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OPERATIONAL READINESS IS THE ISSUE:

UNNECESSARY FRICTION THE DETRACTOR

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A paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Department of Operations. The thoughts and opinions expressed in this paper, except where footnoted from outside sources, are my own and are not endorsed by the Naval War College nor the Department of the Navy.

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19 ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) In the recent Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the biggest overall detractor that created friction for the operational commander was the tendency to forget established military plans and procedures and re-invent the wheel. All services give lip service to the cliché "fight the way you have practiced," but in the heat of crisis action planning for the Gulf War, we generally saw adlibbing instead of established and practiced responses. During Desert Storm we saw how important it was for operational commanders to have plans ready to be refined and executed, but we also saw that friction can cloud even those perfectly refined plans. As the written record of the Iraqi War is created, there will be a plethora of lessons learned. Looking briefly at four areas that increased friction for operational commanders: the use of reserve forces; deployment/employment regulations and policies concerning women; dependent-related burdens that cost too much in both scarce fiscal resources and command attention; and			
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Block 19 (continued) complicated rules for dealing with allies with cultural, political, or religious differences, points to the need for changes in Department of Defense regulations and service policies. During this time of significant change in the military, we must reduce the self-imposed friction facing tomorrow's operational commanders.

**Abstract of
OPERATIONAL READINESS IS THE ISSUE:
UNNECESSARY FRICTION THE DETRACTOR**

In the recent Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the biggest overall issue that contributed to friction for the operational commander was the across the board tendency of the component services to forget what was established and had been practiced, and re-invent the wheel.

All services give a lot of lip service to the cliché "fight the way you have practiced," but in the heat of crisis action planning for the Gulf War, we generally saw adlibbing instead of established and practiced responses. During Desert Shield and ultimately Desert Storm we saw how important it was for operational commanders to have plans ready to be refined and executed, but we also saw that friction can cloud even those perfectly refined plans.

As the written record of the Iraqi War is created, there will be a plethora of lessons learned. Looking briefly at four areas that increased friction for operational commanders: the use of reserve forces; deployment/employment regulations and policies concerning females; dependent-related burdens that cost too much in both scarce fiscal resources and command attention; and complicated rules for dealing with allies with cultural, political, or religious differences, points to the need for changes in Department of Defense regulations and service policies. During this time of significant change in the military, we must reduce the self-imposed friction facing tomorrow's operational commanders.

"...war appears a simple enterprise. But in practice, because of countless factors that impinge on it, the conduct of war becomes extremely difficult. These factors collectively have been called 'friction', which Clausewitz described as 'the force that makes the apparently easy so difficult.' Friction is the force that resists all action. It makes the simple difficult and the difficult seemingly impossible." 1

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INTRODUCTION: OPERATIONAL READINESS IS THE ISSUE

Operational art is defined by the United States Army as the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations through the design, organization and conduct of campaigns and major operations.² Clausewitz clearly stated in his military masterpiece On War that peacetime military forces must engage in activities that relate either directly or indirectly to engagement of forces in a theater of war or theater of operations. These two ideas taken together give one of the maxims of warfare most often repeated by military leaders---"practice the way you intend to fight." All of the doctrine of the various American armed services supposes that we will do just that. All training in peacetime is designed to develop individual and unit combat skills so that in actual battle a precision team will be able to perform immediately and effectively. Much time, effort and money goes into making peacetime training simulate as exactly as possible the tempo, scope and friction of the battlefield. Units and headquarters that will fight together, at least within component services and at best within a joint/allied context, train together to create a more realistic picture of what an actual conflict might entail.

While simulating the tempo and scope of battle can to some degree prepare the services for eventual combat operations, it is not as easy a task to prepare commanders and their forces for the element of friction. The Marine Corps manual Warfighting describes friction as follows:

"Friction may be mental, as in indecision over a course of action. Or it may be physical, as in effective enemy fire or a terrain obstacle that must be overcome. Friction may be external, imposed by enemy action, the terrain, weather, or mere chance. Or friction may be self-induced, caused by such factors as lack of a clearly defined goal, lack of coordination, unclear or complicated plans, complex task organizations or command relationships, or complicated communication systems. Whatever form it takes, because war is a human enterprise, friction will always have a psychological as well as a physical impact." 3

While it is never possible to completely remove friction from the battlefield, every attempt should be made to minimize the self-induced friction.

