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THE MULTIROLE FORCE: A COMBAT MULTIPLIER

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract of
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Multirole forces provide commanders at all levels a force multiplier with which they can more effectively prosecute campaigns. A survey of the United States arsenal reveals a multitude of weapons systems and forces that have multimission capabilities. Operational staffs need to be fully aware of their allocated forces' roles to more effectively employ them. Although it is possible to address all systems or combinations of forces possible in a single paper, the unified command staffs need to reiterate the requirement to use bold and innovative forethought in planning and training of all multirole forces.

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THE MULTIROLE FORCE: A COMBAT MULTIPLIER

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Multirole forces provide commanders at all levels, in particular at the operational level, a force multiplier with which they can more effectively prosecute campaigns. The United States arsenal is full of weapons systems and forces with multirole capabilities and history is replete with examples of why multirole capability is so important to us.

Chapter II identifies individual weapons systems and their multimission use in recent conflicts. Chapter III addresses the issue of combining forces, whether single or multimission capable, and creating a multimission force that presents the enemy with a difficult defensive solution while increasing the options available to the Commander in Chief (CinC) of the unified or specified command. By studying positive and negative examples of employing multirole forces, the critical need for planners to understand the nature of the forces they employ is re-emphasized. Maximum utilization of multimission forces requires bold and innovative ideas but at all times requires a clear understanding of the strengths and limitations of doing so. It requires that the commander and his staff have a firm grasp of those multirole capabilities and the impact their use has on the entire spectrum of warfare *from the strategic down to the tactical level.*

Subsequently, this paper is also about PLANNING and TRAINING. Chapter IV addresses the issue of proper planning and training so that

we prepare to utilize our multirole forces more effectively. Tomorrow's warfighting arena will demand that our plans are flexible, complete, and up to date; and that we have knowledgeable staffs that can dust them off and tailor them to the crisis at hand. Concurrently, there is an absolute fundamental need for those staffs to train their apportioned forces at every opportunity. Only in this way will those staffs understand the strengths and weaknesses of the forces at their disposal and, equally important, only then will those forces be able to educate the commander as to their multimission capabilities. It is in planning and training that staffs at all levels will attain that "situational awareness" that allows truly effective and flexible response in unplanned crisis situations.

CHAPTER II

WEAPONS SYSTEMS

The United States arsenal is full of weapons systems and forces with multirole capabilities and history is replete with examples of their use. A decidedly short but representative list may include:

B-52	Bomber aircraft
F/A-16	Strike fighter
F/A-18	Strike fighter
LPH/LHA/LHD	amphibious assault ships
SSN	attack submarines
CV/CVN	aircraft carriers
OH-58	helicopter
KC-10/KC-135/C-130	aircraft

This list clearly encompasses systems we normally think of in the strategic application mode (B-52), the operational employment mode, (CV/CVN with embarked air wing) and those individual systems we think of as being purely tactical (F/A-16 or OH-58). A case can be made, looking at all U.S. weapons systems, that a majority of systems have some multirole capability. It may be a matter of changing a warhead, or cross assigning a platform to another service, or rearranging the mix of aircraft on the carrier to create new capability. The point is that capability doesn't only have to be built in, it can also be planned in. If properly integrated into the CinC's plan, multirole capable systems have a significant impact on the conduct of operations.

The B-52, which went out of production in 1962, has been a mainstay of the nuclear deterrent triad of the United States. In 1984, the Rand Corporation and U.S. Air Force explored some of the implications of latent or emerging capabilities for non-nuclear strategic weapons (NNSW). They produced six research papers on issues ranging from deterrence to theater warfare use of NNSW.¹ Simply stated, the issue is strategic nuclear use versus strategic, operational or tactical conventional use of NNSW systems. In their study, Rand was prophetic about the use of strategic weapons in a dual capable mode. "All currently deployed strategic delivery vehicles are dual capable (e.g., B-52's and FB-111's) or could be made so. Conventionally armed Sea Launches Cruise Missiles (SLCM) are already deployed on attack submarines and battleships; SAC B-52's have conducted operations in support of conventional forces for years. Furthermore, two squadrons of B-52G bombers (30 aircraft)...will soon be armed with Harpoon anti-ship missiles for maritime support operations...."² They went on to say, "Greater integration of strategic and tactical and nuclear and non-nuclear weapons appears inevitable... Units commonly accepted as tactical are acquiring weapons with strategic potential and strategic units may soon make direct contributions to the ground battle."³

