

**STRATEGY
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**THE U.S. ARMY'S DEPLOYMENT TO THE SPANISH AMERICAN
WAR AND OUR FUTURE STRATEGIC OUTLOOK**

BY

WILLIAM H. LANDON

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**The U.S. Army's Deployment to the Spanish American War
and our Future Strategic Outlook**

by

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ABSTRACT

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1998 marks the 100th anniversary of the Spanish-American War. The author attempts to look back at the logistical deployment during the Spanish-American War and make a comparison to the logistical deployment during our most recent war, Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Both wars were a tremendous success and required the rapid movement of equipment, materiel, and personnel to project U.S. Combat Power. The author argues, however, that from a logistical perspective many of the same shortcomings from both wars remain, and if unresolved, will create significant challenges for logisticians and military leaders in the future. The study maintains that an effective continental United States (CONUS)-based deployment strategy is critical to the Armed Forces capability to project its forces rapidly. It concludes by proposing specific recommendations to deal with these challenges.

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INTRODUCTION

"If the war in Cuba drags on through the summer with nothing done, we shall go down in the greatest defeat ever known."

Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, 1897

The Spanish-American War even after 100 years, still remains America's shortest declared war, lasting only four months, April-August 1898. Despite its short duration, the conflict had far-reaching consequences upon a nation that stood at the threshold of global greatness. The war was a pivotal action in our history, with many "firsts"--overseas deployment, non-crisis mobilization, territorial expansion beyond the continent, perhaps even our first "Joint" War, and our certification as a world power after World War I.¹ But one of its greatest unmet challenges was the logistics distribution systems' ability to be responsive.

A look back at the logistical deployment during the Spanish-American War serves us well in making a similar comparison to the logistical deployment during our most recent war, Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Both wars were a tremendous success and required the rapid movement of equipment, materiel, and personnel to project U.S. combat power. However, from a logistical perspective, many of the same shortcomings from both wars remain, and if unresolved, will create significant challenges for logisticians and military leaders in the future.

A detailed comparison of the two war's logistics distribution systems during deployment show little improvement in overall system performance even though nearly 100 years have passed. Instead of spurring improvements, logistics deployment deficiencies justify the status quo. Although the logistics distribution system lacks the capability to provide responsive precision delivery of required items, some argue that it is too risky to attempt change to a system that does.

INSTABILITY IN CUBA

The American Indian problem, which had consumed the Army's resources for decades, was settled by 1891. However, an economic depression in 1893 had struck the country hard, and five years later the nation was just getting back on its feet when events on a tiny Carribean island, just ninety miles off the Florida peninsula, altered the country's course.

For centuries, the island of Cuba had been part of the once mighty empire of Spain. By the late nineteenth century, however, Spain was slowly losing its grip on the island. In 1868, desiring complete independence, Cuba rebelled against the crown. Ten years later, after losing countless lives and millions of dollars, Spain harshly suppressed the unrest, but her victory was only a temporary reprieve from the volatile situation. Granting limited self-rule to the Cuban natives, Spain believed it could

convince the insurrectionists to lay down their arms. However, trouble escalated and by 1898 the United States was becoming directly involved in the crisis.

Cuba and the island of Puerto Rico were the only two Spanish holdings still left in the New World. Many members of the United States Congress and other government officials held dear to the principal set forth by the late President James Monroe, that European powers should stay out of the affairs of the West.²

Besides territorial questions and human rights issues, the United States in recent history had become increasingly tied to the island's economy. America spent upwards of 50 million dollars yearly in Cuba and exported over 100 million dollars worth of goods to be consumed by the island's populace in the same period.³ In addition to this, Cuba was one of the largest and cheapest suppliers of the world's sugar, of which the United States was one of Cuba's biggest and best customers. All these factors meant the United States simply could not ignore developments with Spain and her rule of the island.

UNPREPAREDNESS FOR WAR

American war plans, which were virtually nonexistent at the start of the conflict, were formulated in an atmosphere completely unconducive to logical strategic thought. And while

the country progressed to victory, it did so with great logistical and strategic problems.