In our most recent conflict in the Persian Gulf, many examples of friction, wholly or in part self-induced, came to the forefront. The Iraqi War stirred up some of the old debates about the utility of a large regular force over dependence on a large reserve component; the place of women in the service; the amount of budget dollars spent for actual combat capability vice that spent on support and personnel benefits ("tooth to tail" ratio in an all volunteer force); and the burden versus the benefits of supporting our allies. These issues are usually fought around the arenas of strategic planning and force structure, but in the Persian Gulf they had direct impact on the operational commander. With a large standing armed force, the United States completed a short duration, limited conflict against a vastly inferior armed force. Initial reports were all rosy. Later analysis of "lessons learned" has revealed

several flaws that introduced more friction to the operational commanders. These flaws, given a longer war against a more capable enemy, could have been potentially serious in our old force structure. In a new force structure for 1995 forward, with reduced manpower and budget resources, these same flaws could be fatal.

In the bittersweet afterglow of what is already being termed a huge operational success for the American forces, the military's attention needs to be turned to identifying and correcting these flaws. Now is the time for the services to do this, coinciding with the massive downsizing of the armed services and the various components therein. The Department of Defense owes it to those men and women who will have operational commands in future conflicts to provide the optimal environment of readiness, unconflicted by needless friction.

THE RESERVE ISSUE

The issue of reserve forces--or the "Total Force Concept" as it has popularly been called in recent years--needs to be carefully examined, critiqued, and revised in light of problems discovered during Desert Shield and Desert Storm. The numbers of Reserves called up were the largest since Korea, and the call-up itself was the first in 20 years. First reports out of the Gulf praised the response of reserve units and made much of this as a validation of the Department of Defense's Total Force policy---a concept embraced with an ardent fervor when the All Volunteer Force became a reality in post-Vietnam 1973. There have been, however, a couple of "not-so-fasts" that are causing serious debate within service circles and could lead to some drastic changes in philosophy and force structure.

The Army experienced unbelievable success with the combat support and combat service support units that were mobilized for service in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The nature of these units, heavy on carryover skills such as medicine, aviation and transportation, allowed for early deployment of a practiced and efficient unit. As General Vuono, Chief of Staff of the Army, observed, "reserve units with missions compatible to civilian occupations---such as supply and transportation---are of great and immediate value simply because, upon mobilization, their administrative and training requirements are relatively modest." 4

The experience with the actual combat units, such as the roundout brigades, was not as positive. The decision of the

Department of Defense not to deploy the 48th Infantry Brigade, Georgia National Guard, to "roundout" the 24th Infantry Division (Mechanized) in Saudi Arabia has created a huge debate about the Army's Total Force policy. Reservists are angry that rather than being deployed and employed in accordance with U. S. Central Command (CENTCOM) 1000-series warplans, they were judged less than competent to perform their mission of integrating with "real" Army units. Instead the 1000-series plans were altered and an active duty, independent brigade fleshed out the 24th Division. It would appear that the Army, despite public relations hype to the contrary, was never convinced the Total Force policy as written and practiced would work. When faced with the real thing, they made hasty substitutions that now call the entire concept into question. As Martin Binkin of the Brookings Institution commented:

"There is good reason to doubt that units of the Army National Guard and Reserve expected to contribute in the first few days of a military conflict...would be able to deploy on schedule without penalties in combat power, effectiveness, and tactical agility." 5

The 48th Infantry Brigade spent Desert Shield and Desert Storm in the California desert at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin. Said one Guardsman upon the unit's demobilization and return to Fort Stewart, Georgia, "There's a lot of disappointed people. A lot of them feel put down; a lot of them are getting out."

The impact on the operational commander was that an asset advertised as deployable and ready to go in a contingency was in fact not going to be a viable resource until an extensive six month training and pre-deployment workup had been completed. That the plans had to be rewritten, that an entire brigade joined the Division midstream, that the lip service to Total Force went by the board may have only been a small issue of friction for him. We may never know because of the way the war played out. The bottom line is that it was one more change that the operational commander had to deal with at a time when other less preventable friction and chaos needed command attention.

