberating Kuwait. After conducting defensive operations for several months during Operation Desert Shield, USCENTCOM had amassed sufficient combat power to defend Saudi Arabia from an Iraqi invasion. As time passed, so did the potential to achieve a diplomatic solution to compel Saddam's withdrawal from Kuwait. It became clear to senior military leaders that offensive operations to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait were inevitable.<sup>34</sup>

USCENTCOM's planning initially excluded Marine participation, which resulted in a draft plan that attempted to employ a MEF in the same manner that the US Army employs an Army Corps.<sup>35</sup> Lieutenant General Boomer directed his staff to develop an alternative plan, which focused on accomplishing the same assigned mission in the CENTCOM draft concept of operations but employed the MAGTF in accordance with its capabilities. Colonel James D. Majchrzak, the I MEF Plans Officer, summarized the mission:

When directed by USCINCCENT, USMARCENT conducts USCENTCOM support attack to fix and destroy Iraqi operational reserves in southeastern Kuwait to preclude their employment against USCENTCOM main attack in the west; isolate Kuwait City for EPAC [Eastern Province Area Command]/multinational MOUT [military operations in urban terrain] operations. Be prepared to continue the attack north to support USCENTCOM offensive operations."<sup>36</sup>

In November 1990, General Schwarzkopf received the USCENTCOM draft plan, and both General Schwarzkopf and Lieutenant General Boomer concurred that the USCENTCOM staff's concept for employing Marine forces was unacceptable.<sup>37</sup> Lieutenant General Boomer provided his proposed plan which included the employment of I MEF to support the seizure of Kuwait City by breaching Iraqi obstacle belts emplaced along Kuwait's southern border. Recalling the

conversation, General Boomer said, “We weren’t going to play around with them on the border in some sort of feint fixing attack, we were going to retake Kuwait, and General Schwarzkopf didn’t have a problem with that. That was the mission we were given.”<sup>38</sup> Lieutenant General Boomer and General Schwarzkopf concurred on the employment of I MEF as a supporting effort in a deliberate and unrestrained use of force instead of a limited, fixing or feint attack to restore Kuwait’s sovereignty.

Convincing General Schwarzkopf to adopt Lieutenant General Boomer’s plan for employing Marine Corps forces was only the beginning of what would be a long, collaborative design and planning process. The strategic conversations led by Lieutenant General Boomer would be critical to developing a cohesive plan, which would address where to breach Iraqi defense belts near the southern border of Kuwait and whether to incorporate an amphibious assault by Marine forces afloat (Figure 7). Through strategic conversations, the general officers and principal staff officers developed into a team who trusted each other, understood each other’s requirements, and supported one another before and after crossing a line of departure.

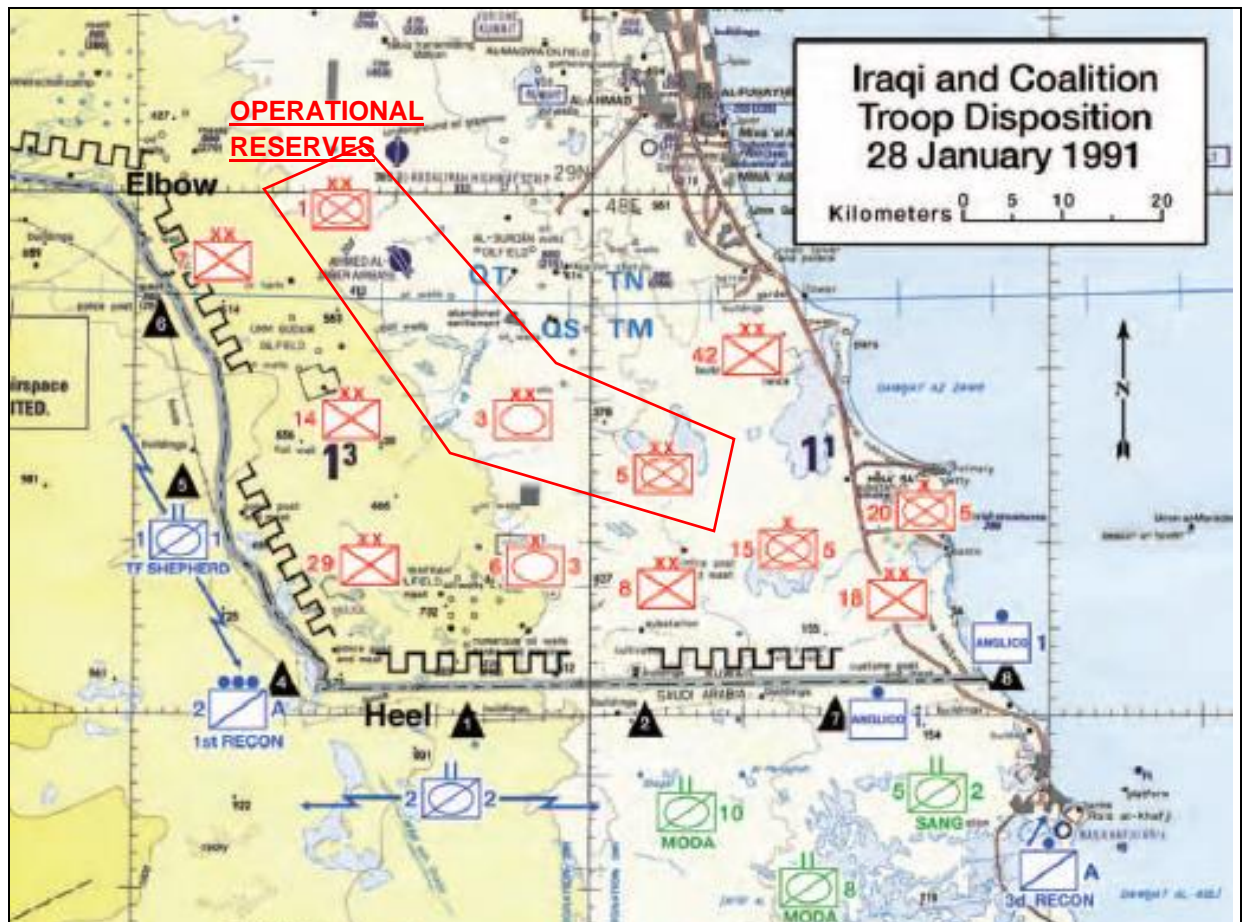


Figure 7. Iraqi and Coalition Troop Dispositions with Obstacle Belts<sup>39</sup>