In fact, we broke many barriers in this regard in Desert Storm. We launched Sea Launched Cruise Missiles (SLCM) from battleships, nuclear submarines, Aegis cruisers,⁴ and Air Launches Cruise Missiles (ALCM) from B-52's.⁵ General George L. Butler, Commander In Chief, Strategic Air Command, CinCSAC, envisions a "twin triad" of nuclear and conventional fighting capabilities.⁶ SAC began to write new doctrine when they utilized U-2, TR-2, RC-35, and nearly 300 SAC tanker assets

for daily air tasking in support of the Central Command (CENTCOM). General Butler gave CENTCOM B-52 assets that were committed to the Strategic Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP), above and beyond the 33 B-52G bombers earmarked for conventional operations. As General Butler noted, "With great confidence, we were able to comfortably take those additional bombers that were in the nuclear war plan and send them to the Gulf where they could operate in the conventional mode. That got us over a tremendous psychological hurdle because we recognized at that point that bombers can, in fact, be one role or the other depending on the call of the President."⁷ As a case in point, seven B-52G's launched from Barksdale AFB, Louisiana and launched 35 multirole air launched cruise missiles during the first night of Desert Storm on January 16, 1991. The AGM-86C ALCM's were modified from the AGM-86B nuclear version ALCM for this mission. In total, B-52's flew 1624 missions, and dropped 25,700 tons of munitions (29% of all U.S. bombs) in Desert Storm.⁸ In the B-52's maritime reconnaissance and attack role, the aircraft can carry AGM-84 Harpoon anti-ship missiles, and 500, 1,000, and 2,000 pound mines.⁹

The hurdle is important in the use of multirole forces such as the B-52. It means we can reduce our reliance on text-book use of weapons and forces and apply them when and wherever needed. In the past the need to maintain an alert posture for the nuclear triad would naturally preclude a wholesale use of strategic triad assets for a conventional unified command campaign. But the demise of the Soviet Union and President Bush's orders to stand down from 24 hour alert opens a myriad of possibilities for operational use of the triad systems.

The Fighter/Attack (F/A)-18 is a weapons system that gives the Air Component Commander of a unified command truly flexible response. (The Air Force F/A-16 falls into this category also). Vice Admiral R.M. Dunleavy, Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Air Warfare) noted, "Desert Storm once again highlighted the force-multiplier advantage of multi-mission aircraft. The F/A-18 can generate more sorties than the F-14, overall is more survivable...requires fewer personnel, and is cheaper to operate." ¹⁰ The two F/A-18 squadrons on board USS Saratoga for Desert Shield/Storm flew 23% of their sorties in the fighter role and 73% of their sorties in the attack role. ¹¹ The use of the F/A-18 in a multirole fashion had to evolve over the course of the air campaign even though we've had this weapon over 10 years. Strike packages were initially assembled in a traditional manner assigning single primary responsibility to different aircraft of the strike (i.e., F-14 combat air patrol and F/A-18 in any attack role). This was primarily due to the sophisticated air defense system of the Iraqis. It soon became apparent, however, that the air wing could afford to reduce the support package and increase the percentage of actual strike aircraft. What evolved was a self contained strike group in which virtually all aircraft delivered bombs. Hornets (F/A-18's) provided fighter and air defense suppression roles. Demonstrating the flexibility of this superior multi-mission system, on day one of Desert Storm, two Saratoga Hornets shot down two Iraqi MIGs while ingressing the target area, then immediately switched to the air-to-ground mode and destroyed their targets with 2,000 pound bombs. The F/A-18 was also used as a combination target combat air patrol (TARCAP) and defense suppression escort (using the HARM anti-radiation missile) for A-6 strike

elements.¹² With the multimission doctrinal use of an F/A-18 finally beginning to evolve, the Carrier Air Wing Commander (CAG) can offer the Operational Commander, whether in a joint or single service operation, a myriad of employment options to fit the tactical scenario as it unfolds. It also gives the CAG increased fire power with a finite set of assets (the numbers being restricted due to deck loading capability of the carrier).

The Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNLAF), which has approximately 185 F-16's, has labelled the multirole use of this aircraft the "swing role". Lieutenant General W.C. Louwerse, the Chief of the RNLAF, states that the F-16 is performing beyond expectations in this swing role. The F-16 leaves NATO commanders the option of deploying the Dutch Squadrons in any role the situation demands. Most importantly is his insightful summary, "In the years ahead we can expect defense, and defense budgets, to receive lower priorities. Such a setting will undoubtedly demand a greater degree of multi-functionality from the armed forces. The swing role is the RNLAF's answer to this."¹³

ALL multirole weapons systems in the U.S. arsenal should be looked upon in the same manner. The force structure is declining and there is no stopping it. It is incumbent upon leaders at all levels to seek imaginative ways to employ the systems at our disposal.

CHAPTER III

FORCES

The issue of multimission forces vice individual multimission weapons systems is a nebulous one. The Carrier Battle Group is a case in point. Single mission and multimission systems and forces are brought together to create an integrated force, able to operate in not only every Naval Warfare area, but across the entire politico-military spectrum, from evacuation operations to launching nuclear weapons.¹ Secretary of the Navy instruction 5030.1K lists the CV & CVN as "Multi-purpose Aircraft Carriers". The aircraft carrier can conduct every major Naval Warfare task from anti-submarine warfare to electronic warfare to close support of amphibious warfare.² This is truly a multirole weapons system. However, the carrier cannot be looked at as a weapons system in isolation. Carriers are employed with the Carrier Air Wing (CVW) embarked and a surface and subsurface force wrapped around it to form a Carrier Battle Group (CVBG). We look at all the other weapons systems assigned to it (many of them, like the S-3, are multirole as well) and the synergism that it creates, and we have a powerful multirole force. This CVBG is certainly the cornerstone of the Navy's power projection and sea control maritime strategy. There is no doubt that this is a formidable package that gives the CinC tremendous flexibility and a myriad of options to employ in a crisis. The CinC must look at every possible way to employ the capabilities of the embarked air wing and surface action group. There are times we have even used it in non-traditional roles. During Operation Eagle Claw, the aborted Iranian hostage rescue attempt, the USS Nimitz was the platform that

carried the RH-53D helicopters to the launch point.³ During Desert Storm when all available amphibious lift was committed to the Persian Gulf, there still existed a standby need to reinforce military installations in the Philippines due to heightened tensions. The USS Midway was tentatively scheduled to embark Okinawa based Marines to accomplish that mission. During the hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise liner in October 1985, the carriers Saratoga and Coral Sea were dispatched to assist Special Operations forces recover the ship. When the Egyptian government aided the terrorists getaway and decided to fly the hijackers to Tunisia, Carrier Air Wing 17 on board Saratoga intercepted the Boeing 737 with F-14 aircraft and diverted it to Sigonella, Italy where the terrorists were arrested by Italian soldiers.⁴ The Sixth Fleet Commander and National Command Authority had an option when all looked lost. They utilized the flexibility of a CVBG. Granted, timing was everything in this crisis but surely without the multirole CVBG on station the terrorist's aircraft would have eventually found a receiving country and the terrorists allowed to go free.

Combining the CVBG with an Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and its embarked Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU(SOC)), the Commander's warfare options expand tremendously. The ARG/MEU is capable of over 20 missions ranging from night helicopterborne raids, to Noncombatant Evacuation Operations, to amphibious landings. This package is the most flexible and combat ready multimission force module at the CinC's disposal today. However, this is only so because the CVBG/ARG is a traditional combination of forces that train together at fleet exercises over, the entire world, on a regular basis. Doctrine exists within the Naval Service to facilitate

interoperability and hence improve combat capability. The CVBG/ARG combination has been used during the Iranian Hostage Crisis, 1980,⁵ Rescue Operations in Grenada, Operation Urgent Fury, 1983⁶, the recovery of the SS Mayaguez in 1975,⁷ and others. But this institutionalized combination of forces is not, and should not be, the only effective multirole combination of forces available in the CinC's playbook. The heart of the matter is that at every turn the operational commander should attempt to create multimission forces. By maintaining flexibility of mission capabilities, the presence of force both increases its own options and obscures the exact role the force will eventually play. In this case, by combining the ARG with the CVBG the enemy is faced with both ground action and air interdiction.⁸