The Marine Corps situation was somewhat different. Since the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) advertises a fully integrated, ready to go force that can be deployed and employed quickly without reserve support, Marine reservists were not called up right away. If the MAGTF was fully capable of performing its assigned mission without augmentation, why did Marine reserve C-130 pilots, as volunteers, fly missions within the first two weeks of Desert Shield on a program called "mandays" vice as recalled reservists? It appears that the operational commander, Major General Moore of the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, did not have everything he needed within the advertised complete MAGTF package. His use of reservists on mandays created the potential for the command to be burdened with unwanted and time consuming personnel actions. On mandays, reservists families rate none of the benefits associated with active duty--commissary, medical, dental, or exchange. Since civilian employers had lost the services

of their employees to the military, it was logically assumed that the military would assume the burden of medical and dental care for dependents. Some hardship was incurred when civilian employers terminated benefits and the military did not pick them up immediately. Some among the Marine community thought that General Gray had flirted with the future of the Marine Corps Reserve for a chance to "one-up" the Army in the readiness category. That may turn out to be true, also, but the immediate fallout was the administrative snafu the commanders were forced to deal with at a time when administrative details needed to be subordinated to operational tasks.

What about the lack of understanding of what a Reserve call-up means? Immediately after the President signed the executive order on 22 August 1990 calling up the reserves, inquiries and complaints started rolling into the Pentagon, the service headquarters, and, worst of all, to individual operational commands with bigger fish to fry. From the hue and cry about employment rights and loss of salary, it is evident that there probably are reserves who participate only for a paycheck, employers who make the right noises in peacetime but don't want to play in wartime, and a segment of the population who have forgotten what the American tradition of the citizen soldier is all about. The person in the middle, receiving the complaints and emergency leave requests from the service member's family and friends, or congressional inquiries from politicians representing their constituents is the operational commander. The commander or the staff must deal

with each issue since the issues not handled immediately (and in favor of the serviceman or woman) will invariably land in a human interest piece in the hometown Sunday paper.

THE GENDER BENDER

One problem that some operational commanders faced while loading transport planes enroute to the war was the age old question of "what shall we do with the women"? At issue was the actual U.S. Code that governs the use of women in combat, the individual service policies, and the personal preferences of military leaders which often overrides both of the former. Commanders train with the soldiers, sailors, and marines that are assigned to them. They have every right to expect that all assigned will be able to perform their assigned duties in whatever contingency the unit is asked to execute. In California, as the I MEF forces loaded aircraft for the flight to Saudi Arabia, women marines were pulled aside and told they would not deploy with their units. Some commanding officers first indication that they would deploy with either last minute replacements or empty billets was at the point of embarkation. This action was contrary to Marine Corps written policy. It also went totally against General Gray's The Commandant's Report To The Officer Corps issued in 1989 which said:

"I want to make clear my total commitment to the full utilization of women in the Corps within the context of our role as an expeditionary force-in-readiness. They are Marines and will be treated as such. Any Marine who doesn't understand this is out of step with his Commandant."

It appeared that there were more than a few Marines out of step with the Commandant at first. Within a week, however, the Corps was issuing statements blaming the original action on poor comm-

unication. On 15 August 1990, the Marine Corps sent out a message to all commands stating that women should not be barred from
7
deploying with their units.

Women's rights groups looking for an issue made much of the slight to the women, as well they should have. But the real loser in this instance was any operational commander whose trained and ready assets were replaced, or worse yet removed and not replaced, in the critical deployment phase of the operation. That this self-imposed friction could occur must fall at the door of the mixmaster of law, regulation, policy, and personal bias that governs the way women in the services are employed.

THE DEPENDENT BURDEN

It was somewhat shocking to the public at large to find out in a January edition of People_Magazine that there were children in the United States stashed with their grandparents, or other relatives because both parents were deployed with American combat forces in the Gulf. The presentation of this issue in the media was such that public opinion pressure, fueled by the emotional idea of both parents being killed in the war, caused the military as a whole and commanders individually to spend an inordinate amount of valuable war preparation time answering policy issue questions that had been thought out and clearly stated for all concerned years before.

In 1987, shortly after the Marine Corps had come to the very disturbing realization that for the first time dependents of Marines outnumbered Marines, then Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, Joseph J. Went said, "A marine with his or her mind on family concerns is not giving 100 percent to the job at hand." In that regard, the General went on to state that military children had suddenly become an operational commander's issue of readiness. This became evident when the balloon we have talked about for years went up on 2 August 1990. Although regulations had been in place requiring that single parents or dual service parents complete and file with their service component a Dependent Care Certificate stating who will care for the children when one or both parents are deployed, at the point where Persian Gulf deployments started only 44% of male

single parents and 60% of female single parents had complied. The last minute scrambling around to make arrangements became an unneeded element of friction for the operational commander and his senior enlisted advisor. It also became a distractor for the individual whose sole attention should have been on pre-deployment checklists and operations plans.