On March 9th, 1898, Congress appropriated "for national defence" the sum of \$50,000,000.⁴ No part of this appropriation was available for offensive purposes--even for offensive preparation. The War Department had been able to do nothing in the way of accumulating material for offensive war a contingency which, after the destruction of the Maine, was regarded by the country at large as inevitable. "The Quartermaster, Commissary and Medical departments, up to April 23, could not either procure or order anything in the way of equipment, clothing, tentage, harness, commissary stores, medical and hospital supplies, camp furniture, and other material."⁵ Because of this, absolutely nothing had been added to the ordinary supply as it existed March 9th, 1898.

The personnel of the Quartermaster, Commissary, and Medical Corps, numerically, were almost as inadequate as the material. On April 23rd there were only 22 trained commissary officers in the service. In the Quartermaster Department, the number of officers was limited by law to 57. Congress allowed 192 medical officers, but when war came only 179 were ready for active service."⁶

There were many medicines that could be purchased at once in the open market, but a great number of articles indispensable to an effective service in camps or field could not be so readily

obtained. Medical chests and apparatus, surgical instruments, hospital tents, and furniture had to be ordered and manufactured.

"The situation can be summarized in a few words: The War Department had, on April 23rd, accomplished some little extra work on the coast defences; it had ready for use enough .30-caliber rifles to arm the 33,000 men added to the Regular Army, and enough .45-caliber Springfields for the volunteers, but that was all."⁷ There was nothing for the troops in the first call, and for the other troops provided for during the last days of April, exclusive of the Regular Army in its original status. If the wording of the act of Congress had permitted the War Department to make use of some portion of the \$50,000,000 for offensive preparations, much could have been accomplished between March 9th and April 23rd in the way of getting ready for the impending conflict.

AMERICA'S FIRST JOINT WAR

Not enough has been done to elevate the status of this "splendid little war" as America's gateway into the 20th century. The Spanish-American War was truly a joint effort by the Marine Corps, Navy, and Army.

The most important part of the American strategy was the investment of Cuba. If Cuba fell, Spain would face inevitable defeat, at least in the minds of American officials in

Washington. The target selected in Cuba would be a harbor on the southern and eastern half of the island named Santiago de Cuba. At Santiago, a Spanish fleet was sealed inside the anchorage when the American naval vessels moved to their blockading stations. The operation would be a joint Army and Navy venture. Army units were ordered to concentrate in southern locations inside the United States and plans were then rapidly formulated for their organization, supply, and departure to Cuba sometime in early summer.⁸

The following dispatch from the Secretary of War details the Navy's and Army's close role in the deployment to Cuba,

"With the approval of the Secretary of War, you are directed to take your command on transports, proceed under convoy of the Navy to the vicinity of Santiago de Cuba, land your force at such place east or west of that point as your judgement may dictate, under the protection of the Navy, and move it on to the high ground and bluffs overlooking the harbor or into the interior, as shall best enable you to capture or destroy the garrison there, and cover the Navy as it sends its men in small boats to remove torpedoes, or, with the aid of the Navy, capture or destroy the Spanish fleet now reported to be in Santiago Harbor."⁹

The blockade of Santiago Harbor by Admiral William T. Sampson secured the Army's ability to transport men and equipment from Tampa, Florida to Santiago, Cuba. The expedition "moved through a succession of sparkling, sunlit days, over a sea as smooth as a lake, undisturbed by Spanish cruisers or by shells from Spanish forts. As far as the eye could see, it had the ocean entirely to itself."¹⁰ The convoying naval warships

treated the Army with the most precise courtesy and concealed contempt.

The transports could not keep in line, the gun-boats and torpedo-boats were busy rounding up the stray vessels. Correspondents reported that the gun-boats were like swift, keen-eyed, intelligent collies rounding up a herd of bungling sheep. It was a most happy-go-lucky expedition, run with real American optimism and readiness to take big chances, and with the spirit of a people who recklessly trust that it will come out all right in the end, and the barely possible may not happen--as one of the generals on board said, "This is God Almighty's war, and we are only his agents."¹¹

Obviously, the expedition from Tampa was a success and unmarred by loss of life or treasure. The support provided by the Navy and Marine Corps contributed to make America's First Joint War a total victory.