During Desert Storm U.S. Army OH-58 AHIP Scout/Attack helicopters were embarked on numerous Navy vessels. The AHIP is traditionally used to scout targets for the AH-64 Apache helicopter. In assigning special operations versions of the AHIP to Naval vessels, the aircrews were able to expand the search perimeter of surface ships such as the USS Nicholas and, utilizing their advanced avionics and limited attack capability, to provide suppressive air power for the Frigate Commander. Not only did they provide the ships with an increased offensive punch but they contributed directly to the attainment of the CinC's goals. To exploit the position of the U.S. aircraft carriers in the Persian Gulf, aircraft on interdiction missions into the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations (KTO) had to fly over a chain of offshore islands and oil drilling platforms. However, many were occupied by Iraqi troops as valuable observation points. As soon as the Iraqi integrated air defense system was destroyed these islands and oil platforms had to be

silenced. The frigate Nicholas with its embarked AHIP helicopters began the campaign.⁹ Under the cover of darkness and using night vision goggles, they destroyed the first two oil platforms with rockets, withdrew, and the Nicholas subdued at least seven additional platforms. Together they killed five Iraqi soldiers, captured 23 prisoners, and recovered shoulder-fired surface-to-air missiles and a long range radio.¹⁰ Combined with USS Curts action on the island of Jazirat Qurah, a clear flight path was opened for strike aircraft.¹¹ By combining a tactical, effectively single mission, helicopter with a single surface ship, you increase the multirole capabilities of the frigate and give the Naval Component Commander more employment options. In Operation Earnest Will, the escort operation of Kuwaiti oil tankers from November 1986 - March 1989, CinCCENT combined forces in a similar manner. Army special forces AH/MH-6 helicopters embarked on U.S. combatants and were used on several occasions, most notably when they engaged the Iranian ICU "Iran Ajar" which was detected conducting minelaying operations near the Bahrain Bell anchorage.¹² Innovative multirole teaming has paid great dividends.

CHAPTER IV

PLANNING AND TRAINING

History is replete with examples of the use of multirole weapons systems and forces that have produced excellent results for the commander. But we don't effectively plan or train to fight with all of the service assets at our disposal. I would propose that in many cases it is by ad hoc decision making due to the pressures of the crisis that forces, for better or worse, are formed for combat.

"It is likely when Marines are sent to combat in a remote part of the third world, that it will be under unexpected circumstances and at a moment's notice. In such cases, proximity, availability of forces, and speed will be paramount considerations. As a result, a theater commander may not be able to brush off a contingency plan and send neatly packaged forces into battle in an orderly fashion. He may be forced to commit a mixed bag of forces piecemeal with little or no previous planning. Marines who served with the 2nd Battalion, 8th Marines on Grenada know this better than most. This not only means that Marines must have the ability to operate with all types of U.S. Army and Air Force units, but they must also be able to contribute initially in something less than their cherished Marine air-ground task force configuration."¹

Kernal Blitz is a Marine Expeditionary Brigade and Amphibious Group size exercise generally conducted once a year off of the coast of Southern California. The exercise is typically supported by a Carrier Battle Group. This traditional Navy/Marine Corps force is certainly one that a regional CinC would plan to employ in contingency action, but the exercise is always conducted with Navy and Marine participants. (Note: In Kernal Blitz 89-1, four UH-60's, three AH-1S's, and three OH-58's were employed as "orange" forces.² It has to be questioned when we

don't utilize U.S. Air Force or U.S. Army units as elements of a "blue" combined force in exercises of this type. Every major crisis the United States military has faced in the last 2 decades has been fought with some combination of joint forces. If we've mishandled these crises it is because we don't effectively plan, and, in particular, we don't train properly.