Military units across the services found out that the big problem on the homefront, where base and station soldiers, sailors, and marines should have been concentrating on mobilization throughput and sustainment issues, was family turmoil created by financial difficulties or fear. The social welfare issues of Desert Storm, particularly among junior enlisted, pointed up the disproportionate amount of time that the services now spend on the "welfare of the troops." In the pre-All Volunteer Force, restrictions on married service enlisted personnel were accepted as a surrender of rights and privileges for the greater good of the country---it was another "price of freedom" like the sound of high-performance aircraft flying over your residence. As the All Volunteer Force had to compete with other segments of society as a business rather than as public service, incentives had to be added to the basic package. The result has been to add a new dimension to the "tooth to tail" problem. Part of the tail is the ever rising personnel benefits part of the military manpower budget, as rules change to allow everyone to be in the service no matter how possibly non-deployable or how costly their personal circumstance may become.

ALLIANCES: A BLESSING AND A NUISANCE

Alliances are a "can't live with 'em, can't live without 'em" proposition. There were many positive benefits gained for the operational commanders through our strong alliance with the host nation Saudi Arabians, not the least of which was a solution to the enormous fuel problems created by the deployment of such a large mechanical and motorized force. While the good was very good, some of the not so good created friction for the commanders on the scene and should be brainstormed for possible solutions.

One of the initial areas that created problems was the necessity to create command relationships more complicated than was either needed or desired. Because of the issues of national pride, politics, and public perception of the role of the United States in Desert Shield/Desert Storm, a separate, formalized command and control set-up placed the Arab coalition members in a different category from other allied nations. Adding to the problem was the perceived need to use Arab forces, no matter their combat capability, in key areas of the battlefield during the ground war.

The optimum set-up for maximum efficiency and minimum delay or friction would have been complete unity of command with General Schwarzkopf, as the senior officer in the force with the bulk of the forces, in charge of all the forces. As it was, the General had to count on his American and western allied forces to coordinate with their Arab counterparts in their individual sectors. As we have since learned, in the

case of the Marine attack at least, this resulted in slow movement of a Arab unit, and the Marines ended up passing a Marine unit through the rear of their attacking force to secure their own exposed left flank.

Adding to the problem was the issue of certain members of religious groups being unwelcome in allied countries, or only welcomed if they were hidden out in the group, not allowed to practice their religion. Along those same lines, there was a good deal of initial friction created when American service-women deployed and tried to do their jobs as they had been trained. One of the big clashes came when the Saudis protested against the women driving vehicles as part of their jobs. In Saudi Arabia women do not drive. Compromises within the acceptable range of the host country were reached, but the bottom line is that the United States went to Saudi Arabia on request to provide a capability to an ally and the operational commanders should not have had to alter their schedules and perhaps reduce their capability to a less ready state.

LUBRICATING THE FRICTION

Since readiness is the measure of effectiveness of our armed forces, every effort must now be made to take the lessons of the Gulf War and work to reduce the friction that impacts on readiness. Regulation changes can be a "friction-buster" for the operational commander, as could individual service policy changes. At a minimum, the four areas we have looked at have possible solutions if the Department of Defense and the services are willing to accept the challenges that massive change entails.

First, the reserves must be overhauled. What the country needs in an environment of less global war threat and more contingency/mid-to-low intensity threat is a service structure built around three distinct segments:

1. Active duty contingency forces, either forward deployed or capable of rapid deployment.
2. Strategic reserve forces, composed of those combat support or combat service support units/individuals in civilian compatible skills, such as medicine, supply, aviation and transportation, that can be used in a timely manner with minimal pre-deployment work-up.
3. Mobilization reserve forces, which are largely combat skill units that are programmed to be follow-on forces, brought into the high intensity, long duration conflict after appropriate post-mobilization training and processing has taken place.