A STRATEGIC AND LOGISTICAL CHALLENGE

In the past hundred years, the United States has found itself entangled in seven major wars. Fortunately, all of these conflicts have been fought on foreign shores, thus sparing the American homeland from the terrible destruction caused by modern warfare. While this "geographic blessing" has been a great benefit to the American people, it has been a significant

strategic and logistical challenge for our Armed Forces. Consequently, the United States has had to transport its soldiers and equipment over great distances to support our national and military objectives.

The Spanish-American War was a success but everything did not go perfectly. The logistics distribution system, for instance, lacked the capability to provide a responsive precision delivery of required items.

In Tampa, Florida 1898, "several of the volunteer regiments were without uniforms; several were without arms; and some were without blankets, tents, or camp equipage. The 32nd Michigan, which was among the best, arrived without arms."¹² To illustrate the embarrassment caused by poor logistical conditions, "fifteen box cars loaded with uniforms were side-tracked twenty-five miles from Tampa, and remained there for weeks while the troops were suffering for clothing. Stores were sent to the quartermaster at Tampa, but the invoices and bills of lading were not received, so that officers were obliged to break open seals and hunt from car to car to ascertain whether they contained clothing, grain, balloon materiel, horse equipments, ammunition, siege guns or commissary stores."¹³ Although these examples come from the Spanish-American War, similar stories abound from every major contingency operation which the U.S. Army has conducted.

Because wartime environments are uncertain and constantly changing, there are no productivity formulas that will have

lasting effect on system responsiveness. An example of successful responsiveness would be development of a seamless DOD logistics support structure. Today's reality is that commercial business technology has overcome both the transportation and communications limitations of yesteryear, yet we in the DOD have not fully availed ourselves of them.

PROVIDING FOR COMBAT UNIT NEEDS--A SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR/DESERT SHIELD-DESERT STORM RELOOK

As Secretary of Defense William Perry said, "the reason we have a military distribution system is to give combat units what they need when they need it." Before continuing, the following question must be answered: Did the past and does the current logistics system give units what they need when they need it?

As indicated in the previous topic, "A Strategic and Logistical Challenge," the Spanish-American War's distribution system was not able to provide a timely flow of individually important items to those who needed them. In addition, the logistics system was not able to respond within a limited amount of time.

Operations Desert Shield/Storm (ODS) provide a prime case study of the DOD's performance under current doctrine and procedures. In 1990 the DOD had \$109.9 billion supply inventory on-hand.¹⁴ During ODS, 3.9 million tons of this inventory arrived in Southwest Asia as sustaining supplies.¹⁵ The total

tonnage delivered to Saudi Arabia during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm exceeded that delivered to France during, and six months after, the Normandy invasion by almost 200 percent.¹⁶ But, despite the total amount of material delivered, and the size of the theater build up of on-hand stocks (DOS--Days-of-Supply), after action studies show that combat units did not get what they determined they needed when they needed it. "Supplies were lost to the system, sometimes for months. Resupply of spare parts was ineffective. Equipment was deadlined, and some units received only minimal parts support."¹⁷

The focus on building up stocks (60 DOS) created congestion and backlogs throughout the system of the 40,000 containers shipped to ODS, for example, 25,000 (62.5 percent)¹⁸ had to be opened just to determine their contents and destination. Many of these were never unloaded and redeployed just as they arrived.

Overloading the logistics system with shipment of just-in-case tonnage precluded some deployed forces from receiving high priority items they needed until after the tide of battle had rendered the need for those items superfluous. Along with wasting strategic lift capacity, just-in-case stocks were in direct competition with high priority unit requisitional items (10,700 per day at peak)¹⁹ for the attention of material handlers and managers to sort, document, and forward. "Resupply was so poor that at least one major (Army) unit did not receive resupply

for a single piece of deadlined armor through regular wholesale supply channels for the duration of its deployment."²⁰

"Order-ship-times actually lengthened throughout ODS. Items requested by units using the highest priority designator (64.9 percent of total) took an average of 28 days just to reach the port of embarkation (POE) for shipment out of the continental United States."²¹ The average time for all requested materiel, regardless of the source of priority, to reach POE during ODS was 50.9 days.²² This was clearly not being responsive to unit needs.