*Commander's Leadership in Initiating Strategic Conversations.* Lieutenant General Boomer deviated from existing Marine Corps doctrine when selecting the communication channels for the process of designing and planning the I MEF concept of operations. According to Marine Corps doctrine at the time of the Gulf War, commanders and staff utilized a 15-step process to facilitate the commander's selection of a course of action and facilitate the development and issuance of operations orders to subordinate units.<sup>40</sup> This planning process emphasized the necessity of staff coordination during the development of courses of action, but it did not emphasize the importance of bottom-up refinement of courses of action by subordinate commands. If Lieutenant General Boomer had relied on doctrinal planning methodology, only

the I MEF CE staff would have been involved guiding his decision making on the concept of operations, including where to breach the Iraqi obstacle belts and how to employ 1st Marine Division (MARDIV) and 2d MARDIV.

Instead, Lieutenant General Boomer created two different channels for planning. One channel would utilize the I MEF CE staff and his MSC commanders in planning I MEF operations. The staff would present their estimates and courses of action to Lieutenant General Boomer and the other MSC representatives during planning meetings, and all of the participants would engage in dialogue during their analysis. The second channel would involve regular weekly meetings with just his MSC commanders, several of their deputy commanders, and their Assistant Chiefs of Staff for Operations (usually referred to as G-3 Operations Officers). These meetings immediately followed planning conferences and daily update briefs provided by the I MEF CE staff on Wednesdays.<sup>41</sup> Although the MSC commanders had different names for these meetings (e.g. commander's conferences, general officer sessions, general officer huddles, etc.), everyone recognized that these meetings were ultimately the forum where Lieutenant General Boomer would make critical decisions.

There were four benefits to selecting two communication channels for planning and informing Lieutenant General Boomer's decision-making process. First, two channels of communication utilized the time available to conduct holistic planning and maximize the richness of communication. III MEF had four months to plan before the air campaign of Operation Desert Storm would begin, and another month until the ground offensive would begin. There was no need to centralize planning to increase the speed of the decision-making process. These channels maximized the richness of the communication between commanders and staff officers by establishing forums of in-person communication. Participant use of a large terrain

model near the I MEF Command Post enhanced the richness of in-person communication during strategic conversations.<sup>42</sup> The terrain model provided a three-dimensional perspective of friendly and enemy force dispositions, which facilitated productive dialogue and the development of shared understanding of the battlespace among planning participants.

A third benefit of using two communication channels was that it allowed Lieutenant General Boomer to leverage the wisdom of the MSC commanders in the planning process to offset the manning and staff proficiency shortfalls of the I MEF CE. As mentioned previously, the Marine Corps emphasized the MEB as the principal warfighting MAGTF. Hence, MEB CEs were manned and trained as the principal warfighting headquarters at the expense of the I MEF CE. In the first month of Operation Desert Shield, Lieutenant General Boomer quickly realized that the I MEF CE was not trained or staffed to conduct 24-hour combat operations. He relied upon personnel absorbed from 7th MEB to fill the I MEF staff, but the I MEF CE continued to experience personnel shortfalls and personnel turnover that created friction between the I MEF CE staff and the MSE staff through December 1990.<sup>43</sup> The inclusion of the MSC commanders, their deputy commanders, and the G-3 Operations Officers added critical expertise during strategic conversations.

The fourth benefit of Lieutenant General Boomer's channel selection was the development of a shared philosophy of the problem and shared experience in evaluating the enemy and I MEF courses of action among all planning participants. Lieutenant General Boomer provided his planning philosophy during the first of many planning conferences that would integrate both the MEF Battle Staff Planning Group and the MSC representatives:

What I wanted to do today, which we haven't done at the CENTCOM level, is to have the commanders in and to go through the courses of action that the MEF battle staff planning

group has developed, in many cases with your help and with your ideas and with their input. There is nothing sacred about these courses of action, which is why we are here. If there was anything sacred about them, we would just publish our plan and say go do it, but I feel very, very strongly that in the deliberate planning process, the commanders who are going to have to fight this battle should take part in the planning process.<sup>44</sup>

Lieutenant General Boomer's approach to planning Operation Desert Storm was not intended to gain buy-in from his subordinate commanders. He focused on creating a process that leveraged the collective wisdom of a group to produce a plan and created shared experiences and understanding.

Lieutenant General Boomer used the doctrinal planning methodology as a starting point for setting the agenda, but he significantly increased the horizontal and vertical communication during planning. During meetings with the I MEF staff and MSC commanders, Lieutenant General Boomer led strategic conversations by providing all participants an update on the conversations he had had with senior leadership at USCENTCOM, and the different aspects of the I MEF mission he wanted to focus on (e.g. operations security, military deception, etc.). The agenda for the rest of these meetings involved presentations by different staff sections of the I MEF CE that included revised staff estimates, updates on current operations, and revised courses of action and concepts of support. The I MEF Chief of Staff or the I MEF Deputy Commander moderated the timing and sequencing of the presentations.

The strategic conversations that flowed from I MEF staff presentations would provide a context for the agenda items to be discussed between the general officers and their G-3 Operations Officers in the next meetings. Sometimes Lieutenant General Boomer used the following meetings with his MSC commanders to create productive dialogue about the plans presented by the I MEF CE staff, actions occurring within the USCENTCOM area of responsibility, and sensitive leadership issues he believed were inappropriate for the I MEF

staff's participation. It is likely that he made a majority of his decisions regarding the I MEF concept of operations in these meetings because they facilitated final consultation with his MSC commanders and the I MEF Deputy Commanding General. This channel provided a means for Lieutenant General Boomer to present his views and intent, while also using it as a means to evaluate his views and seek solutions to both operational and moral dilemmas.

