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14. ABSTRACT Geographic combatant commanders (GCC) are required to conduct Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) when directed. NEO are highly political, visible in the media, and often executed with short notice. The NEO could become a concurrent mission with other operations across the spectrum of conflict. Given commitments to the global war on terrorism, military capability allocated to a NEO must be effective and efficient depending on what forces are available. The unique characteristics of a NEO require a greater degree of planning and preparation by joint forces to insure success. Joint Force Commanders must understand the complexities of NEO missions and closely coordinate efforts with Department of State and Ambassadors prior to conflict. The degree to which military planners are successful in planning ensures greater freedom of action and more effective and efficient application of military capability.					
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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

**Joint Considerations for Planning and Conducting
Noncombatant Evacuation Operations**

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 Joint Military 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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6 November 2007

Abstract

Geographic combatant commanders (GCC) are required to conduct Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) when directed. NEO are highly political, visible in the media, and often executed with short notice. The NEO could become a concurrent mission with other operations across the spectrum of conflict. Given commitments to the global war on terrorism, military capability allocated to a NEO must be effective and efficient depending on what forces are available. The unique characteristics of a NEO require a greater degree of planning and preparation by joint forces to insure success. Joint Force Commanders must understand the complexities of NEO missions and closely coordinate efforts with Department of State and Ambassadors prior to conflict. The degree to which military planners are successful in planning ensures greater freedom of action and more effective and efficient application of military capability.

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INTRODUCTION

Joint Doctrine requires and historical trends indicate the U.S. military will operate across a range of military operations.¹ Geographic combatant commanders (GCC) are required to conduct Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) when directed.² A NEO is “an operation directed by the Department of State or other appropriate authority, in conjunction with the Department of Defense, whereby noncombatants are evacuated from foreign countries when their lives are endangered by war, civil unrest, or natural disaster to safe havens or the United States.”³ By their nature, NEO are highly political, visible in the media, and often executed with short notice. Many Americans can remember the image of the final hours of the chaotic evacuation of Vietnam.⁴ The credibility of the U.S. government hangs in the balance when the military executes a NEO. If done well, we retain a margin of legitimacy and effectiveness in the region. If done poorly, we risk lives of American citizens (AMCITS), relationships with allies, and influence in the region.

The likelihood and frequency of U.S. involvement in NEOs in the future can be tied to trends seen in “The Failed States Index” published annually by *Foreign Policy* in cooperation with Fund for Peace.⁵ Since 2005, the number of failed or failing states tracked in this index has increased from 75 to 177. The index defines a state that is

¹ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 17 September 2006), I-11 – I-13.

² Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-68 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 22 January 2007), I-4.

³ *Ibid.*, GL-23.

⁴ Van Es, Hubert, “*Thirty Years at 300 millimeters*,” *The New York Times*, April 29, 2005, http://www.mishalov.com/Vietnam_finaleescape.html (accessed 14 October 2007). This photo, taken on April 29, 1975, was originally misidentified as the American Embassy when in actuality it was a building used by USAID and CIA.

⁵ Foreign Policy and Fund for Peace, “The Failed States Index,” *Foreign Policy* (May-June 2007): p. 54-63.

failing as one which has lost control of its territory or a “monopoly on legitimate use of force.”⁶ The conclusion to be drawn is that conflict (and by extension a break down in diplomacy) is more likely in failing states. These conditions are normally associated with NEOs. Since the number of failed states are rising significantly, so too is the likelihood of NEOs. The GCC should be attuned to the impact failed states have on regional stability. The possibility that NEO is more likely due to the phenomenon of failed states indicates a greater level of combatant command focus is prudent relative to this mission profile.⁷

Depending where the NEO takes place, the mission can range from a few hundred designated evacuees to several thousands. Additionally, the circumstances of the conflict driving the NEO could result in an extensive operation requiring a substantial amount of U.S. military capability. The NEO could become a concurrent mission with other operations and given commitments to the global war on terrorism, the military capability allocated to a NEO must be both effective and efficient based on available forces.