EMBARKATION AT TAMPA--A DEPLOYMENT NIGHTMARE

Tampa was not adapted to the concentration and the effective handling of the vast quantities of supplies necessary for an army of 25,000 men. It was accepted by the board of officers appointed to inquire into its suitability for the dispatch of a small force, but it would hardly have been selected for the purposes of the Santiago expedition, had so large a force been under consideration at the time.

"The city of Tampa was approached by only two lines of railroad, both single-track. To make the matter worse, one company, the Plane Line, controlled communications between Tampa and Port Tampa, where the ships lay, and from where the troops must be embarked."²³

"Tampa and Port Tampa are nine miles apart. One single-track railroad connects the two places. At the terminus there was but one wharf, and that capable of accommodating not more than nine transports at a time."²⁴ General George Humphrey, the Chief Quartermaster of the 5th Corps, in his testimony before the Dodge Commission, thus described the inadequate railroad and wharfage facilities at Tampa and Port Tampa and the many obstacles to be overcome in embarking for the Santiago expedition:

It was often difficult to get cars most needed to that place, or to get those that arrived there in position for unloading. This, in part, was owing to there being no card on cars, or other information, showing their contents. Bills of lading, in but few instances came to hand in time, and invoices not at all. But, all matters considered, I do not see how it was practicable to send them forward at the time shipments were made. The loading of the transports was at best difficult, owing to the limited wharf facilities and not having in hand full cargoes."²⁵

As shown, ample supplies and munitions had been shipped to Tampa, but in the congestion that followed the increased mobilization of the forces there, the bills of lading were either mis-sent or not delivered. This confusion was, in part, owing to the immense amount of mail sent to the troops at Tampa, which, because of the inadequate post-office facilities, it was impossible for the officials to assort and distribute until long after its receipt. Hence the bills of lading were much delayed in reaching their proper destination.

THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP--DID POLITICS HINDER MILITARY NEED AND THE ARMY'S ABILITY TO DEPLOY?

U.S. Army policy from the Civil War through the Indian Wars, and again during this century, was one of total war; i.e., nothing was excluded in the campaign of war. Without explanation, the Spanish-American War stands as an anomaly to this policy. This becomes a more intriguing question when it is recognized that the leadership of the Army at the time was made up of Indian fighters, with the senior leaders all Civil War veterans (including the President and Secretary).

President William McKinley appointed generals such as Fitzhugh Lee and "Fighting Joe" Hooker in large part as a conciliatory gesture to bind Civil War wounds.²⁶ This raises the question: Was this blatant politics with no regard to military need?

The Spanish-American War was the first in which the senior leadership was not covered with tangible public acclaim. While Miles, Shafter, Merritt, et al., were hardly social pariahs after the war, they never received the national recognition of Washington, Scott, Taylor, Grant--and afterwards, Pershing, MacArthur, Marshall, and Eisenhower. The Spanish-American War leaders are lost in the footnotes of not only military, but also American history.²⁷

Along with all of the reforms credited to the aftermath of the War, General Staff, education, demise of the bureaus, etc.,

little is said about the age of the leadership. Were the physical, and mental, shortcomings of these 40 (in some cases 50) year veterans the genesis of the current retirement system? With the exception of MacArthur, and to a lesser extent Marshall, we have not entrusted senior war leadership to old men.

SHAFTER--AN AID TO DEPLOYMENT

Even bad generals have more published about them than Shafter does--and he was not a bad general.