Lieutenant General Boomer established an open communication climate, and his subordinate commanders maintained it. The merging of the I MEF CE staff and his MSC commanders was a clear example of deviating from the hierarchical boundaries prescribed by Marine Corps doctrine during the Gulf War. Lieutenant General Boomer also included individuals from outside the organization to participate in strategic conversations. On December 10, 1990, Lieutenant General Bernard E. Trainor (USMC, Retired), was invited to provide a brief on Iraqi Forces at the I MEF Command Post. Lieutenant General Trainor served as a war correspondent for the *New York Times* after his retirement from the Marine Corps in 1985 and witnessed Iraqi military operations during the Iran-Iraq War. The dialogue that flowed from Lieutenant General Trainor's presentation had a significant impact on Lieutenant General Boomer and the MSC commanders' perception of the Iraqi forces' strengths and weaknesses and reinforced Lieutenant General Boomer's focus on targeting Iraqi morale and artillery units. There were other occasions when Lieutenant General Boomer invited individuals from outside I MEF to participate in strategic conversations and directed his staff to engage in conversations with adjacent units.

The MSC commanders emulated Lieutenant General Boomer's method of creating an open communication climate, which demonstrated a shared philosophy on the value of in-person communication channels and allowing subordinates to contribute to planning efforts. The MSC

commanders ensured that their staffs conducted in-person conversations with the I MEF CE staff. Major General William M. Keys, the Commanding General, 2d MARDIV stated, "planning was on a daily basis....A lot of it personal, [not] so much by me personally but my staff....There were a lot of course, the normal message traffic phone calls but this plan was being formulated there was a lot of personal interaction between the staffs which was somewhat difficult over here because of the distances involved where you had to go plan."<sup>45</sup> The time and manpower invested in face-to-face conversations with the I MEF staff at the MEF Command Post were not just a function of not having modern information systems technologies. It was an emulation of the planning philosophy of the I MEF CG, and a reflection of the professionalism of the MSC commanders.

*Participant Behaviors During Strategic Conversations.* When the I MEF CE began its deployment to Saudi Arabia, Lieutenant General Boomer deployed a stenographer with the I MEF CE staff. The stenographer created a historical record of all update briefs and other significant planning meetings. There are more than a thousand pages of transcript from these meetings retained by the US Marine Corps History Division that indicate meeting participants engaged in strategic and non-strategic conversations. Between March and October 1990, a majority of the daily morning update briefs demonstrated message exchanges that indicate discussions occurred between the I MEF staff and Lieutenant General Boomer, but not the productive dialogue to be considered strategic conversations. For example, staff officers would present an update on information pertinent to their specific sections, Lieutenant General Boomer would ask questions to seek underlying meaning and clarification, and there would be a discussion among attendees without productive dialogue. It was rare for junior staff officers to

ask I MEF leadership questions (i.e. the Commanding General, Deputy Commanding General, and Chief of Staff).

From November 1990 to February 1991, the transcripts from the update briefs and a planning conference indicate dynamic exchanges of messages and the components of strategic conversations. During this period, the I MEF CE staff began their detailed planning for conducting offensive operations and presented updates on their staff estimates for the I MEF courses of action to liberate Kuwait. The MSC commanders appeared with greater frequency during these meetings, particularly on Wednesdays when Lieutenant General Boomer held general officer sessions immediately following the morning update briefs. The presence of the MSC commanders and other I MEF general officers significantly changed the dynamics of message exchange. MSC commanders would ask Lieutenant General Boomer questions to understand the information presented during these meetings and understand Lieutenant General Boomer's intent, and often presented their opinions. The input provided by the MSC commanders caused the I MEF staff to modify their plans.

The transcript of the planning conference held on December 15th provides a clear example of the strategic conversations that occurred over time throughout I MEF planning and preparations for Operation Desert Storm. This planning conference was the first time that all I MEF general officers assembled in-person to review the draft concept of operations and courses of action for liberating Kuwait. The initial I MEF courses of action assumed that the 1st Armoured Division of the British Army would remain under the tactical control of the I MEF CG. These courses of action included a division-sized breach of the Iraqi defensive belts and amphibious assaults by a MEB. Visual aids, including a terrain model and a briefing packet, were provided to the general officers during the conference.

The transcript from this planning conference demonstrated five of the seven components of strategic conversations. An excerpt from this transcript is provided in Appendix A, reflects the general officer and staff officer use of the strategic conversation components, and is a sound representation of the conversations that occurred during other planning and staff meetings. During this planning conference, participants presented questions to seek meaning from presenters' and participants' messages, and to provoke participant thoughts about certain details of the draft concepts and courses of action. General and staff officers asked questions that demonstrated they were listening critically to interpret the genuine meaning of the messages they received, and that they sought to confirm their discernment of the underlying meaning of visual and vocal messages. Lieutenant General Boomer created an open communication climate by allowing the MSC commanders to question and challenge aspects of the staff plans. He reserved his comments to clarify his intent and to acknowledge participant input that exposed incorrect assumptions or deficiencies of draft plans. Furthermore, all participants facilitated productive dialogue by allowing information presented by others to change their preconceived notions of what was and was not appropriate in the draft concept of operations and courses of action.

The productive dialogue of these meetings and the effective listening of Lieutenant General Boomer and his commanders allowed participants to identify new themes for the strategic conversations during the general officer sessions. Although there are no transcripts of the conversations that took place during these meetings, interview transcripts of I MEF general officers indicate that strategic conversations did occur, and did effectively produce shared philosophies, understanding, and experiences. For example, one strategic conversation topic during the December 15th planning conference focused on the political aspect of including an amphibious assault in the I MEF concept of operations. The Commandant of the Marine Corps,

General Alfred M. Gray Jr., communicated his desire for I MEF to include amphibious assault to liberate Kuwait. A successful amphibious assault would allow Headquarters Marine Corps to distinguish the unique capabilities of the MAGTF within the Department of Defense, and a MAGTF's relevance within a joint task force construct.

This topic, which was briefly mentioned during the planning conference, was reserved for discussion during the general officer sessions due to the moral dilemma it posed. Conducting an amphibious operation would have supported requests for congressional funding in future budget hearings, and would prevent members of Congress or the media from identifying the Marine Corps as a second land army. The I MEF general officers were aware of the political benefits of conducting an amphibious assault during Operation Desert Storm. Several of the general officers recognized that this political consideration interfered with selecting a course of action based on its efficiency and effectiveness in accomplishing I MEF's assigned mission with minimal risk to the young Marines, Sailors, and Soldiers that would execute it.