THESIS

The unique circumstances and characteristics of a NEO require a greater degree of thorough planning and preparation by joint forces to ensure success. Joint Force Commanders and their staffs can be proactive in their approach to NEOs by studying the complexities of NEO missions and coordinating their efforts with DOS prior to execution. Further, establishing formal procedures for planning and inter-agency preparation for NEO assures this important task receives command emphasis and

⁶ Ibid., p. 9-10. This is from the FAQ and Methodology section.

⁷ Husak, Michael, Memorandum, “Review of Draft Paper” and notes, 16 October 2007. The use of The Failed States Index to strengthen this monograph was from JMO Seminar Moderator in his review of this paper.

assessment. The degree to which military planners are successful will produce greater freedom of action and more effective and efficient application of military capability.

APPROACH

This monograph begins with a historical example to highlight the challenges of conducting these operations and give some real world appreciation for the value of rigorous preparation for these missions. The purpose of the historical example is to gain a better understanding of the environment that exists during a NEO and to be able to discuss the theoretical aspects of conducting such operations in the context of actual events. This will enable one to deduce cause and effect relationships and see the value of planning and preparation for a NEO. Next, the paper will review the joint doctrine available to a Joint Force Commander to prepare for and execute a NEO. Finally, a list of key considerations will be identified to aid a joint commander and staff in their approach to deliberate or crisis action planning, preparation, and execution for a NEO.

OPERATION EASTERN EXIT, MOGADISHU, SOMALIA, 1991.

Operation Eastern Exit took place in Mogadishu, Somalia, in January 1991. Events leading to the start of this NEO date back to 1969 when Siad Barre came to power. He ruled Somalia with an iron fist which led to the formation of three rebel groups. These groups began to take up arms against the Barre regime in the late 1980s. The three rebel groups were the Somali National Movement (SNM), Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), and the United Somali Congress (USC). The USC became the most violent of the three, and by November 1990 there were clear signs that the country was headed towards collapse. The USC, armed with machine guns, mortars, and twin barrel

anti aircraft guns mounted in trucks held positions within 30 kilometers of Mogadishu by December that year.⁸

The impact of the violence was significant by December. There was a rising death rate due to growing crime which the government was unable to control, and a specific violent robbery attempt which involved Ambassador James Bishop's own family.⁹ By mid December, most people in the country were too afraid to be out after dark.¹⁰

On December 5, 1990, the ambassador recommended voluntary departure of dependents and non-essential personnel and by December 19 the official American community had decreased from 147 to 37. On December 30, artillery fire was exploding in the street of Mogadishu. There had also been direct attacks on key U.S. embassy personnel. At this point, the ambassador moved remaining Americans inside the walls of the embassy compound.¹¹

Operation Desert Shield was also in full swing during this period, which eclipsed the attention one would expect from the disintegration of a country. Compounding the problem were too few staff members from the Department of State (DOS) and Department of Defense (DOD) in Washington focused on the crisis in Somalia.¹² This also impacted the level of assets allocated to Operation Eastern Exit and later contributed to friction related to command and control.

⁸ Siegel, Adam B. *Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia, in January 1991*. (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analysis, April 1992) 7-8.

⁹ Kevin Bishop, Joseph G. Sullivan Ed., *Embassies Under Siege; Personal Accounts by Diplomats on the Front Line*, (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1995) 150.

¹⁰ Siegel, Adam B. *Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia, in January 1991* p., 8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹² Kevin Bishop, Joseph G. Sullivan Ed., *Embassies Under Siege; Personal Accounts by Diplomats on the Front Line*, p. 154.

The crisis did capture the attention of the Commander, Navy Central Command (COMNAVCENT) on December 31, which prompted him to have his staff begin to “take a look at a helo NEO of Mogadishu.”¹³ Increasing violence and continued fire in the vicinity of the embassy convinced Ambassador Bishop to request evacuation of the American community from Somalia. This request was approved by DOS on January 2, 1991.¹⁴ The Pentagon published an execution order for the mission. The initial estimate of military capability required for the mission included two C-130s, one AC-130, one amphibious assault ship (helicopter) (LPH) and one amphibious transport ship with appropriate escort vessels.¹⁵ Based on events that follow, one may ask when should the military been formally alerted to a possible requirement for a NEO in Somalia. Perhaps the first unambiguous signal of crisis which should have triggered a warning order was the recommended voluntary departure of U.S. personnel by the Ambassador.

