14

THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

September 11, 2001, started out as a beautiful day across most of the eastern United States. Blue skies and pleasant temperatures carried the hint of fall even as summer lingered. At 8:46 a.m., American Airlines Flight 11 slammed into the 96th floor of the 110-story North Tower of New York's World Trade Center, spewing out 20,000 gallons of aviation fuel that ignited in a firebomb whose temperature would rise to nearly 2,000˚F. Sixteen minutes later, as horrified Americans watched the unfolding tragedy on television, United Airlines Flight 175 struck the twin South Tower, creating yet another inferno on its 80th floor. Firefighters and police rushed to the rescue of what might have been upward of 50,000 employees. Soon hundreds and then thousands were streaming away from the doomed buildings and their neighbors. The 110,000 tons of steel, concrete, and impedimenta above the point of impact on the South Tower proved too much to bear by 9:59 a.m., and it collapsed from 110 stories to 150 feet of rubble. Within thirty minutes the North Tower collapsed as well.

At the Pentagon, crisis action teams were starting to deal with the emerging catastrophe when American Airlines Flight 77 roared into the building's western face at 9:38 a.m. Over the next several hours, details would emerge of yet another plane, United Airlines Flight 93, which crashed under mysterious circumstances into a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. A total of 2,435 workers, 343 firefighters, and 23 police officers died in the Twin Towers and another 125 employees and service members in the Pentagon. Aboard the four planes, 265 people—213 passengers, 33 crewmembers, and the 19 hijackers—perished in the attacks.

Well before details became clear, Americans surmised that they had been attacked by a clever and ruthless adversary. A chilling story emerged: in a well-organized scheme, teams of four of five terrorists, armed with plastic weapons and posing as ordinary passengers, had seized each plane. These imposters overwhelmed the crews, substituted one of their own for each pilot, and flew into their chosen targets. The exception was United Airlines Flight 93. The passengers on this somewhat later flight had learned by cellular phones of the fate of earlier hijacked aircraft. Popular conjecture holds that some passengers attempted to regain control of the plane, and in the resulting tumult it fell out of the sky, killing all aboard but sparing its unknown target. Americans had their first heroes, and martyrs, in what President George W. Bush would soon label the Global War on Terrorism. They also had a new date that would live in infamy: "9/11."

Ground Zero symbolizes the 9/11 terrorist attacks, as the USS *Arizona* had the attack on Pearl Harbor nearly sixty years before.

HOMELAND SECURITY

The Army was heavily involved from the beginning of the crisis. Time-honored tradition looks upon the Army National Guard as heir to the militia for state governors under duress. When New York governor George E. Pataki declared a state of emergency, Adjutant General Thomas P. Maguire ordered 8,000 guardsmen to report for state active duty. New York National Guard soldiers had already been gathering in their armories. By the evening of September 11, 1,500 were already at Ground Zero, as the World Trade Center catastrophe site came to be called; the rest were en route to duty stations.

The initial role of these National Guardsmen is best described as military support to civilian authority. They quickly reinforced the hard-pressed New York City Police in providing traffic control and security; their uniforms and disciplined demeanor had a calming presence on the public. As equipment arrived, guardsmen provided civil engineering support, assisted with debris tagging and removal, established shelter and lodging, coordinated transportation, and facilitated logistical support. Over time, they picked up such additional taskings as escorting official visitors, managing relief donations, moving mail, checking credentials, facilitating stress management, providing medical support, and serving as honor guards for memorial services. The guardsmen's special mix of military and civilian skills, complemented by organization and discipline, made them an invaluable asset for local authorities facing an emergency.

At the Pentagon site, the involvement of soldiers was even more immediate, since so many were either victims or impromptu first responders. Many rescued comrades from smoke and flame or unearthed them from the debris. Firefighters, paramedics, police, and rescue personnel from the surrounding communities began arriving within minutes; before long patches of open ground west of the Pentagon were organized into a relatively orderly array of triage and treatment areas, emergency medical response staging areas, and an air evacuation site. No one present had expected to see such carnage at the Pentagon, but many had worked through carnage at other times and places. Casualties were evacuated, survival assistance officers appointed, families notified, and about a tenth of the building sealed off as unusable and under investigation as a crime scene. Symbolizing the resilience of the American people, the following day soldiers from the Military District of Washington draped their huge garrison flag, an outsized American flag measuring 20 by 40 feet, beside the gaping wound; the rest of the building went on with the business of national defense. There would be tearful memorial services to come, but no pause in the war others had started.

Two days after the attack on the Pentagon, investigators take a break. Inside, search and rescue efforts continue.