An interview with Brigadier General Thomas V. Draude (USMC, Retired), who served as the Assistant Division Commander of 1st Marine Division during Operation Desert Storm, demonstrated the presence of strategic conversations on this topic. Brigadier General Draude recalled the productive dialogue during this general officer session:

I remember it well, because the issue is are we going to do the amphibious assault. And we ran [through] all the primarily cons, but still, yeah, we're going to do it. And I finally just said to the junior guy there, I said, "Why do we feel compelled to do an amphibious assault when it really, from what we can gather here, is not necessary?" Somebody said, "Draude, you don't understand. The political future of the Marine Corps requires that we do an amphibious assault." I guess without thinking, the words came out, and I said, "If we're going to risk life and limb, Marines and civilians, for the political future of the Marine Corps, we're not worth the stars we're wearing." Whoa. I saw my career flash in front of my eyes....General Boomer, thank God, said, "Tom's right. There is no need for us to do it."<sup>46</sup>

The questioning, listening, discernment, and productive dialogue demonstrated in the transcripts from meetings and interviews with general officers serve as evidence that strategic conversations occurred regularly between the I MEF CG, general officers, and staff. The strategic conversations produced the products of shared philosophy, shared experience, trust, and familiarity between the I MEF general officers. These products would enable the MSC commander's ability to make significant changes to the I MEF concept of operations and subordinate unit tasks weeks before initiating the ground offensive of Operation Desert Storm.

*Products and Outcomes of Strategic Conversations.* The use of strategic conversations had short-term and long-term value. In the short-term, they allowed Lieutenant General Boomer to use the human capital within I MEF to develop a coherent plan that would guide the actions of his staff and subordinate commanders when they initiated the ground offensive. Lieutenant General Boomer described part of his intent behind the general officer sessions:

The general officers and their G-3s are...sitting down, talking about, and arguing about whether or not we can do this. Some people are uncomfortable with that...But let me tell you, I'm not that smart and most of you are not that smart either. The point that I want to make to you here is that you need the brainpower of everybody working for you when you are formulating a plan that is going to cause Marines to go to their deaths....If your ego is so big that you can't sit around and have your commanders tell you what's wrong with your thoughts and your thinking and argue with you about how you're going to do this, then in my view you're in the wrong business.<sup>47</sup>

Lieutenant General Boomer recognized the importance of an open communication environment and productive dialogue, and how these elements of strategic conversations would lead to the development of an effective plan.

The long-term benefits of the strategic conversations among key leaders in I MEF were the shared philosophy of the problem that I MEF would solve (liberating Kuwait) and the shared experiences of finding solutions to this problem. Brigadier General James A. Brabham, the

Commanding General of 1st Force Service Support Group during Operation Desert Storm, expressed the value of the strategic conversations and the products they produced during an interview:

The general officer seminars [are] where the MEF commander and other commanders quite clearly state their intent, their battle plan, their focus.... The general officer seminars were successful because of the MEF commander's leadership style. And the MEF commander's very much a participant manager in term of his commanders and those sessions where we exchanged views. Everybody, as the aviators say, left their egos at the door and the general officers laid their real assessments and feelings on the table, and there was no-hold-barred with the boss and hopefully, we developed the best plans we could with all those resources....When we left there we all knew what the hell we were doing quite clearly, and we all knew what the other guy was going to do, and we had solved any hard points that we all had between us. Just a good way of doing business.<sup>48</sup>

The shared philosophy, shared experience, familiarity, and trust among commanders – belief in the reliability, truth, and ability of each commander to perform their mission according to the I MEF concept of operations and mission-type orders – enabled their ability to make a significant change to the I MEF concept of operations two weeks before initiating the ground offensive. At least one month before the ground offensive, the I MEF concept of operations involved a single-division breach of the Iraqi defensive belts that consisted of antipersonnel mines, antitank mines, wire obstacles, berms, antitank ditches, and fortified positions that covered the obstacle belts with direct and indirect fire. The 1st MARDIV would lead the advance and conduct the breach of two Iraqi obstacle belts. The 2d MARDIV would follow in trace of 1st MARDIV, and after the breach was completed, would pass through 1st MARDIV's friendly lines at the breach site and continue their advance.<sup>49</sup>

Throughout the planning process, the commander and assistant division commander of 1st MARDIV believed that a single-division breach was the optimal course of action.<sup>50</sup> The 1st MARDIV conducted breaching operations training with specialized breaching equipment and

forces that were task-organized for breaching operations for several months leading up to the ground offensive. Lieutenant General Boomer felt that the lack of specialized breaching equipment and time for 2d MARDIV to conduct breaching operations training inhibited the execution of a two-division breach of the Iraqi defensive belts.<sup>51</sup> In a single-division breach, two divisions would have to pass through the breach site almost simultaneously, presenting a valuable target to Iraqi artillery units. If I MEF failed to effectively suppress the enemy's indirect fire capabilities during the passage of friendly lines, the Iraqi forces could have inflicted significant casualties and prevented I MEF from accomplishing their mission. Lieutenant General Boomer's decision to change the I MEF concept of operations and execute a two-division brief was a response to the receipt of additional specialized breaching equipment, and the products of the strategic conversations that occurred during the planning and preparations for the ground offensive.