Discussion took place among NAVCENT, Amphibious Group Two (PHIBRGRU TWO) and other subordinate leaders as to what the exact force for the mission should include. Ultimately, the USS *Guam* (LPH-9) and the USS *Trenton* (LPD-14) were allocated to the NEO from NAVCENT. This force included helicopters, and a USMC Battalion Landing Team.¹⁶ Requested, but disapproved, were those assets required to “conduct the evacuation across-the-beach” and HMMWV gun trucks for mobility and firepower if needed.¹⁷ COMNAVCENT, VADM Stanley Arthur, USN “knew that war with Iraq was inevitable . . . and feared any forces sent to Somalia would be lost to him

¹³ Siegel, *Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia*, in January 1991., 8.

¹⁴ “Somalia Evacuation-EASTERN EXIT,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, February 1991, 3.

¹⁵ Siegel, *Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia*, in January 1991., 11.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

for an extended period of time.”¹⁸ With orders issued, the forces underway to the objective area of Mogadishu, the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) staff from the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) continued planning and coordination until they were within distance to begin the helicopter insertion of the security force and start the evacuation.¹⁹

The initial chalk of the 60 man evacuation force departed from the USS *Guam* (LPH-9) via CH-53 helicopters on January 5, 1991.²⁰ The mission on the ground in Somalia was completed on January 6, using CH-46 helicopters, with further onward movement of evacuees conducted through January 11.²¹ The result was the safe evacuation of 281 people from 30 countries, including 8 ambassadors.²² The mission could be called an unqualified success, but not without a number of lessons.

Ambassador James Bishop tells us that he visited CENTCOM in August 1990 prior to assuming duties in Somalia and reviewed information relative to a potential crisis in that country.²³ During the NEO however, he learned from planners aboard the USS *Guam* (LPH-9) that they had not obtained much intelligence about the current situation and had not been sent any information available to CENTCOM on the emergency evacuation plan.²⁴ Additionally, the location of the Embassy had changed.²⁵

¹⁸ Ibid., 12.

¹⁹ Brown, Ronald J., *Marine Forces Afloat in Southwest Asia, 1990-1991*, Marine Corps Gazette, November 1992. p. 62.

²⁰ MacIntyre, Douglas J., *Current Technology and NEO: Bringing a MEU(SOC) Mission in to the Digital Age*, Marine Corps Gazette, July 2001, p. 51.

²¹ Siegel, *Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia*, in January 1991., 2.

²² Ibid., iii, Initial reports from the Washington Post on January 9, 1991 put the number at 260.

²³ Kevin Bishop, Joseph G. Sullivan Ed., *Embassies Under Siege*, p. 150.

²⁴ Ibid., 161. Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is the Embassy’s plan for a NEO. While not defined in Joint Publication 3-68’s glossary, the term is introduced on page x. The term is used frequently in JP 3-68.

²⁵ Siegel, *Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia*, in January 1991., 16.

Operational intelligence, one of the current seven operational functions identified in Joint Publication 3-0, was a weakness in the planning of this mission.²⁶ Further, Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational environment (JIPOE) as a key process associated with operational intelligence was incomplete or not integrated in planning.²⁷ The decision making and allocation of military capability should be driven by factors such as terrain, weather, enemy, distances, expected duration – information available from a rigorous JIPOE. In this case, the driving factors appeared to have been minimizing the impact on the Desert Storm effort and complying with the first blush analysis of requirements from the joint staff. Planning and execution were further hindered by not taking advantage of pre-existing plans at CENTCOM and a lack of current products which would indicate the new location of the Embassy. Again, this shows evidence of weak JIPOE.

Ambassador Bishop also conducted prior coordination with foreign diplomats in Somalia to learn about their emergency evacuation plans. During the crisis, he requested from Washington a coordinated effort among at least three countries that had forces in the area in preparation for Operation Desert Storm. His requests for a multinational effort were not acted upon. Incidentally, French and Italian vessels did arrive for the evacuation, but there were no effective communications between them and U.S. ships.²⁸ Clearly, with evacuees from 30 different countries and the robust military capability

²⁶ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 17 September 2006), p., III-16.