Every ARG/MEU(SOC) on the East and West Coast is evaluated in a Special Operation Capable Exercise (SOCEX) prior to deployment. It is strictly a Navy/Marine exercise. There is no doubt that the ARG/MEU team should be required to demonstrate unit level proficiency in the mission performance standards dictated by applicable orders, but training must be expanded. In the work-up and evaluation phase, more joint training must be conducted. In addition, ARG and MEU performance standards for Special Operations Capable certification should be changed to reflect the realities of the necessity for joint interoperability. Going one step further, the CinC's must mandate joint training at every opportunity. It is not enough to build in joint training scenarios in large scale exercises that are tailored to regional contingency plans. The regional CinC's, (i.e., CENTCOM and EUCOM) should facilitate and mandate cross pollination at every turn, no matter the size of the exercise.

Operation Urgent Fury, the rescue operation on the island of Grenada, was thrust upon the United States at a time when attention was focused on our United Nations involvement in Lebanon. Amphibious Squadron 4 and Marine Amphibious Unit 22, embarked aboard the USS Guam and remaining ships of the Amphibious Ready Group had departed on 19 October 1983 for Lebanon. The USS

Independence Carrier Battle Group had sailed a day earlier. On 20 October both the ARG and CVBG were diverted to Grenada to participate in the rescue operation. By the time D-Day arrived on 25 October, Joint Task Force 120's force list included representation from every service.³ One look at the Order of Battle is impressive. This force was very much multirole. In particular, the amphibious and airborne (82nd Airborne and Ranger infantry battalions) capability available to Admiral Metcalf, JTF 120 Commander, was formidable. A true amphibious-airborne operation, however, was not possible. Lack of practice between the two main multirole forces dictated geographically separated actions rather than a single integrated one.⁴ Employing amphibious and airborne forces together in a joint assault enhances the strengths and reduces the limitations of both.⁵ This is the secret of employing multimission capable forces. With the continuous MEU deployment cycle from each coast, amphibious forces are always available to the CinC, but there are certainly going to be instances where a MEU size element would not be large enough to carry out the mission. In situations much like Grenada, the rapid deployment of airborne forces to reinforce a MEU ground element would provide the additional assault support to ensure adequate power is available....⁶ It is amazing to me that this same scenario is not exercised on a regular basis on both coasts. As difficult as the (training) process may be, fully integrated amphibious-airborne (multirole) operations should be conducted for 3 important reasons. First, these operations could significantly increase the U.S. wide-range response capability, and second, the United States could achieve it with no new equipment or force structure. Finally, the amphibious-airborne operation represents the epitome of joint warfare. Each service is

represented..."to fully exploit the unique (and multirole) capabilities of each armed force".⁷

Without innovative and bold joint planning and training at every level, staffs will be ill-informed as to the multirole capabilities and limitations of the forces at their disposal.

In 1992, there is no coherent reason that some form of joint training is not being conducted at virtually every exercise. JCS Pub 0-2, "Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)" directs the commander of a unified command with the responsibility to ensure sufficient joint training is conducted within his commands to ensure effective conduct of joint operations. Further it directs the Commanders of Service components within unified commands with the responsibility for execution of sufficient unit training programs to prepare his forces for effective employment within the unified commander's operational plans.⁸ The Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) directs that unified and specified commanders develop Conceptual and Operations Plans for their Area of Operations and through the deliberate planning cycle this is done every 24 months. Doctrinally, the Joint Publications System is extensive and has been promulgated to provide guidance to conduct joint operations. The publications range from Joint Pub 0-1, "Basic National Defense Doctrine" to JCS Pub 3-02, "Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations" to JCS Pub 5-02, "Joint Operations Planning System, and many more.⁹

The UNAAF lists the primary and collateral functions of each of the services. For example, the Air Force collateral functions are:

- a. Surface sea surveillance and antisurface ship warfare through air operations.

b. Antisubmarine warfare and antiair warfare operations to protect sea lines of communications.