On 1 February 1991, Lieutenant General Boomer met with Major General Keys, the Commanding General of 2d MARDIV, at the division command post. Major General Keys demonstrated initiative by delivering a proposal to change the concept of operations and conduct a two-division breach.<sup>52</sup> After the brief, Lieutenant General Boomer recognized that there was little time for discussing the proposal collectively with his commanders. He recalled the conversation in an interview following the war, stating, "I think my exact words were almost, 'Bill, you sure you can do the breach?' 'I can do the breach.' I said, 'Fine, we'll change the plan.'"<sup>53</sup> Lieutenant General Boomer decided to significantly change the I MEF plan two weeks before the ground offensive for three reasons. First, he believed that the MSCs would be able to react to his decision because "every commander was eminently familiar with everybody else's intention."<sup>54</sup> This assumption reflected his familiarity with his subordinate commanders and his

awareness of the shared experience and familiarity developed between commanders and staff during the planning and sand-table exercises. Second, he trusted Major General Keys' judgment in 2d MARDIV's ability to execute the second breach, and he trusted Brigadier Generals Brabham and Charles C. Krulak, the commanders of 1st Force Service Support Group and Direct Support Command, to create a new combat service support area (CSSA) to support a second breach site.<sup>55</sup>

The exceptionally quick construction of a large CSSA supporting 2d MARDIV's breach site demonstrated implicit communication between the MSC commanders and Lieutenant General Boomer, and MSC commanders' ability to anticipate each other's support requirements. After Lieutenant General Boomer informed him of the second breach by 2d MARDIV, Brigadier General Krulak immediately began preparing for the construction of a CSSA to support the breach. Within 36 hours, Brigadier General Krulak assembled a group of staff officers and subordinate commanders to locate a construction site, design a CSSA, and prepare all equipment and materials necessary for its construction before receiving approval from Lieutenant General Boomer to execute construction.<sup>56</sup>

Two days after the meeting between Lieutenant General Boomer and Major General Keys, Brigadier General Krulak urged the I MEF CG to approve construction of the CSSA. He had the 7th and 8th Engineer Support Battalions staged and ready to execute during this meeting, anticipating the I MEF CG's approval. Lieutenant General Boomer gave the approval to execute construction, and Brigadier General Krulak's aide contacted the engineers to relay the general's order to execute.<sup>57</sup> In less than sixteen days, engineers from 1st Force Service Support Group, 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, and 3d Naval Construction Regiment constructed a field hospital with 14 operating rooms, 24 miles of blast wall, 151 ammunition cells, 800 survivability positions, an

air facility with a C-130 airstrip, a well that purified 100,000 gallons of water per day, and bulk water and bulk fuel distribution facilities that could sustain two divisions for 15 days.<sup>58</sup>

Brigadier General Krulak had had the foresight and implicit understanding of what I MEF and 2d MARDIV would need to support the second breach. His ability to anticipate the needs of other MSCs and Lieutenant General Boomer's approval saved time, facilitated the completion of the CSSA before I MEF would further delay USCENTCOM's initiation of the ground offensive, and served as an example of outcomes from strategic conversations.

## Conclusion

Analysis of I MEF general and key staff officer communication behaviors reveal that strategic conversations occurred. Lieutenant General Boomer selected communication channels and agenda items that created a collaborative and interactive forum for rich, in-person communication. The strategic conversations that occurred during I MEF staff meetings and the general officer sessions allowed the MSC commanders and staff to ask questions, critically listen, and discern true meaning from each other's messages. Many of the general officers knew and trusted each other based on their shared experiences before the Gulf War. The strategic conversations served to reaffirm that trust because the open communication climate allowed commanders to question and recommend corrections to I MEF and MSC plans. From this process, commanders developed familiarity with each other's intent, plans, and their support requirements. The strategic conversations during the planning process provided I MEF commanders the mental flexibility to adjust their plans two weeks before the ground offensive of Operation Desert Storm. These conversations also allowed Lieutenant General Boomer to effectively provide his intent and mission-type orders to subordinate commanders, which enabled subordinate initiative and facilitated the decentralized command and control of operations.

I MEF's successful use of strategic conversations during the planning and preparation for Operation Desert Storm demonstrates the utility of strategic conversations for planning any military event at any echelon of command. This case study focuses on the messages exchanged between the I MEF commanders and staff because of the availability of transcripts and interviews conducted with the participants of strategic conversations. There are few primary sources available to conduct a similar analysis at the division, brigade, or battalion levels, but this does not make the strategic conversations model less relevant to leaders in smaller

organizations. Using the components of the strategic conversations model as a substitute for the principles of communication listed in *Warfighting* (Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1), and to expound upon the aspects of effective communication described in *Planning* (Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 5) will refresh Marine Corps doctrine with current communications theory, enhance Marines' professional leadership development, and institutionalize effective communication practices. In 1997, General Charles C. Krulak, Commandant of the Marine Corps, stated in the foreword of *Warfighting*, "Military doctrine cannot be allowed to stagnate, especially an adaptive doctrine like maneuver warfare.... Doctrine must continue to evolve based on growing experience, advancements in theory, and the changing face of war itself."<sup>59</sup> It's now twenty years later, and our doctrine is long overdue for a revision.

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<sup>1</sup> Headquarters United States Marine Corps (HQMC), *Warfighting*, MCDP 1 (Washington, D.C.: HQMC, June 20, 1997), 78-79. <https://www.doctrine.usmc.mil/signpubs/d1.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> HQMC, *Planning*, MCDP 5 (Washington, D.C.: HQMC, June 20, 1997), 87-88, <https://www.doctrine.usmc.mil/signpubs/d5.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Richard L. Daft, *The Leadership Experience*, 4th ed. (Mason, OH: South-western Cengage Learning, 2008), 263.

<sup>4</sup> HQMC, *Planning*, 87-88.

<sup>5</sup> In this paper, a major subordinate command refers to a unit subordinate to the I MEF Command Element that is commanded by a general officer (military pay grade O-7 or greater). A major subordinate element refers to a unit subordinate to the I MEF Command Element that is commanded by an officer with the rank of colonel or of lower rank (military pay grade O-6 or less).

<sup>6</sup> *English Oxford Living Dictionary*, s.v. "trust," accessed February 18, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/trust>.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, s.v. "familiarity," accessed March 12, 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/familiarity>.

<sup>8</sup> HQMC, *Warfighting*, 78.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 87-90.

<sup>10</sup> General Martin E. Dempsey, "Mission Command," white paper, April 3, 2012, 3, [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/concepts/white\\_papers/cjcs\\_wp\\_missioncommand.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/concepts/white_papers/cjcs_wp_missioncommand.pdf). Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, JP 3-0, January 17, 2017, II-2, [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new\\_pubs/jp3\\_0\\_20170117.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp3_0_20170117.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> HQMC, *Warfighting*, 78.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>13</sup> Patty Mulder, "Organizational Culture Model (Schein)," *ToolsHero.com*, accessed March 28, 2017, <http://www.toolshero.com/leadership/organizational-culture-model-schein/>.

