

PRESENTATION BY

BOBBY H. FREEMAN

OPERATION DESERT SHIELD

DECEMBER 6, 1990

THE ANTHENAUM SOCIETY

HOPKINSVILLE, KENTUCKY

OPERATION DESERT SHIELD

AT THIS WRITING, AMERICAN FORCES OF ALL SERVICES ARE ARRIVING IN SAUDI ARABIA AND THOUSANDS MORE ARE EN ROUTE BY AIR AND SEA. THE REPORTS SO FAR EXTOL THE PLANNING, PREPARATION AND EXECUTION OF THIS MAMMOTH DEPLOYMENT OF OUR FORCES.

NOT SINCE WORLD WAR II HAS THE UNITED STATES MADE A CONCENTRATED DEPLOYMENT OF THIS SIZE, AND BY THE OBSERVATIONS PUBLICLY AVAILABLE SO FAR, THE OPERATION GOES WELL.

ANOTHER REMARKABLE FEATURE OF OUR PERSIAN GULF ACTIVITIES IS ITS ADHERENCE TO THE SCRIPT THAT MILITARY PLANNERS HAVE BEEN ESPOUSING FOR YEARS, NAMELY: EARLY INTRODUCTION OF LIGHT FORCES FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY THE TANKS THAT PROVIDE THE NEEDED PUNCH. THERE REMAINS, HOWEVER, A FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION: WHY DOES IT TAKE SO LONG TO GET THERE AFTER THE DECISION IS MADE TO GO? THE ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN OUR STRATEGIC LIFT (AIR AND SEA) CAPABILITIES AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF RESERVE FORCES.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE IN THE PAST IS TO DEMAND A CERTAIN READINESS LEVEL FROM OUR FIGHTING FORCES, BUT WE HAVE NOT PLACED THAT SAME DEMAND ON THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM NEEDED TO MOVE THE FIGHTERS. WHAT FOLLOWS IS HOW WE BUILT OUR SYSTEM AND SOME OF THE WEAKNESSES THAT NEED FIXING.

U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY GOALS CAN BE SUMMARIZED IN TWO BASIC PRECEPTS: (1) KEEP THE U.S. HOMELAND SECURE FROM EXTERNAL AGGRESSION AND (2) PROTECT OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS WORLDWIDE. NOW THERE ARE FEW COUNTRIES IN THE WORLD THAT HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO ATTACK OUR HOMELAND MILITARILY, AND THOSE THAT DO HAVE THE MEANS

ARE LIMITED TO AIR AND SEA ATTACKS AS THEIR REASONABLE OPTIONS. THEREFORE, A STRONG NAVY AND A GOOD AIR DEFENSE-COUPLED WITH AN EARLY WARNING CAPABILITY- ARE THE BACKBONE OF WHAT IS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE A HIGH PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS IN THE FIRST GOAL.

THE SECOND GOAL IS MORE COMPLICATED BECAUSE "NATIONAL INTERESTS" ARE NOT TOO WELL-DEFINED; THEY CAN AND DO CHANGE IN RELATIVELY SHORT PERIODS OF TIME; AND THEY MAY BE POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RATHER THAN GEOGRAPHICAL. A NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT GOAL ONE IS INVIOATE AND, CONCOMITANTLY, THAT GOAL TWO IS ACHIEVABLE TO THE PRESIDENT.

IF WE ARE FORCED TO FIGHT FOR ANY REASON, WE WANT TO CARRY THE FIGHT TO THE ENEMY AND NOT CONDUCT WAR ON OUR HOMELAND. TO THIS END, AND IN CONSONANCE WITH GOAL TWO, WE HAVE FASHIONED A MILITARY STRATEGY BASED UPON THESE IMPORTANT FUNDAMENTALS:

- A. SELECTED ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY FORCES STATIONED IN CRITICAL AREAS AROUND THE WORLD.
- B. MILITARY EQUIPMENT STORED AT SEA AND ON LAND OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES AND KEPT READY.
- C. ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY FORCES STATIONED IN THE UNITED STATES, READY AND TAILORED FOR QUICK DEPLOYMENT BY AIR AS IMMEDIATE ACTION ELEMENTS.
- D. ACTIVE DUTY AND RESERVE COMPONENTS MAJOR STRIKE FORCES STATIONED IN THE UNITED STATES AND PREPARED FOR RAPID DEPLOYMENT BY SEA AND AIR TO PROVIDE OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY.
- E. ACTIVE DUTY AND RESERVE SUPPORT FORCES IN THE UNITED STATES FOR INTEGRATED DEPLOYMENT BY SEA AND AIR TO SUSTAIN THE EMPLOYED FORCES.

THE CONCEPT IS THAT THESE FIVE ELEMENTS BE WELL-KNOWN TO ALL NATIONS AND,

THEREFORE, ARE IN THEMSELVES A DETERRENT TO A POTENTIAL AGGRESSOR. A AND B HAVE BEEN CORNERSTONES OF OUR STRATEGY FOR DECADES. C HAS BEEN USED SEVERAL TIMES OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS, MOST RECENTLY IN GRENADA AND PANAMA AS WELL AS SAUDI ARABIA. MILITARY PLANNERS AND OPERATORS KNOW, HOWEVER, THAT WITHOUT D AND E, THE MILITARY EFFECTIVENESS OF THE UNITED STATES WOULD BE EXTREMELY LIMITED.

IT IS EXACTLY THIS CATEGORY THAT WE HAVE AN IMBALANCE BETWEEN OUR STRATEGIC NEEDS AND OUR CAPABILITIES. IN OUR COMMITMENTS TO NATO, FOR EXAMPLE, WE PROMISED TO BE ABLE TO HAVE TEN ARMY DIVISIONS ON THE GROUND IN EUROPE WITHIN TEN DAYS OF A NATO DECISION TO MOBILIZE TO MEET A WARSAW PACT ATTACK. EVEN WITH FOUR DIVISIONS STATIONED IN EUROPE AND SIX ADDITIONAL DIVISIONS' EQUIPMENT STORED IN NATO COUNTRIES PLUS A RELATIVELY LARGE INFRASTRUCTURE OF SUPPORT IN EUROPE, THE UNITED STATES STILL DOES NOT HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO PRODUCE TEN DIVISIONS READY TO FIGHT ON THE CONTINENT WITHIN TEN DAYS OF THE DECISION.

THE KEY TO MEETING THE TEN-IN-TEN PROMISE IS HAVING THE RIGHT NUMBERS OF LONG-RANGE AIRLIFT AND FAST SEALIFT TOGETHER WITH A STANDARD OF READINESS BY BOTH THAT WOULD PERMIT US TO MEET THE NEEDED TIME AND QUANTITY REQUIREMENTS.

IN THE CURRENT CASE OF U.S. DEPLOYMENTS TO SAUDI ARABIA, THE LIMITATIONS OF AIRLIFT AND SEALIFT ARE ONCE AGAIN SHOWING THE EFFECT OF DIFFERENT CONDITIONS OF READINESS. THE 82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION IS OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY AND MOST READY MAJOR UNIT. IT REQUIRES ABOUT 860 C-141 FLIGHTS AND 19 C-5 FLIGHTS TO TRANSPORT THE DIVISION FROM ITS HOME BASE TO A CRITICAL AREA, AND WHEN IT ARRIVES IN ITS DESIGNATED AREA, IT CAN OPERATE FOR ABOUT THREE TO SEVEN DAYS WITHOUT ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES. AN ARMY FORCE ON THE GROUND, HOWEVER, SHOULD BE

SUPPORTED BY AN APPROPRIATE MIX OF AIR FORCE AIR POWER, WHICH ITSELF REQUIRES ADDITIONAL HEAVY AIRLIFT FOR BRINGING IN ALL THE BASE SUPPORT NEEDED TO KEEP SOPHISTICATED AIRPLANES FLYING AND ARMED.