c. Aerial minelaying operations

d. Air-to-air refueling in support of naval campaigns.¹⁰

From General MacArthur's use of land based bombers in his amphibious island hopping campaign, Operation Cartwheel, in WWII,¹¹ to the use of Air Force KC-10 and KC-135 refuelers for Naval aircraft in Operation Desert Storm, the expanded maritime strategic role of Air Force assets has proven itself over and over. In 1962, B-47's assisted the Navy in search and surveillance of Soviet ships during the Cuban missile crisis.¹² In 1975, F-111's flew sea surveillance and small boat attacks in the SS Mayaguez crisis.¹³ However, since General Nathan Twining, Air Force Chief of Staff, announced essentially the same maritime collateral functions of the Strategic Air Command in 1951, the U.S. Navy and Air Force have signed no less than five Memorandum of Agreements (MOA) or "understandings" on cooperation in the Maritime Strategy (1974, 1975, 1982, 1984,¹⁴ and the latest in 1991 by the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Kelso and the Air Force Chief of Staff, General McPeak.¹⁵) The 1991 MOA stated, "The goal of this effort is to provide operational commanders flexible and interoperable forces, supported by appropriate joint doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures." This MOA is not necessary. JCS Pub 3-02, "Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations", compiled from FM 31-11, NWP-22 (B), AFM 2.53, and LFM 01, is an example of a doctrinal pub that should allow us to train and operate together. The Navy and Air Force don't need five memorandums to get the services to work together. Every military leader in recent memory has touted "joint", and if that's not

enough, each succeeding crisis does it for us. The circle is complete. We have direction, plans, and doctrine. We just don't have complete training effectiveness. I feel that the line between the planning and the training worlds is somewhat blurred by service parochialism and institutionalized exercise planning. We have made superb strides in the last decade but its time to go all the way.

There is surely going to be periods in the future with reduced forces that an ARG/MEU will be in a place like the Mediterranean and not be covered by a CVBG. The Air Force will be required to conduct maritime operations in support of the ARG until relieved by a reinforcing CVBG. The time to integrate our multirole capabilities is in pre-deployment work-ups, and in theater exercises, not when the next crisis flares up.

Lieutenant General Charles A. Horner, Joint Forces Air Component Commander for Operation Desert Storm stated, "The realistic training programs, initiated nearly a decade ago, paid great dividends as our aircrews entered the conflict having been trained as they were expected to fight." He sites exercises such as GALLANT KNIGHT, GALLANT EAGLE, BRIGHT STAR, QUICK FORCE, BLUE FLAG, AND RED FLAG as paving the way to realistic and pragmatic expectations¹⁶ (as to our services performance). To this list I would add the Marine Air Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1 "Weapons and Tactics Instructor" classes at Yuma, AZ, the Strike University pre-deployment exercises for the Carrier Battle Group at NAS Fallon, NV, and the combined arms training done at both the National Training Center, Ft Irwin, CA and Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, 29 Palms, CA. These are all superb evolutions

that have unquestionably brought our unit fighting capabilities up to the level displayed in Desert Storm.

However, I would propose that the scenarios fought in many of these exercises are "canned" such that we fight force on force, (i.e., 7th Light Infantry Division versus 7th Marine Expeditionary Brigade) and not combined force on combined force. Although the tactical level commanders get invaluable experience in employing their own multirole forces, the operational level staffs miss out in not experimenting with force structures that test their ability to make maximum use of multirole capabilities to achieve victory.

There is not only a horizontal interaction but a vertical interaction between the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Innovative training scenarios should be devised for exercises, that force the Operational Staffs to employ their multimission forces from all the levels just as if a real world crisis contingency presented itself. In these scenarios the staffs would be given forces apportioned in the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP) and combine them to experiment with their multirole capabilities and their weaknesses. Exercises could be developed that require, for instance, CinCCENT to employ forces against CinCPAC forces (or their designated JTF commanders), because there are many potential trouble spots across all of the CinC areas of responsibility that mirror each other, particularly in the littoral areas. An exercise in this form would truly necessitate that staffs learn about the capabilities and limitations of their forces, particularly if the amount and type of forces allocated to the exercise aren't all that the JSCP envisions in a "perfect scenario". In such a scenario, multimission platforms and forces would prove their worth.