Additionally, emphasis should be increased in the areas of cross-training of reserve and regular units, standardization of physical fitness and health examinations, and elimination of the "alternate drill" concept which generally means a single reserve

drilling apart from the unit and thus actually doing busy work rather than meaningful training. Other issues for study have been raised by Colonel Eric L. Chase, USMCR, including eliminating waivers for reserves for annual marksmanship training, and a requirement for all reserve units to be mobilized without prior warning one weekend annually.

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Second, strike the portion of Section 10, United States Code, which places combat restrictions on women in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force. Eliminate "physical risk" as criteria for assigning women to occupational fields and units. Retain and enforce physical and mental capability as assignment criteria for jobs and/or units. When the balloon goes up, we will have too much to do to worry about policies regarding the women---we will need to be deploying cohesive, practiced and seasoned units. If we go to war and even one commander has to ask "What should I do with my women"?, it will be one too many.

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Third, as we draw down the size of the All Volunteer Force, rewrite the regulations to reimpose the restrictions against married first term enlistees. The military was never intended to be a mirror image of the society it is sworn to protect. Indeed, if everyone in society was capable of defending the country and desired to do so, we would have no need of a standing armed force.

Restrictions on marriage may draw protests from the public which has begun to view the military as a job corps proposition for getting unemployed youth off the streets and providing the

single parent with an alternative to Aid To Dependent Children funds. However, given a clear picture of the financial burden current regulations on dependents and dependent support force on the services, balanced against the military budget cuts that must come over the next nine years, these protests may be overcome by common sense and practicality.

Fourth, serve notice to our allies---not in a confrontational way, but by way of stating the cost of doing business with the United States in an armed coalition--"We will help our allies and we will help them to help themselves. But we don't deploy to assist with reduced capability due to the religious and/or cultural biases that may be generated by the composition of our forces. If the American Army or Navy comes, it comes with men, women, Jews, gentiles, blacks, whites, etc. because that is how we've organized and trained, and that is how we are most capable."

CONCLUSION

War is more than a "simple clash of interests." It is a demanding and complex trying of the military's purpose and function. It lives and grows in an environment of fog, chaos,¹² and friction. Of the three elements, friction is the most prevalent and lends itself best to reduction. What can be done now to ensure that operational commanders---from the CINC down to the individual small unit commander---have friction reduced to the lowest possible level?

Fighting in exactly the same way that you have trained to fight is a simple concept that as we have seen proved difficult to achieve in our latest conflict. But that is the key to decreasing the inevitable friction of the battlefield. The examples presented in this paper have been viewed as somewhat isolated cases, but are probably representative of the problems faced by all commanders at various levels of command during the Iraqi War. Simple multiplication would reveal the extent of needless friction that each commander would face in another conflict that might pit us against a stronger and more determined enemy, capable of resisting for a period far longer than the weeks of our total campaign in the Gulf.

Regulation and policy changes can be one way to improve the plight of the operational commander. Our "Total Force" policy and the resultant structure of reserve forces in all components needs an objective (not emotional) reappraisal. The whole concept of physical risk as a determinant of deployment criteria and utilization of women needs as equally unemotional review. We must ask the hard questions about priorities in a fiscally restrained new era. If quality of life is an important

retention issue in the All Volunteer Force, would it not make better sense to shape a force whose requirements for a decent quality of life kept costs in better proportion to the total fiscal assets that will be available in the future?

The harder problem may be to reduce the friction that the diversity of belief, tradition, and culture between allies creates. As we have seen, this is a double edged sword, having impact on not only the principle of unity of command, but on the simple employment of personnel, regardless of gender or religion, in a country or countries whose cultural and religious beliefs differ from our own. Perhaps our only way to prepare for this is to "draw a line in the sand" for our future allies much as we did for the Iraqis. The United States will support our allies and come to their defense if asked, but we come as we are and we fight as we have planned and prepared.

The issue is not prejudice against reserves, female battle casualties, anti-family bias, or disregard for the beliefs of those who do not share our politics or culture. The issue is readiness---how best to achieve it at the best possible price for the American taxpayer.

Readiness in a smaller, All Volunteer Force of the future will allow for little slack in the system. Failure to recognize this and do everything we can to eliminate unnecessary friction will leave operational commanders on the spot in the next conflict.

ENDNOTES

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4. Carl E. Vuono, "Desert Storm and the Future of Conventional Forces," Foreign Affairs, Spring 1991, p. 59.
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