John D. Miley, *In Cuba with Shafter*, 1899

On June 14, 1898, the American force, then all assembled in Tampa, Florida, departed on transports for Cuba. In command of the expedition was Michigan native, Civil War veteran and holder of the Medal of Honor, Major General William R. Shafter. Shafter's command, the Fifth Army Corps, consisted of two infantry divisions, an independent brigade, and one cavalry division composed of two brigades. The Ninth Cavalry, the Third, and the Sixth Regiments composed the First Brigade. In the Second Brigade was the Tenth Cavalry along with the First U.S. Cavalry Regiment and the well-known First Volunteer Cavalry Regiment, "Rough Riders."²⁸

Shafter was an officer of noted ability, although as astutely pointed out by historian David Trask, "...he lacked real training and experience in the conduct of joint operations."²⁹

General Shafter's record for bravery in the Civil War and his long years since as colonel of a regiment patrolling Indians in the West, or on garrison duty at the San Francisco Presidio, did little to prepare him to organize an expedition to Cuba. But he possessed, as Captain French E. Chadwick of the Navy pointed out, "thorough courage, strong will, and much strength of character."³⁰

As befitted an old frontier fighter, Shafter was, to the distaste of some correspondents, rather rough in manner and bearing. His years in the West led him to rely upon the regulars, who made up the main body of his expedition, and to trust the regimental commanders to demonstrate initiative in getting men aboard the transports--and later in operations in Cuba.

The colonels justified Shafter's trust. By the time word reached them on June 6 that they should board transports, they had learned that the ships could hold only eighteen thousand or twenty thousand men rather than the anticipated twenty-five thousand.³¹ Every regiment engaged in a determined scramble to get aboard, for fear that otherwise it would be left.

However, Shafter's troubles were only beginning. Not only did it appear that the ship's boarding capacity was inadequate for the number of troops to be transported, Shafter still had to deal with a complicated logistics snarl. From the port stretched unmarked boxcars nine miles back to Tampa. It was too difficult

for General Shafter to unravel, and although he held conferences day and night, it seemed equally to baffle his subordinates.

As for Shafter, he remained optimistic in the face of chaos and reported May 31 that he could sail in three days. In the end, General Shafter was able to speed the loading by personally supervising, first from the piazza of the Tampa Bay Hotel, and then from the pier at Port Tampa, where a packing case served as a desk and two cracker boxes supported his huge bulk.³²

The operation against Santiago was a combined operation, an aspect of warfare which Shafter was utterly ill prepared to manage. To make matters worse, both he and the naval commander, Admiral William T. Sampson, were under a misunderstanding as to the military's course of action. Neither officer communicated directly offshore during the planning stages of the campaign.

EXPEDITION TO CUBA

"God takes care of drunken men, sailors, and the United States," quoted Richard Harding Davis, and cited the expedition to Cuba as a severe testing of the axiom.³³ Even by the standards of nineteenth-century warfare, it was bizarre and risky almost beyond belief. The War Department order to General Shafter on May 26 to prepare to load twenty-five thousand men and their equipment on transports at anchor in Tampa Bay transformed the relatively orderly army camps into the wildest state of confusion.

President McKinley had in mind only a minor expedition, the one for which General Shafter had been preparing since the beginning of May. However, on May 30, the War Department sent Shafter a wire in cipher,

"you are directed to take your command on transports, proceed under convoy of the navy to the vicinity of Santiago de Cuba, land your force at such place east or west of that point as your judgement may dictate, under the protection of the Navy, to capture or destroy the garrison there; and with the aid of the Navy capture or destroy the Spanish fleet now reported to be in Santiago harbor, on completion of this enterprise, unless you receive other orders or deem it advisable to remain in the harbor of Santiago de Cuba, re-embark your troops and proceed to the harbor of Port de Banes, when will you sail?"³⁴

General Shafter could not say, for the orders caught him utterly unprepared, less through his own fault than that of the War Department. Somehow it seemed to expect that Shafter could load his regiments aboard the transports and be off in a matter of a day or so.