²⁷ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Intelligence*, Joint Publication (JP) 2-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 22 June 2007), p., I-17. This term is new, but the process is very similar to IPB – Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield which many in the military readily recognize.

²⁸ Kevin Bishop, Joseph G. Sullivan Ed., *Embassies Under Siege*, p. 152.

available in the region because of Operation Desert Shield, this was an operation which could have been conducted by a multinational force.

Operation Eastern Exit highlights the relatively short notice that can be expected to execute a NEO. The NAVCENT Commander had discerned a potential for a NEO mission on December 31, and two days later, the mission had been approved. The fact that the U.S. military was able to start evacuation on January 5, only three days after the mission was approved, is laudable. With the short notice and the *ad hoc* nature of the forces selected for the mission, came confusion regarding command and control. Commander, Amphibious Squadron Six (COMPHIBRON SIX) was receiving message traffic directly from NAVCENT and thus assumed PHIBGRU TWO was no longer in the operational chain of command.²⁹

With respect to ROE and lethal force, Ambassador Bishop stated that coordination with the military was very good. Specifically, concerning ROE and command and control, he wrote: “Another of the lessons I had learned from the Liberian task force was to avoid a predeployment debate over command of military forces within the compound . . . Marine and SEAL officers decided where to deploy their men, and responsibility for use of lethal fire remained mine.”³⁰ Adam Siegel’s research memorandum adds more. During the mission, a Marine sniper team in a tower was being fired on by a Somali. Soon thereafter, a Marine Lieutenant Colonel in charge of the security element ordered the sniper team to hold their fire and come down from their vantage point. In the issues section that follows the discussion, Siegel states, “In line

²⁹ Siegel, *Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia*, in January 1991., 43.

³⁰ Kevin Bishop, Joseph G. Sullivan Ed., *Embassies Under Siege; Personal Accounts by Diplomats on the Front Line*, 162.

with Ambassador Bishop's instructions, no shots were fired by the Marines or SEALs throughout the day. Even in a situation that fulfilled all reasonable rules of engagement . . . no shots were fired.”³¹ In this case, no military members were harmed by the hostile fire. However, this incident begs the question as to what the full extent of authority the Ambassador has in his assigned country over U.S. military forces conducting a NEO. Further, is that authority clearly understood among DOS and DOD personnel during a NEO.

REVIEW OF JOINT DOCTRINE

U.S. joint doctrine for conducting NEOs is found in Joint Publication 3-68, Noncombatant Evacuation Operations. This recently published document provides a wide range of information that is valuable to understanding the basics of the mission profile.³² It covers subject matter from the strategic level to specific forms required to be filled out on individual evacuees prior to departure. As new joint doctrine becomes available, and as existing doctrine is updated, its value and readability is expected to improve. This section of the paper will make some judgments on the content of this joint publication which could be used for future revisions.

Perhaps the most striking observation of Joint Pub. 3-68, is its inclusion of material which discusses organizations and policy at the national level as well as procedures clearly at the tactical level. A more useful organization of information would be a separation by strategic and operational level doctrine (perhaps joint doctrine should

³¹ Siegel, Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia, in January 1991., 31-32.

³² Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-68 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 22 January 2007), p. J-2. U.S. Army Field Manual 90-29 is listed as a reference in Joint Pub 3-68 as well as “Allied Joint Doctrine for NEO” and other useful documents. Due to the recent publication of 3-68, it is reasonable to assume that previously published service doctrine formed the basis for Joint Pub 3-68's revision. Additionally, 3-68 is the authoritative doctrine for the joint commander (and not service doctrine) and for these reasons, the monograph focuses on Joint Pub 3-68.

only focus at this level) and tactical level doctrine. Another approach would be to publish two separate documents.

The joint doctrine begins with an attempt to provide a general understanding of the environment one can expect to operate in when faced with conducting a NEO. While these portions of the manual introduce characteristics of a NEO, broad objectives, and organize conditions as to “permissive, uncertain, and hostile” the discussion is not as thorough as one would expect.³³ The publication introduces the option of conducting a NEO with a multinational force. This is a key consideration that is discussed further in later chapters, but could be expanded.³⁴ Doctrine on this subject may have influenced decision makers in 1991 to approve Ambassador Bishop’s request for assistance to support allied evacuation efforts.