THE 101st AIRBORNE DIVISION (AIR ASSAULT) WITH ITS HIGHLY MOBILE FLEET OF TANK-KILLING HELICOPTERS REQUIRES NEARLY TWICE THE AIRLIFT OF THE 82nd DIVISION. A MILITARY COMMANDER SEES THIS FIGHTING UNIT AS GIVING HIM THE TACTICALLY MOBILE FIREPOWER SO LACKING IN THE AIRBORNE DIVISION.

WHEN A MILITARY OPERATOR KNOWS THAT IN A TROUBLED HOT SPOT TO WHICH HE IS COMMITTED THE POTENTIAL ENEMIES HAVE MOBILE ARMORED FORCES, HE MUST HAVE ARMORED AND MECHANIZED INFANTRY FORCES ON HIS SIDE. THE SO-CALLED LIGHT U.S. FORCES CAN GIVE GOOD EARLY DEFENSIVE ACCOUNT OF THEMSELVES IN A FIGHT AGAINST HEAVY ARMORED ENEMY FORCES, BUT THEY WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SUSTAIN IT FOR LONG, NOR WOULD THEY BE ABLE TO LAUNCH OFFENSIVE ACTIONS WITHOUT OUR OWN HEAVY FORCES AVAILABLE.

THE WEIGHT AND SIZE OF HEAVY DIVISIONS (AN ARMORED DIVISION HAS ABOUT 4,700 VEHICLES OF ALL KINDS INCLUDING MORE THAN 100 HELICOPTERS) MEANS THAT THEY MUST GO BY SEA, WHICH, IN TURN, GENERATES THE NEED FOR EARLY DEPLOYMENT ON FAST SHIPS THAT ARE KEPT AS READY AS ARE THE FIGHTING UNITS THEY ARE DESIGNATED TO CARRY. A FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE IS THAT THERE IS NOT A MATCH BETWEEN THE READINESS OF ARMY DIVISIONS TO DEPLOY AND THE READINESS OF THE RIGHT SHIPS TO TRANSPORT THEM.

A CASE IN POINT IS THE CURRENT DEPLOYMENTS TO SAUDI ARABIA. THE 24th INFANTRY DIVISION (MECHANIZED) WAS ORDERED TO LOAD AND DEPLOY ON 1 AUGUST, 1990. AS OF

4 SEPTEMBER, ONLY PART OF THE DIVISION HAD CLOSED INTO SAUDI ARABIA. THE 24th DIVISION IS A HIGHLY READY MEMBER OF THE LIGHT AND HEAVY DIVISION MIX IN OUR CONTINGENCY ARMY CORPS. THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER IN SAUDI ARABIA KNOWS THAT THE FAST AIR DEPLOYMENTS OF THE LIGHT DIVISIONS (82nd and 101st) MUST BE BUTTRESSED BY ARMORED FORCES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE-AND WILL ALWAYS BE IN ANY CONTINGENCY; OTHERWISE, NO AIR DEPLOYMENT WOULD BE NECESSARY IN THE FIRST PLACE.

IT FOLLOWS, THEN, THAT THE SEABORNE REINFORCEMENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO START LOADING AS QUICKLY AS THE AIR MOVEMENT FORCE; HOWEVER, WE HAVE NOT YET PROVIDED THE NECESSARY RESOURCES TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN. SHIPS, PORT CAPACITY, AMMUNITION CLEARANCES-ALL THESE NEED TO BE AT A COMPARABLE STATE OF READINESS.

THE LEAD BATTALION OF THE 24th DIVISION, FOR EXAMPLE, CAN BE AT THE SAVANNAH PORT READY TO BEGIN LOADING WITHIN HOURS AFTER BEING ORDERED TO MOVE. THE REMAINING BATTALIONS CAN ARRIVE AT PORT AS NEEDED TO MEET THE LOADING SCHEDULE BEHIND THE FIRST UNIT. SIMILAR ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE AT GALVESTON OR HOUSTON FOR THE HEAVY DIVISIONS IN THE SOUTHWEST.