<sup>14</sup> Michael W. Kramer and Patricia M. Sias, "Interpersonal communication in formal organizations," in *Handbooks of Communication Science [HoCS]: Interpersonal Communication Volume 6*, ed. Charles R. Berger (Boston, DE: De Gruyter Mouton, 2014), ProQuest E-Library edition, 474.

<sup>15</sup> Daft, *The Leadership Experience*, 263-264.

<sup>16</sup> Phillip G. Clampitt, Laurey Berk, and M. Lee Williams, "Leaders as Strategic Communicators," *Ivey Business Journal* (May/June 2002), <http://iveybusinessjournal.com/publication/leaders-as-strategic-communicators/>.

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- <sup>17</sup> Richard L. Daft and Robert H. Lengel, *Information Richness: A New Approach to Managerial Behavior and Organization Design*, Office of Naval Research technical report (College Station, TX: Department of Management, Texas A&M University, May 1983), 10, <http://www.dtic.mil/docs/citations/ADA128980>.
- <sup>18</sup> Daft, *The Leadership Experience*, 264.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, 269.
- <sup>20</sup> Haridimos Tsoukas, "A Dialogical Approach to the Creation of New Knowledge in Organizations," *Organization Science* 20, no. 6 (November-December 2009): 949, <https://web-b-ebshost-com.lomc.idm.oclc.org/>.
- <sup>21</sup> Edward L. Glaeser et al., "Measuring Trust," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* (August 2000), 811, [http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/laibson/files/measuring\\_trust.pdf](http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/laibson/files/measuring_trust.pdf).
- <sup>22</sup> Saddam Hussein, "Confrontation in the Gulf; Excerpts From Iraqi Document on Meeting with U.S. Envoy," by The New York Times (September 23, 1990), 3, <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/09/23/world/confrontation-in-the-gulf-excerpts-from-iraqi-document-on-meeting-with-us-envoy.html?pagewanted=3>.
- <sup>23</sup> Harry G. Summers, Jr., *A Critical Analysis of the Gulf War* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1992), 175.
- <sup>24</sup> General Norman Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero: The Autobiography of General H. Norman Schwarzkopf*, paperback ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 1992), 601.
- <sup>25</sup> Colonel Charles J. Quilter II, *US Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991: With the I Marine Expeditionary Force in Desert Shield and Desert Storm* (Washington D.C.: US Marine Corps, 1993), 3.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, 4.
- <sup>27</sup> HQMC, *Command and Control*, MCDP 6 (Washington, D.C.: HQMC, October 4, 1996), 91-92, <https://www.doctrine.usmc.mil/signpubs/d6.pdf>
- <sup>28</sup> HQMC, *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Organization*, FMFM 2-1 (Washington, DC: HQMC, June 10, 1988), 2-1 to 2-2.
- <sup>29</sup> Quilter II, *With the I Marine Expeditionary Force*, 21.
- <sup>30</sup> General Charles C. Krulak, "Desert Storm," interview by Dr. David B. Crist, *Career Interview*, October 17, 2000, 69.
- <sup>31</sup> Major John T. Quinn II, *Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991: Marine Corps Communications in Desert Shield and Desert Storm* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, US Marine Corps, 1996): 107-108.
- <sup>32</sup> Marine Air-Ground Task Force Warfighting Center, *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Communications*, OH 3-3AB (Quantico, VA: United States Marine Corps, January 1988) 2-7 to 2-8. HQMC, *Marine Air-Ground Task Force Organization*, FMFM 2-1 (Washington, DC: HQMC, June 10, 1988), 8-9.
- <sup>33</sup> Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, "Special Trust and Confidence Among the Trail-Breakers," interview, *Proceedings* 117 (November 1991), 50, [http://www.usni.org/document/boomer-walter-1991-117-11-1065pdf?magazine\\_article=68858](http://www.usni.org/document/boomer-walter-1991-117-11-1065pdf?magazine_article=68858); Myatt, 71, Myatt, J. M., "The 1st Marine Division in the Attack." Interview. *Proceedings* Vol. 117 (November 1991), 71-76. [http://www.usni.org/document/myatt-jm-1991-117-11-1065pdf?magazine\\_article=68863](http://www.usni.org/document/myatt-jm-1991-117-11-1065pdf?magazine_article=68863).
- <sup>34</sup> Paul W. Westermeyer, *US Marines in the Gulf War, 1990-1991: Liberating Kuwait* (Quantico, VA: History Division, United States Marine Corps, 2014), 55.
- <sup>35</sup> A US Army Corps and a MEF were and continued to be fundamentally different units. In the 1990s, a US Army Corps was composed of approximately four divisions – a combination of armor, infantry, airborne, and artillery. The organization of the US Army VII Corps, which deployed in support of the Gulf War, included rotary wing assault support and close air support assets integrated with within the armor and infantry divisions. The US Army Air Corps required support from the US Air Force for fixed wing close air support and fixed wing assault support. It also received logistics support from independent Army sustainment commands. A MEF is composed of only one infantry division. This infantry division, referred to as a Marine Division (MARDIV), receives close air support and assault support from the fixed wing, rotary wing, and unmanned aerial vehicle assets of the Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) within the MEF. The synergy and interdependence between the MARDIV and MAW provided USCENTCOM unique capabilities but limited their employment as a force separate from the MEF and the MAW. The initial plans for the ground offensive of Operation Desert Storm called for the employment of the 1st MARDIV as a separate force, which would have failed to maximize the combined arms capability of I MEF.
- <sup>36</sup> Quilter II, *With the I Marine Expeditionary Force*, 21.
- <sup>37</sup> General Walter E. Boomer, "Oral History Interview," by Paul Westermeyer, July 27, 2006, 22.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>39</sup> Westermeyer, *Liberating Kuwait*, 104.
- <sup>40</sup> HQMC, *Command and Staff Action*, FMFM 3-1 (Washington, DC: Headquarters, US Marine Corps, May 21, 1979), 46-48.