It was not until June 1st, four days after Shafter had received his order, that they were even ready to take on supplies. When the flotilla steamed out of Tampa Bay on June 14 after so many weary postponements and delays, Richard Harding Davis wrote that both the troops on the ships and the spectators ashore were suspicious and wary.³⁵ From the transports, there was no waving, yelling, or band playing, and on the docks there were only "three colored women and a pathetic group of perspiring stevedores and three soldiers" to wave farewells.³⁶

THE LEGACY OF THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

While victory had been secured, serious questions about the conduct of the war needed to be answered. Many American officials believed that the management of the war at the highest levels had been inept. To investigate these serious charges, President McKinley, even before the hostilities were formally terminated, formed a commission to investigate the conduct of the war. Headed by Civil War veteran Greenville Dodge, the Dodge Commission released its findings in February 1899.

The findings were predictable. First, the structure of the War Department itself was archaic and unable to handle the load thrust upon it during the war. Second, the Secretary of War, Russell Alger, was unable to perform his duty with efficiency. To rectify the situation, McKinley needed a new Secretary of War and the country needed a reformed infrastructure for the military. Both of these matters would be addressed in the near future.

To replace Alger, McKinley selected New York-born attorney Elihu Root. Root succeeded in pushing through the reforms recommended by the Dodge Commission, although it took the new Secretary of War several years to overcome the opponents of change. While he possessed no military experience, Root was an excellent communicator, administrator, and politician. His efforts reaped rewards when Congress passed the General Staff Act

of 1903. From the year he entered office, Root had supported a general staff system that would modernize the War Department.

BASIC CONCEPT OF DISTRIBUTION LOGISTICS REVIEWED--PAST AND PRESENT

Our basic concept of logistics has not changed significantly since the Spanish American War. We continue to perpetuate logistics doctrine rooted in the early eighteenth century. It is a doctrine designed to overcome the inability of a sailing ship and horse-drawn distribution system to be responsive. Early industrial age planners needed and used the forward depot stockpile as a pragmatic workaround solution to the problem of bulk transport.³⁷

Without instant communications or rapid transportation available to them, eighteenth century planners had no choice but to build up forward depots--wagon load by wagon load. Ever since, our mental energies have gone toward seeking efficiencies in bulk transport and stockpile methodology. Today's reality is that commercial business technology has overcome both the transportation and communications limitations of yesteryear, yet we in the DOD have not fully availed ourselves of them.

Our current logistics system was developed in a period when transportation was far more expensive than the materiel being transported. It is still based on this assumption. However, just the opposite is true today. Over the past 30 years, the

cost of transportation has fallen precipitously, while the cost of materiel has skyrocketed. An aircraft engine today costs almost 250 percent and a missile 300 percent more (in constant dollars) than they did in the 1960s while international air and sea cargo shipment rates have declined over 100 percent.³⁸

As we move into the twenty-first century, the continuing expansion in the importance of unique, often high cost, high tech items critical to sustaining our war-fighting advantages will force us to abandon large inventories of distribution stockpiles. As of February 1997, the Department of Defense has classified and tracks 6,853,917 unique items.³⁹ Pushing some bulk quantity of each item to a theater of operations on a just-in-case basis is no longer a practical solution. High cost, high priority items will have to be distributed globally from a central conus base.

REALITIES OF A CHANGED WORLD

The ongoing revolutions in military affairs will make quick small scale deployments the norm. The circumstances under which these forces will be employed required agile and responsive logistics support. A buildup period for theater supply stocks is unlikely.

Deployments for peacekeeping, humanitarian, or localized combat operations will require the rapid employment of swiftly tailored and immediately effective Joint Task Forces. These forces will come from a much smaller force structure.

Reduced force structure and smaller force deployments enhance the importance of every weapons system and platform. Daily readiness of key weapon systems at unit level will take on a national level of significance not previously seen.

While in the past logisticians succeeded in maintaining high readiness rates for deployed forces despite an unresponsive distribution system, the special circumstances that enabled them to do so no longer exist. Besides seemingly limitless supplies of money, large force structures in the past enabled the services to choose only their most ready units for mission deployment.

Because of this depth in force structure, not all elements of the same type had to be engaged in an operation. This allowed the uncommitted elements to be used as sources for spares or even as a source for complete major end items. Force structures for some capabilities are already too small to meet existing requirements and marginally adequate for most others. Stripping one part of a force to support another is no longer an option.