THE NECESSARY CONDITION TO CORRECT THIS IMBALANCE IS SUFFICIENT SEALIFT WITH APPROPRIATE READINESS IN THE RIGHT LOCATIONS TO MEET THE COUNTRY'S REQUIREMENT IN SUPPORT OF OUR NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY.

THE OBVIOUS COURSE IS TO USE SEALIFT FOR THE HEAVY DIVISIONS. FOR A DEPLOYMENT OF ONLY ONE OR TWO HEAVY DIVISIONS, THE U.S. SEALIFT CAPABILITY MAY BE ADEQUATE; HOWEVER, THE SUSTAINMENT OF DEPLOYED FORCES PLUS THE DEPLOYMENT OF OTHER HEAVY DIVISIONS AND THEIR SUPPORT GOES BEYOND U.S. CAPABILITIES. MOREOVER, ONLY A

FEW SHIPS HAVE ROLL ON/ROLL OFF CAPABILITY, AND EVEN FEWER ARE CAPABLE OF MODERN FAST SPEEDS.

FOR EXAMPLE, THERE ARE ONLY EIGHT SL-7 FAST SEALIFT SHIPS IN OUR INVENTORY. THEIR 33-KNOT SPEED AND ROLL ON/ROLL OFF CONFIGURATION MAKE THEM IDEALLY SUITED FOR MOVING HEAVY FORCES. IT REQUIRES ALL EIGHT OF THEM TO MOVE AN ARMORED DIVISION. THE NATIONAL DEFENSE RESERVE FLEET INCLUDES 234 SHIPS. THE READY RESERVE FORCE (93 OF THE 234) AVERAGE 20 YEARS OF AGE. SIXTY-FIVE OF THESE ARE SUPPOSED TO BE READY FOR ACTIVATION ON FIVE DAYS' NOTICE. AS THE DEPLOYMENTS TO SAUDI ARABIA ARE SHOWING, THE QUICK CALLING OF SOME OF THESE SHIPS IS RESULTING IN MAINTENANCE FAILURES AND SIGNIFICANT DEPLOYMENT DELAYS. IN ADDITION, THE SUPPLIES NEEDED TO SUSTAIN THE DEPLOYED FORCE WILL FURTHER TAX AN ALREADY INADEQUATE CAPABILITY.

WITH ONLY A FEW EXCEPTIONS, MOST ACTIVE ARMY DIVISIONS STATIONED IN THE UNITED STATES ARE ORGANIZED TO HAVE ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF THEIR COMBAT POWER IN THE RESERVE COMPONENTS (ARMY NATIONAL GUARD AND U.S. ARMY RESERVE). THEREFORE, IN ORDER FOR ACTIVE ARMY DIVISIONS TO GO TO A TROUBLE SPOT WITH A FULL WARTIME CAPABILITY, THEY MUST TAKE ALONG WITH THEM THEIR RESERVE COMPONENTS TEAM MEMBER (CALLED ROUND-OUT UNIT). THIS, IN TURN, MEANS THAT THE RESERVE COMPONENTS TEAM MEMBER MUST BE AS READY FOR ACTION AS ITS ACTIVE DUTY PARENT. IT ALSO MEANS THAT A MOBILIZATION OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS IS NEEDED.

FOR OUR DEPLOYMENTS TO SAUDI ARABIA, SOME OF THESE CRITERIA WERE MET-BUT NOT ALL. FOR EXAMPLE, THE 24th INFANTRY DIVISION (WHOSE REOUND-OUT UNIT IS THE 48th INFANTRY BRIGADE, GEORGIA NATIONAL GUARD) WAS ORDERED TO DEPLOY TO SAUDI ARABIA. THE 48th BRIGADE IS MAINTAINED AT ABOUT THE SAME READINESS LEVEL AS ITS PARENT,

THE 24th DIVISION (MECHANIZED); HOWEVER, THERE WAS INITIALLY NO CONCURRENT MOBILIZATION OF THE RESERVE COMPONENTS. THEREFORE, ANOTHER ACTIVE BRIGADE WAS ORDERED TO FILL IN FOR THE ABSENT RESERVE COMPONENTS TEAM MEMBER.