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- <sup>41</sup> Major General William M. Keys, interview by Lieutenant Colonel Morosoff, April 6, 1991, 1. Interview transcript provided by the Oral History Section, US Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
- <sup>42</sup> Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, interview, date unknown, 17. Interview transcript provided by the Oral History Section, US Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
- <sup>43</sup> Major General Royal Moore, interview by Colonel Arleigh, March 18, 1991, 29. During this interview, Major General Moore described his frustration regarding the establishing of effective communications architecture and staff communications during this interview. He attributed part of the friction between the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing and MEF staffs due to frequent personnel rotations and personnel shortfalls within the MEF CE. The interview transcript was provided by the Oral History Section, US Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
- <sup>44</sup> Stenographer's transcript of the I MEF Planning Conference, December 15, 1990, 4. Transcript provided by Paul W. Westermeyer, US Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
- <sup>45</sup> Major General William M. Keys, "Tape #1455," interview by Lieutenant Colonel Morosoff, April 13, 1991, 1.
- <sup>46</sup> Brigadier General Thomas V. Draude, "Marines on the Ground," interview by Colonel Richard D. Camp, Dr. Fred Allison, and Paul W. Westermeyer, June 21, 2006, in *Desert Voices: An Oral History Anthology of Marines in the Gulf War, 1990-1991*, ed. Paul W. Westermeyer and Alexander N. Hinman (Quantico, VA: History Division, United States Marine Corps, 2016), 105.
- <sup>47</sup> Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, interview, date unknown, 17. Interview transcript provided by the Oral History Section, US Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
- <sup>48</sup> Brigadier General James A. Brabham, "Tape #1454", interview by Lieutenant Colonel Morosoff, April 6, 1991, 6. Interview transcript provided by the Oral History Section, US Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
- <sup>49</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Dennis P. Mroczkowski, *Marines in the Persian Gulf 1990-1991: With the 2d Marine Division in Desert Shield and Desert Storm* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, HQMC, 1993), 23.
- <sup>50</sup> Draude, interview, 109.
- <sup>51</sup> Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, "Marines in Command," interview by Paul W. Westermeyer, July 27, 2006, in *Desert Voices: An Oral History Anthology of Marines in the Gulf War, 1990-1991*, ed. Paul W. Westermeyer and Alexander N. Hinman (Quantico, VA: History Division, United States Marine Corps, 2016): 10.
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- <sup>52</sup> Westermeyer, *Liberating Kuwait*, 136.
- <sup>53</sup> Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, "Marines in Command," 11.
- <sup>54</sup> Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, interview, date unknown, 2. Interview transcript provided by the Oral History Section, US Marine Corps History Division, Quantico, VA.
- <sup>55</sup> Boomer, "Special Trust and Confidence Among the Trail-Breakers," 49.
- <sup>56</sup> Major Steven M. Zimmeck, *US Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990-1991: Combat Service Support in Desert Shield and Desert Storm* (Washington, DC: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, US Marine Corps, 1999), 116-117.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid, 117.
- <sup>58</sup> Westermeyer, *Liberating Kuwait*, 139-140. Zimmeck, *Combat Service Support in Desert Shield*, 117-118.
- <sup>59</sup> HQMC, *Warfighting*, foreword.

## Appendix – Planning Conference Transcript Excerpt

*On December 15, 1990, Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, the I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) general officers, and the I MEF Battle Staff Planning Group conducted a planning conference to discuss the mission assigned to I MEF and the draft courses of action developed by the I MEF CE staff. Below is an excerpt from a stenographer's transcript of this meeting (pages 12-16) that demonstrates five of the seven components of the strategic conversations model: creating an open communication climate, presenting questions to seek meaning, listening to interpret genuine meaning, discerning underlying meaning, and conducting productive dialogue. The excerpt begins with a presentation by Major Dave Richards on the concept of fire support for the draft I MEF Concept of Operations for Operation Desert Storm. The participants of this strategic conversation included Lieutenant General Walter E. Boomer, Commanding General, I MEF; Major General John I. Hopkins, Deputy Commanding General, I MEF; Major General James M. Myatt, Commanding General, 1st Marine Division; Brigadier General Thomas V. Draude, Assistant Division Commander, 1st Marine Division; Major General William M. Keys, Commanding General, 2d Marine Division; and Major General Royal N. Moore, 3d Marine Aircraft Wing.*

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Strategic  
Conversation  
Component

Transcript Excerpt

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MAJ RICHARDS: I'm Major Dave Richards from the MEF G-3, fire support section. I've been asked to provide an overview on unique requirements for command and control based on the fact we have more than one GCE here at the MEF, as many as three, possibly four.

One of the first requirements we see is we have to build a fire support coordination center at the MEF. We intend to organize that based upon — based around those personnel that are currently present in the MEF headquarters and a fairly significant component from the 14th Marines MCC that are due out here in about a week. Location of the FACC will be at — colocated with the COG and with the DASC. The concept of fire support coordination throughout the exercise will be to maintain the detailed —

GEN BOOMER: This is not an exercise.

MAJ RICHARDS: — throughout the operation, sir, will be to maintain detailed coordination down at the division and here. We do not see the MEF fire support coordination center doing most of its work in the coordination arena; therefore, we see most of our business being involved in the planning and the targeting and fighting the battle deep. There will be some occasions where we do get involved in fire support

coordination. We see that mostly laterally and in resolving disputes internally.

GEN BOOMER: Leave that up for a minute.

Questioning

GEN MYATT: What does that mean?

GEN HOPKINS: That means we got multiple GCEs engaged, and we have to weigh the battle.

Questioning

GEN MYATT: I thought that's a focus of effort?

Listening

GEN HOPKINS: Well, yeah, Mike, but you're splitting straws there. There could be a focus of effort, but then the enemy doing something and you may have to change the weight we put on it. I mean I'm saying we have to have flexibility to be able to control that.

GEN BOOMER: They are due in in a week.

GEN MYATT: Ray, I'm going to have a lot of questions on this because you're asking us to man three nets for which we don't have the equipment.

GEN HOPKINS: Well, yeah. That's our responsibility, not yours, higher headquarters or lower headquarters. We have to provide the wherewithal, unless you have personnel problems. Let's get through this.

Questioning and  
Discerning

GEN BOOMER: Mike, I don't think you're questioning the need for an FACC at the MEF?