The smaller size of the combatant elements deployed will also require a smaller, response-based logistics structure. A guiding principle of the DOD Logistics Strategic Plan is that the "footprint of logistics support must be reduced substantially without reducing readiness."⁴⁰ This principle primarily refers to the institutional infrastructure but can be applied equally to theater level support structures for deployed forces.

The requirement to deploy large numbers of service support personnel to manage forward base inventories for relatively small operational forces will be unacceptable. Units deployed for limited profile missions will have to rely on the DOD's global distribution pipeline for sustainment and replenishment. Reduced overseas bases will also increase direct reliance on CONUS and host nation support facilities.

Both warfighters and logisticians need to adjust to these realities of a changed world. The buildup of "Just-in-Case" inventory is no longer a viable alternative. A support concept that relies on instantaneous information exchange, global asset visibility, and precision delivery of specific items is more conducive to the current state of the world. Adjustment at the highest levels has already begun. Acceptance of both the economic and military realities of a changed world has led to a top driven call for a change in the way DOD conducts its logistics business.

U.S. DEPLOYMENT STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE AND OUR NEED TO RE-VITALIZE OUR U.S, MERCHANT MARINE INDUSTRY

Since the Spanish-American War, the U.S. has depended on a strong Merchant Marine fleet to deploy forces to the theater of operations. With the advent of the "CONUS-based" strategy, the

Armed Forces' capability to project its forces rapidly by means of sealift has become even more critical.

This strategy is predicated upon a CONUS-based military that would have only a few critical units stationed overseas to demonstrate America's resolve to its foreign allies. Instead of reinforcement forces supporting forward-based units, this strategy requires deployment of force packages from the United States to repond to a crisis situation. The political and economic pressures on the national leadership made this refocusing of our military strategy inevitable.

A strong commercial merchant marine industry is the most efficient, least costly method to accomplish this goal. While in many respects, a strong industry is affected by elements of the international trading system which are outside DOD's ability to influence, the Department must be in the forefront in supporting the viability of the industry by advocating such practices as cargo preference laws, operating and construction subsidies.

While the current U.S. administration considers such subsidies protectionism, most nations competing with the U.S. for a share of the international market do subsidize their fleets. Changing U.S. policy in support of such subsidies would greatly improve our Merchant Marine industry's chances in again becoming competitive worldwide.

Senator Jeremiah Denton, chairperson of the Commission on Merchant Marine and Defense best summarized the importance to the

United States of a strong Merchant Marine fleet. He said, " . . . the maritime shortfall cannot continue to be put aside as one of many foreseen shortfalls in the too hard to fix category-- without a strong and healthy maritime industry, the United States cannot carry out its basic national security strategy."⁴¹

CONCLUSION

The entire strategic planning, support, and execution of the Cuban Campaign of the Spanish-American War uncovered serious problems with American preparedness (particularly logistical deployment) and while America was the ultimate victor in the contest, her effectiveness at waging operations on foreign soil received severe criticism from all quarters.

Despite the criticism, the Spanish-American War provided a valuable opportunity to analyze our past as well as our current logistics deployment process. A detailed comparison of the Spanish-American War and Desert Shield/Desert Storm's logistics distribution systems during deployment shows little improvement in overall system performance even though nearly 100 years have passed.

The Spanish-American War prepared the United States for the future she was to play as a world leader, defender of freedom, and promoter of democracy. Without the war, the country would not have been able to fulfill this role. Her mighty military

machine, which in future generations would defeat enemies in Europe, Asia, and elsewhere abroad, was nonexistent in 1898.

As a nation then, we can ill afford to slight our national security interests in modernization of logistics deployment systems. Modernization of logistics systems must be a higher resource priority with the services, even though resources are scarce. A re-education and broad acceptance of current realities are a prerequisite for deployment progress.