This new joint publication provides a great deal of discussion of the roles and interaction of DOS with respect to DOD in the execution of a NEO. Chapter 2, “Roles, Coordination, and Interaction” goes into sufficient detail as the key players on an ambassador’s country team and what a joint force can expect from them.³⁵ There is very little discussion on the role DOS takes with respect to coordination with countries adjacent to the crisis or in the region that would impact on the NEO. The remainder of the inter-agency discussion consists of a brief introduction of U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of Human Services, and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.³⁶ The authors of Joint Publication 3-68 have addressed some of the inter-agency aspects of NEO, but need to be more inclusive of agencies that can

³³ Ibid., I-1 – I-3.

³⁴ Ibid., I-5 – I-6.

³⁵ Ibid., II-3 – II-6.

³⁶ Ibid., II-7.

contribute to NEOs. The doctrine should provide more detail and scope on agency capability and how the military can harmonize its efforts with these agencies.

Joint Publication 3-68, as mentioned earlier, identifies the requirement of Geographic Combatant Commanders to conduct reviews of embassy emergency action plans. Chapter 4, Contingency and Predeployment Planning Considerations indicates that the military planning “begins when the subordinate JFC receives the warning order from the CCDR and lasts until the evacuation force deploys to either an ISB or the evacuation site.”³⁷ Nothing in the doctrinal manual indicates a requirement or suggests that the combatant command or other headquarters should conduct deliberate planning prior to a crisis. This is a major deficiency. If the joint doctrine writers believe these types of operations are important enough to devote a separate manual for the subject, one would think there would be discussion on planning ahead of a crisis. Certainly the historical example indicates planning would have improved the operation.

Overall, Joint Publication 3-68 is a good doctrinal manual. After investing the time to read this lengthy publication, the uninitiated comes away with a good understanding of the unique aspects of NEOs and the major actions that must take place to complete the mission. The next version of this joint publication should be revised and improved however with more input from NEO planners, DOS and embassy country teams, and NEO after action reports.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

For the purpose of this paper, a key consideration is defined as an operational aspect of a NEO, a technique, or procedure, or an expansion of available doctrine that will facilitate future planning, preparation, and execution of Noncombatant Evacuation

³⁷ Ibid., IV-1.

Operations. The key considerations will be drawn from several sources including the joint doctrine, historical examples, and experience and observations by the author of those conducting joint exercises or conducting contingency planning for NEOs. The objective is to provide joint planners and commanders with additional tools, or perspectives that will make their efforts in this area more effective and efficient.

Planning for NEOs consists of contingency planning and crisis action planning when the environment of a specific country becomes unstable and a NEO may be necessary in the near term. Both are considered in the discussion that follows.

Prioritization. Given staff resources and time are limited for planning and preparation, prioritization is important. Countries in the GCC's AOR can be prioritized relative to those more likely to become unstable versus those that one would not expect a NEO. Countries can also be prioritized in terms of how many evacuees can be expected if a NEO was requested in that country.

As a base line however, for each country in the AOR in which there is an American Embassy or US citizens there is a responsibility for the GCC to review those Emergency Action Plans (EAP) at a minimum.³⁸ Given limited staff resources to conduct site surveys at every country the geographic commands should prioritize this effort as well.

A review of trends in the "The Failed States Index" by *Foreign Policy* also provides a basis for predicting which countries are more likely to become unstable.³⁹ This product, compared with other indicators and reports from country teams should

³⁸ Ibid., p. xi.

³⁹ Foreign Policy and Fund for Peace, "The Failed States Index," *Foreign Policy* (May-June 2007): p. 59.

provide data necessary to establish a list of those countries most likely to require a NEO. Additionally this adds to a more complete JIPOE and aids in predictive analysis.⁴⁰