GEN MYATT: In a way, I am. I know somebody wrote a book that you would have, but in a way I'm really wondering if you're not talking more along the old fire support information center.

GEN BOOMER: Okay, I won't split that hair with you, but we are going to strengthen our capability at the MEF to coordinate fire support.

Open  
Communication  
Climate:  
Questioning MEF  
Plans

GEN MYATT: My motive for this, sir, is to lay the framework, because next will be discussion of the DASC, and there we have a big dog in that fight.

MAJ RICHARDS: To discuss the specific issues, we see in the artillery that all artillery will be allocated to the divisions. We see a need not to build — we do not see a need to build a force artillery headquarters. As such, we need and have a requirement to provide mutual support within

the divisions between the individual artillery regiments. In an effort to ensure that that can be conducted, this is the net — one of the nets that General Hyatt [sic] was addressing that we see as an absolute necessity. The regiments and we refer to it as the MEF artillery command fire direction net. This is the net that most of the work between independent, individual artillery regiments will communicate with and request reinforcing fires and mutual support from lateral divisions. It is not our intention, here, to command those regiments from the MEF, but to monitor the situation and become involved where the General sees that it becomes necessary. The major purpose is lateral support, requesting reinforcing fires.

GEN DRAUDE: The artillery regiment is going to be questioning MOUT.

Questioning

GEN KEYS: What you're saying is you can tell my regiment to shoot something with or without ~ whether I know it or not?

MAJ RICHARDS: Sir, your division will be monitoring that particular net.

GEN KEYS: Well, I assume that.

MAJ RICHARDS: In Naval gunfire, this is not an addition; it's a reflection of how support has to be provided. Naval gunfire command and control net and support nets are monitored by those units that have ships in support. We anticipate that the MEF will continue to monitor the command and control, and only monitor as we have Naval gunfire ships in support as a whole.

GEN HYATT: I don't even monitor —

MAJ RICHARDS: Will be monitored by those commands having ships in general support, if we retain, and to the regiment in general support, then the division would also monitor the support net for that tasker.

GEN DRAUDE: Do you envision the ships in a MEF general support role?

MAJ RICHARDS: Yes, sir, I do; and specifically because, as you look at some of the — all three courses of operation during the three initial breaches, Naval gunfire cannot support the breaches, so they cannot be placed in support of the division directly; they are not providing that support. We see, for example, the opportunity to interdict the 5th Mech and other targets beyond the Naval fire support line obviously will take place at the MEF level and not at the division level.

GEN KEYS: Can you do that with just a request?

Questioning GEN HOPKINS: What do you mean?

GEN KEYS: Well, you're going to direct this; right?

Listening to  
General Keys  
Underlying  
Meaning GEN HOPKINS: Well, this is just a game plan on how we see it with the fire support coordination line. This is not day to day; this is exception to the way the divisions are going to run. There's no interference with the business as usual, and whether it's air, Naval gunfire or what have you, it's just those exceptions as indicated by Dave and the general support role.

GEN MOORE: From my education, how many tubes you talking about at maximum point of effort?

MAJ RICHARDS: Sir, now there are only five ships currently in support; a battleship and four other destroyers.

GEN HOPKINS: Could be two battleships; right?

MAJ RICHARDS: Absolutely. We have not gotten any indication.

GEN MOORE: For a short time I wouldn't be throwing my riddler wrappers up in the air just over two battleships.

GEN HOPKINS: No. I'm saying every bit helps.

GEN MOORE: I couldn't agree with you more.

GEN MYATT: I hope they do something. The Wisconsin has 1,000 pounds of powder for 300—

GEN HOPKINS: I think that issue's being worked; isn't it?

GEN BOOMER: They say it is.

Questioning to  
Seek Meaning &  
Explore Options GEN SMITH: Is Naval gunfire support, in your case, guaranteed or is it as in our case the ship is more important than the man on the ground, and therefore you catch it if it's safe?

GEN HOPKINS: A little bit of both.

MAJ RICHARDS: The ship's primary responsibility is ship defense.

GEN MOORE: Don't you ever forget that, either.

GEN HOPKINS: We got a guy that calls that shot. That may be more sensitive with the aircraft carrier or something like that, that's given; but with a battleship, and depending on where we are, they don't have a Navy threat, we should be able to hang in there for a while and take out the Silkworms. The captain of the ship is the captain of the ship; he has a shot on that even over his boss.

MAJ RICHARDS: Much like in the artillery, where we need to talk laterally, we also need to do that in fire support coordination in the overall issues. Currently there are no connections between divisions on fire support coordination nets, so we see a need, again, to build a fire support coordination net at the MEF level. Remember, the detailed coordination is done at division, between divisions, and this is the conduit that they will conduct the coordination.

GEN HOPKINS: Suppose you and Bill do not agree; right? Which would never happen;

GEN MYATT: If there's a focus of effort from the MEF commander.

GEN HOPKINS: Well, yeah, Mike, but I think the focus of main effort is 360 degrees in some cases.

Listening &  
Facilitating  
Productive  
Dialogue

GEN BOOMER: Let me say something to you all about this, and there seems to be some concern which I don't understand. I spent all of my career preaching decentralized fire control. I'm not going to interfere with your ability to fight this battle or use your artillery. I do see a need, at times, for it to be coordinated, and John wasn't far off. Both of you could be in a fix; someone's going to have to decide who would get it, and the focus of the main effort may have veered off, you just can't tell. That's all we are trying to do, not take away your flexibility.

GEN MYATT: Sir, I understand that, where 11th Marines would be firing in support of 2d Division (Reinforced), but without a corps artillery capability such as the HLiRS, the way the MEF influences the battle is going to be through its allocation of the air pieces.

GEN BOOMER: I understand, but we also need to play in this piece of the battle in a common-sense way, in a way that can help you, and that's all we are trying to do.

GEN MYATT: All these are HF nets and the distances are great; and I wasn't kidding about equipment limitations, and I'm one of those that believe we have too many nets and you can coordinate that on one, but

to have me come up on a FSC dragging a Mark-138 around behind me,  
to me —

Productive  
Dialogue:  
Influenced by  
Participant  
Messages

GEN BOOMER: Well, you may have a good point there. We may  
could do it with less. We will take a look at that.

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