In Desert Storm, we were highly successful in integrating some elements of American forces (i.e., U.S. Army Tiger Brigade under OPCON of 1st Marine Division). We also had five months of Operation Desert Shield to improve interoperability, and exercise together. The valuable training we gathered there will be a perishable skill as personnel move into and out of respective staffs. The lesson that should be taken from Desert Storm and other real world operations is that we should be conducting this type of joint training on a routine basis.

There are some bright spots beside the impressive effort of the JCS to promulgate joint publications across the warfare spectrum. Cobra Gold is a JCS mandated combined and multinational exercise that has become the 2nd largest PACOM exercise. It is conducted in Thailand and structured as a Joint Task Force level conflict. Cobra Gold 90 was held 23 April - 15 June 1990 and the JTF was under the command of Marine Corps Brigadier General R.C. Phillips. Not only was every service a major participant, but the Thai JTF was fully integrated into the USJTF staff. In the exercise Marine Corps and the U.S. Army infantry units linked up to conduct operations to the final objective.¹⁷ A Cobra Gold scenario on larger and smaller scales, on a more frequent basis, would expose commanders at all levels to a whole new realm of multimission possibilities, create the dialog and after action reports that effect necessary change, and provide the CinC with a better warfighting machine.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

It would be easy to say that we should re-open the B-52 production line or extend F/A-16 production or build hundreds more F/A-18's. It would also be easy to say let's not retire current multimission forces (i.e., the LPH, a platform that could be dedicated to mine warfare) so that CinCs can retain valuable fighting assets. These things are simply impossible to do from a procurement and engineering standpoint or unlikely to happen from a political or economic standpoint. In some cases even upgrades to existing systems are falling out due to the budget ax. The advanced air-to-air missile scheduled for the F/A-18 was cut from the 1993 budget. This weapon would have increased the capability of the F/A-18 (in its air superiority role) as it expands its multirole mission and replaces the F-14.

With the advent of the force draw down (up to 25%), and inherent budget reductions, it is unwise to focus on force planning as a solution to operational deficiencies. Surely the requirements generated from CinC's will continue to influence procurement decisions in the future, but it is evident from recent Secretary of Defense pronouncements that what we have is what we're going to have for the foreseeable future. It is the current force structure, or less, that we will use in planning and execution. The crisis we respond to in the future will be a "come as you are" affair. Decision makers need to know the capabilities and limitations of their current forces and plan accordingly.

In the article, "The Way Ahead" the authors stated that we will operate with smaller battle groups comprised of more capable ships. But they stated that "...improved capability never will be a substitute for adequate numbers. A single unit still cannot be in two places at one time. We must have enough carriers, amphibious ships...to maintain focused, forward, simultaneous, peacetime presence...."¹ But what if we don't have the numbers? We may not have the luxury in the future of being able to call for a CVBG and/or ARG at will. CinC's must think about the implications of rapid crisis response (a historical reality) and how they will combine joint multirole forces to create the necessary combat power to win the battle.

It is impossible to cite all of the weapons systems that have a multirole capability because the U.S. arsenal is full of them. Equally impossible is it to postulate on the myriad of ways units could be combined to create multirole, multimission forces for the commander of a unified or specified command. Our military history is overflowing with the planned uses and, more often, ad hoc uses of multimission forces to respond to a crisis. Forces have been used wisely and in some cases unwisely. However, I believe our future is brighter because we have the direction from the Chairman of the JCS, the planning structure and the doctrine.

Commanders and their staffs need to relook at OPLANS and training exercises. We need to take a bold and innovative approach to the way we do business, cast aside service parochialism once and for all, and learn the capabilities and limitations of our sister services first hand. It is important to focus on the positive aspects of multirole force employment. The stark reality of the current force drawdown has not

fully hit. When the dust settles, commanders at all levels will unequivocally need to draw on the multirole capabilities of all DOD assets to deploy contingency force packages that can meet the challenge.

The multirole force is truly a combat multiplier.

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