Reconnaissance. Joint doctrine indicates the GCC has a requirement to review embassy emergency action plans, but not necessarily to conduct reconnaissance of the area where a NEO might take place. Knowing the exact locations and capabilities of embassies, Aerial Ports of Embarkation (APOE) and Sea Ports of Embarkation (SPOE), as well as templated Assembly Areas (AAs) and Evacuation Control Centers (ECCs) would greatly enhance a joint force's ability to start the evacuation process as soon as possible upon arriving in the JOA. As the case study indicated, the embassy in Somalia had changed location,⁴¹ the Omega navigation system was inoperable, personnel on the ground at the embassy did not have adequate landing zone (LZ) marking equipment, and there were not good air-ground communications. The result was unnecessary exposure of troops to ground fire during ingress.⁴² To this end, a routine update of existing information (fresh reconnaissance) is invaluable. In the bigger picture, conducting rigorous JIPOE is a team effort among military planners and inter-agency stake holders – especially DOS – when NEO is involved.

Interagency Joint and Multinational Planning Conferences. Planning is improved when it is the result of factual data and includes the experience of those who must execute the mission. Embassy security personnel should not develop emergency action plans in isolation. If a geographic command and a country team think a NEO

⁴⁰ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Intelligence*, Joint Publication (JP) 2-0 (Washington, DC: CJCS, 22 June 2007), p., II-9.

⁴¹ Kevin Bishop, Joseph G. Sullivan Ed., *Embassies Under Siege; Personal Accounts by Diplomats on the Front Line*, 161. The original plan developed on the Guam would have sent the CH-53s five miles off course and into the most violent part of town. Fortunately a USMC NCO who had been security guard at the embassy on a previous assignment informed the staff and commander of the mistake.

⁴² Siegel, *Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia*, in January 1991., 44-46

could be multinational and have an idea of which joint force HQs and units would execute the mission, then all of these stake holders should contribute to planning. Joint, multinational, and interagency reconnaissance, as well as collaborative planning and exercises could reveal capability or courses of action that would have gone unnoticed if one entity (the country team for example or the combatant command staff) conducts NEO planning in isolation.⁴³ Finally a sharing of methods for developing Emergency Action Plans among embassies in the AOR should benefit both the GCC and each embassy.

Better F-77 Data. The F-77 Report shows the number of potential evacuees for a foreign country at each embassy. This annual report can be found for a particular country on the SIPRNET.⁴⁴ Some NEO planners multiply the F-77 data by a factor of three when estimating the number of evacuees for a NEO.⁴⁵ While the number of evacuees in Eastern Exit was within the capability of the evacuation force, other countries have a much larger number which becomes problematic in terms of time required to conduct the evacuation and military capability available for the mission.⁴⁶ Through team work between DOS and DOD, and encouragement from the latter to the former, embassies can take steps to increase the accuracy of their estimates of foreigners in country. Better estimates should result in better planning and a more efficient use of available resources. Specifically, the forecasting and contracting of commercial lift and determining the number and location of key nodes such as AAs, ECCs, APODs and SPODs would be more accurate with better F-77 data.

⁴³ LTC King, William, JFLCC Chief of Plans, February, 2007. This was a conversation with the author about experience dealing with Country Team NEO planners. The country team was not initially receptive to changes or suggestions to improve their Emergency Action Plan.

⁴⁴ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-68, IV-6. Joint Publication 3-68 discusses the accuracy of the report being subject to tourism in a particular country during a particular season.

⁴⁵ Robinson, Darlene, JFLCC NEO Planner, December, 2006.

⁴⁶ Author's experience during joint exercises and contingency planning, 2006-2007.

Joint Force HQs Certification. Combatant Commanders must increase their ability to rapidly plan and execute NEOs through the development of a training regime that certifies the readiness of joint HQs and units who are expected to execute NEOs. These certifications could be externally evaluated exercises, planning conferences with the top priority countries in the AOR, key staff officer training, or some combination. Arguments against this concept would be the uncertainty of which HQs or forces would be available due to our heavy commitment to OIF and OEF. However, even a modest program conducted annually would yield a number of better trained leaders and staff officers across our services who could contribute to better planning, preparation, and execution of these types of missions. Standing Joint Force Headquarters staff should be specifically trained in NEOs as they are normally made available to augment a joint headquarters during a crisis.