LATER, ON 22 AUGUST, THE PRESIDENT AUTHORIZED A LIMITED CALL-UP OF RESERVE COMPONENTS. THE IMPLEMENTING DECISION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE FAILED TO INCLUDE A CALL-UP OF THE 48th BRIGADE. A SIMILAR SITUATION EXISTS WITH THE 1st CAVALRY DIVISION AT FORT HOOD, TX, BEING ORDERED TO DEPLOY, BUT ITS ROUND-OUT UNIT, THE 155th ARMORED BRIGADE OF THE MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD, WAS NOT CALLED UP, SO A BRIGADE OF THE 2nd ARMORED DIVISION WAS ORDERED TO REPLACE THE MISSING ROUND-OUT UNIT.

MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF THE ARMY'S TOTAL COMBAT UNITS AND MORE THAN 80 PERCENT OF ITS TOATL SERVICE SUPPORT UNITS ARE IN THE RESERVE COMPONENTS. SOME OF THEM ARE KEPT AT A HIGHER STATE OF READINESS, SOME NOT SO HIGH. THE 48th BRIGADE AS ROUND OUT TO THE 24th DIVISION IN THE CONTINGENCY CORPS IS ONE OF THOSE KEPT AT A RELATIVELY HIGH READINESS CONDITION. WITH SO MUCH OF ITS MUSCLE AND SINEW IN THE RESERVE COMPONENTS, IT SEEMS BOTH LOGICAL AND REASONABLE FOR THE TOTAL ARMY CONCEPT TO BE COMPLETELY USED AND EVALUATE IN THIS CRITICAL NATIONAL EFFORT IN SAUDI ARABIA.

EVERY ARMY COMMANDER (ACTIVE AND RESERVE) TRAINS AND MAINTAINS HIS UNITS TO ACHIEVE HIS REQUIRED READINESS CONDITION. SOME HAVE BEEN GIVEN A VERY HIGH READINESS. OTHERS WHO ARE NOT DESIGNATED FOR EARLY DEPLOYMENT ARE GIVEN THE RESOURCES FOR A LOWERE READINESS CONDITION. THE CONCEPT MAKES GOOD SENSE AND IS CERTAINLY MORE COST-EFFECTIVE THAN PAYING THE GREATER PRICE FOR ALL TO BE AT TOP READINESS ALL THE TIME; HOWEVER, SINCE WE DO NOT PLAN ON EMPLOYING THE

FORCES INSIDE THE UNITED STATES, THE HIGH READINESS CONDITION OF ANY OF THE FORCES MAKES GOOD SENSE IF AND ONLY IF IT IS MATCHED BY AN EQUALLY HIGH CAPABILITY TO TRANSPORT THEM WHERE THEY WILL BE NEEDED.

WHETHER ACTIVE OR RESERVE COMPONENTS, THE FIGHTING AND SUPPORT FORCES OF THE TOTAL ARMY SHOULD BE MATCHED WITH APPROPRIATELY READY AIRLIFT AND SEALIFT, AND ALL THE NECESSARY ROAD, RAIL, PORTS AND ANCILLARY-EQUIPMENT TO MOVE THEM IN PLANNED DEPLOYMENT ECHELONS. THE COST OF NOT DOING SO CAN BE MEASURED IN LIMITATIONS TO THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE TO THE PRESIDENT AND IN GREATER RISKS TO THOSE WHO MIGHT GO TO A TROUBLE SPOT EARLY AND BE WITHOUT THE TOTAL BACKING THEY NEED.

THE RESERVE CALL-UP AND THE DEPLOYMENTS TO SAUDI ARABIA HAVE BEEN A SUPERB SHOW OF AMERICAN RESOLVE AND MILITARY CAPABILITY. THIS EXPERIENCE SHOULD ALSO SERVE AS A CLARION CALL TO FIX THE BROKEN PART OF OUR STRATEGIC TRANSPORTATION CAPABILITIES.