We need to accept today's realities. The truth is that past and present deployments do not provide combat units with what they need, when they need it. The fact is that resource constraints will no longer allow warfighters to rely on traditional coping behaviors as buffers against an unresponsive logistics system. The reality is that an unresponsive logistic system is putting current and future readiness, modernization, and combat capability at risk. The bottom line is that the operational environment in a changed world requires reliance on an agile global distribution network. And, finally, we must accept the reality that information age technology has made change possible. The right materiel, in the right quantity, can be delivered to the right place, at the right time, anywhere on the globe. "Change will result when we recognize that we are capable of doing better than we are currently doing."⁴²

ENDNOTES

¹ J.B. Crabtree, *The Passing of Spain and the Ascendency of America*. Springfield, MA: King-Richardson, 1898, 464.

² Theodore P. Greene. *American Imperialism in 1898*, Boston, MA, D. C. Heath and Co., 1955, 72.

³ Michael D. Haydock, "This Means War," *American History*, Vol. 32, No. 6, 1997, 3.

⁴ Frank Freidel, *The Splendid Little War*, Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1958, 8.

⁵ Ibid, 9.

⁶ Ibid, 11.

⁷ Ibid, 14.

⁸ Walter Mills, *Martial Spirit*, Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1931, 11.

⁹ R.A. Alger, *The Spanish-American War*, New York, NY: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1901, 64.

¹⁰ Frank Freidel. *The Splendid Little War*, Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1958, 72.

¹¹ Ibid, 74.

¹² Ibid, 61.

¹³ Ibid, 61.

¹⁴ U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Appropriations. *Defense Inventory: DOD Needs to Continue to Improve Management and Reduce Stocks*. GAO/NSIAD-92-11. 19 February 1992, p. 1.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Defense, *Final Report to Congress--Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, 411-412.

¹⁶ Center of Military History, *Logistics in World War II--Final Report of Army Service Forces*, (Washington, D.C., GPO), p. 43.

¹⁷ N. Y. Moore; J. M. Halliday; K. Beam; D. McIver; M. Lewis; F. Finnegan; and T. Masselink, "Materiel Distribution: Improving Support to Army Operations in Peace and War," RAND, DRR-440-A, November 1993, p. xi.

¹⁸ Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Logistics), *Defense Intransit Visibility Integration Plan*, February 1995, p. iii.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of Defense, *Final Report to Congress--Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, p. 397.

²⁰ N. Y. Moore; J. M. Halliday; K. Beam; D. McIver; M. Lewis; F. Finnegan; and T. Mosselink, "Materiel Distribution: Improving Support to Army Operations in Peace and War," RAND, DRR-440-A, November 1993, 2-3.

²¹ Ibid., 19.

²² Ibid, 20.

²³ Frank Freidel, *The Splendid Little War*, Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1958, 65.

²⁴ Ibid, 60.

- ²⁵ R. A. Alger, *The Spanish-American War*, New York, NY: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1901, 66.
- ²⁶ R. A. Alger, *The Spanish-American War*, New York, NY: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1901, 34.
- ²⁷ Ibid, 37.
- ²⁸ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Rough Riders*, New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, 1.
- ²⁹ David F. Trask, *The War with Spain in 1898*, Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1996, 3.
- ³⁰ Frank Freidel, *The Splendid Little War*, Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1958, 62.
- ³¹ Ibid, 61.
- ³² Ibid, 61.
- ³³ Ibid, 59.
- ³⁴ Ibid, 59.
- ³⁵ Ibid, 71.
- ³⁶ Ibid, 72.
- ³⁷ Martin Van Creveld, *Supplying War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 17-26. Explains the development of the magazine system.
- ³⁸ John Dumond, Rick Eden, John Folkeson, *Velocity Management*, 8.
- ³⁹ Defense Logistics Services Center, "Federal Catalog System Overview," December 1995.
- ⁴⁰ Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Logistics), *Department of Defense Logistics Strategic Plan*, 1995, 5.
- ⁴¹ Major John G. O'Hara, USA, "Strategic Mobility: We Have a Long Way to Go," *Defense Transportation Journal*, August 1991.
- ⁴² Office of the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Logistics), *Department of Defense Logistics Strategic Plan*, 1995, 13.

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