Rehearsals. Rehearsals for both joint exercises and execution for operations is time and effort well spent. Rehearsals can be conducted by staffs, components, commanders of the subordinate units or any combination there of. To the extent possible, interagency leaders, and other supporting non-military representatives should participate as well. Regardless of how much planning and preparation time is available, some time needs to be spent conducting a rehearsal. A rehearsal can take many forms from something as simple as a conference call among all the key leaders to a major mock up of the area of operations in a large meeting room. The goal is that every key player knows what each element, organization, or key individual is doing to support the plan. In this way, commanders, staffs, and other stakeholders can visualize events in space and time as a group. Inevitably, issues of synchronization, priority, and modifications to the plan

are discussed. Rehearsals can also be executed in simulation. A realistic constructive simulation could be modeled to replicate a NEO. This would greatly assist planners in visualizing their course of action, determining the capacity of key nodes (AAs, ECCs, APODs, SPODs) and the expected duration and through-put in these key nodes. Many problems and misunderstandings can be avoided by conducting rehearsals.

Anticipate Demand for Lift. NEO planners predict that many U.S. citizens and other foreign nationals will not wish to depart or be evacuated until they are convinced that danger is imminent.⁴⁷ The result is an early establishment of assembly areas (AAs), ECCs, and the other nodes required for evacuation do not meet their capacity initially, but as violence and danger close in, these nodes overflow and are unable to evacuate people fast enough. Correspondingly the requests for lift (lift meaning any and all transportation means from population centers to AAs to ECCs, and ultimately to safe havens or repatriation sites) to the next higher headquarters are late as well. The art in execution here is always being able to match lift capability to demand and processing time at each node. Rehearsals, accurate F-77 data, timely and accurate reporting, and current intelligence all contribute to being able to anticipate demand for lift. Exceeding the holding capacity of AAs and ECCs in country results in increased risk to designated evacuees.

Determining Who Gets Evacuated. Our case studies and other historical examples indicate that a decision to conduct a NEO is normally made later rather than sooner.⁴⁸ The dynamics of who makes the decision on which people are evacuated is an

⁴⁷ Robinson, Darlene, JFLCC NEO Planner, December, 2006.

⁴⁸ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-68, I-2. "The order to evacuate may not be given at the most opportune time, but rather may be delayed until the last possible moment to avoid actions that may be viewed as a tacit admission of political failure."

even more complex problem.⁴⁹ Decisions are made on the ground and at the highest levels of government, which change the problem set for the force executing the mission. While execution of such a politically sensitive mission as a NEO comes with short notice changes, the better DOS and DOD plan and prepare for these missions the better they will be at anticipating who will be evacuated. This knowledge and experience will generate the right questions at the right levels early in the crisis and will make for smoother execution and forecasting of lift.

ROE and Engagement Authority. While most NEOs will be governed by a set of collective and individual self-defense criteria, some situations may need to blend aspects of status and conduct ROE.⁵⁰ A NEO may be executed in a country where some forces are declared hostile. Our historical examples and our body of doctrine and government documents are a source of confusion when it comes to which senior person on the ground makes the call on certain engagements – or engagement authority. A US military officer would think the on-scene commander or senior military commander present retains this authority. However, the ambassador is the senior U.S. government official present and is responsible for the evacuation. Joint Publication 3-68 states that “During NEOs the U.S. ambassador, not the combatant commander (CCDR) or subordinate joint force commander (JFC), is the senior United States Government (USG)

⁴⁹ Kevin Bishop, Joseph G. Sullivan Ed., *Embassies Under Siege; Personal Accounts by Diplomats on the Front Line*, 166. “One issue that remains unresolved is the responsibility of the State Department to its local employees...” Ambassador Bishop’s request to evacuate Somali employees was denied by ‘Washington’ resulting in the employees murder or starvation. Joint Publication 3-68, page VI-10, indicates the Ambassador or the JFC can direct “others eligible” category for evacuation.

⁵⁰ Rose, Stephen A., “*Crafting the Rules of Engagement for Haiti*,” *International Law Studies: The Law of Military Operations*, edited by M.N. Schmitt, Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 1998. p. 228. A good description of the difference between status-based and conduct-based ROE is found in this article. “Status-based ROE, in which pre-declared enemy forces are declared hostile and may be shot on sight, minimize the risk to U.S. troops but may lead to significant civilian casualties if enemy forces are not readily distinguishable from the general populace. Conversely, conduct-based ROE, which typically authorize force only in response to hostile acts or intentions, tend to reduce civilian casualties while increasing the risk to U.S. forces.”

authority for evacuation and, as such, is ultimately responsible for the successful completion of the NEO and the safety of the evacuees.”⁵¹ The historical example illustrates that the ambassador believes he makes the call. These issues need to be resolved prior to execution and should be addressed face to face on the ground at the start of execution.

Mastering the many aspects of conducting NEOs come with experience, training, and research which may be applicable to future operations. These considerations must be included in staff tools to aid in the review of country Emergency Action Plans, incorporated in later revisions of doctrine, standard operating procedures, or tactics, techniques, and procedure documents and publications. While these considerations are certainly not going to apply in all cases, they should provide an intellectual stimulus to staff planners as they go about the business of contingency or crisis action planning.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Operation Eastern Exit resulted in the safe evacuation of designated persons from Mogadishu in 1991, but not without some friction related to poor planning. Existing evacuation plans were not consulted, there was confusion about which operational headquarters were in the chain of command, and there was confusion about the location of the U.S. embassy where the evacuees were sent for protection and prior to the arrival of the U.S. evacuation force.

The recent joint doctrine for NEO provides a wealth of information and direction to joint commanders and staff planners. It includes detailed information helpful for tactical and administrative aspects of NEO as well. Suggestions for improvement include

⁵¹ Chairman, U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*, Joint Publication (JP) 3-68, ix.

addressing the regional aspects of NEO in greater detail, being more directive as to the level of planning and preparation military staffs must conduct with inter agency players (especially DOS), and clearly articulating the authority of the Ambassador vis-à-vis the on-scene military commander (with a focus on ROE and engagement criteria). Finally, a review of the monograph's "key considerations" by doctrine writers for the next update of Joint Pub 3-68 may add value for the joint commander and his planning staff.

Recommendations include the following: GCCs should identify, train, and certify headquarters for NEO operations. Joint headquarters identified to conduct NEOs should be required to conduct periodic reconnaissance of top priority locations where NEOs are most likely. Joint exercises should include aspects of NEO and include inter-agency coordination with key DOS and embassy personnel. Geographic Combatant Commanders should identify the need for simulations and computer models that better replicate the dynamics of conducting a NEO.

The GCC is in the best position to increase the quality of NEO planning among the embassies in his AOR. Prioritization of staff effort and a quality JIPOE which is the product of inter-agency coordination will also contribute U.S. readiness to conduct NEO.⁵² The GCC should encourage this effort among DOS country teams and demand it from his operational staff and subordinate headquarters prior to a crisis requiring a NEO.

⁵² Husak, Michael, instructor notes, 16 October 2007.

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TABLE OF ACRONYMS

AA	Assembly Area
AC-130	Armed Cargo Aircraft
AMCIT	American Citizen
AOR	Area of Responsibility
APOD	Aerial Port of Debarkation
C-130	Cargo Aircraft
CCDR	Combatant Commander
CH-47	Cargo Helicopter
CH-53	Cargo Helicopter
COMPHIBRON	Commander, Amphibious Squadron
DOD	Department of Defense
DOS	Department of State
EAP	Emergency Action Plan
ECC	Evacuation Control Center
GCC	Geographic Combatant Commander
HQs	Headquarters
IPB	Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield
ISB	Intermediate Staging Base
JFC	Joint Force Commander
JIPOE	Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment
JOA	Joint Operations Area
LPD	Amphibious Transport Ship
LPH	Amphibious Assault Ship (Helicopter)
LZ	Landing Zone
MAGTF	Marine Air-Ground Task Force
MEB	Marine Expeditionary Brigade
NAVCENT	Navy, Central Command
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OMC	Office of Military Cooperation
PHIBGRU	Amphibious Group
HMMWV	High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicle
COMNAVCENT	Commander, Navy Central Command
CENTCOM	Central Command
NEO	Noncombatant Evacuation Operation
ROE	Rules of Engagement
SEAL	Sea-Air-Land
SNM	Somali National Movement
SPM	Somali Patriotic Movement
SPOD	Sea Port of Debarkation
USC	United Somali Congress
USG	United States Government