Military support to civilian authority has been but one Army role historically associated with homeland security. Others have included rear-area security, border security, civil defense, control of domestic disturbances, internment, humanitarian relief, and economic intervention (seizing factories). The immediate reaction after the September 11th attacks was to reinforce local authorities in relief and security, but broader responses soon emerged. During World War II, the entire continental United States had been treated as a combatant rear area, wherein 16,007 factories and other strategic sites were secured by their own employees assisted by 200,000 auxiliary military policemen and 160,000 state guardsmen. In 2001's new war, civilian airports seemed the most vulnerable facilities; and 6,000 guardsmen under state control fanned out to assist in securing 444 of them in fifty-four states and territories. Another 3,000 guardsmen under state control assisted in securing waterways, harbors, nuclear power plants, dams, power generation facilities, tunnels, bridges, and rail stations. This was no small task, since the Corps of Engineers alone manages 12,000 miles of commercial waterways, 925 harbors, and 276 locks. An additional 14,000 reservists were mobilized to assist in securing facilities and installations on federal property. Some of these commitments diminished over time, as when the Transportation Security Administration assumed responsibility for the airports.

Some homeland security taskings were episodic. In 2002, the Army assisted in securing the Super Bowl, the Winter Olympics, the Winter Paralympics, meetings of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly, and the World Economic Forum. The Olympics alone required the services of 5,000 guardsmen.

Border security had not been a military responsibility for most of the twentieth century, but the war on drugs had reintroduced the military to assisting in that role. In 1989, Congress designated the Department of Defense (DOD) as the lead agency for detecting the air and maritime transit of illegal drugs. Shortly afterward, it stood up Joint Task Force 6 (JTF–6) in Texas to assist with aerial reconnaissance, border surveillance, dive operations, intelligence analysis, construction, transportation, communications, canine units, and other types of support wherein military skills would be useful. JTF–6 had been a small headquarters with the staffing equivalent of two or three battalions customarily attached. After 9/11, national attention to border security radically increased and broadened beyond the emphasis on drugs. More than 1,500 additional soldiers deployed to assist the U.S. Border Patrol, the U.S. Customs Service, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service. The Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 limited their role to indirect but nevertheless valuable support.

In the wake of 9/11, National Guardsmen augment security at airports across the United States.

The greatest single fear the terrorists inspired was that they would somehow acquire weapons of mass destruction—chemical, biological, or nuclear—and unleash them against the citizens of the United States. President Bush's administration had already reenergized investments in ballistic missile defense. The systems under design were oriented against missile launches from rogue states, however. What if nonstate terrorists smuggled a weapon of mass destruction into the country undetected?

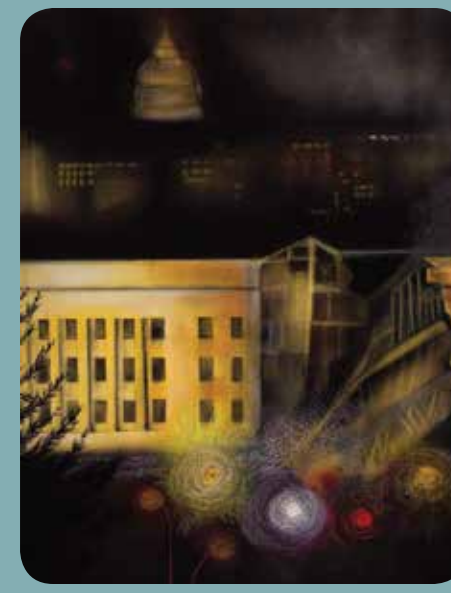
The Army had been responsible for elaborate civil defense efforts throughout much of the Cold War, though U.S.-Soviet arms control negotiations sought to mitigate the external threat. By the late 1990s, fanatical terrorists rather than calculating Soviets seemed the more plausible danger, and the Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 1997 established the Domestic Preparedness Training Initiative within the DOD. This envisioned soldiers training local law enforcement authorities in preparation for chemical, biological, or nuclear attack and offering other assistance with respect to such possible events as appropriate. Mass casualty exercises involving soldiers, police, firefighters, medical personnel, and other first responders with scores of volunteers playing victims became a common sight in towns and cities around the United States. Not all the support was for training alone; the Army Reserves' 310th Chemical Company provided a biological integrated detection system early warning at the 2002 Winter Olympics, for example.

After 9/11, the Army would add its homeland security responsibilities to its existing requirement to support civilian emergency responses during natural disasters. The National Guard in particular would be available to provide state and local governments with readily available, disciplined personnel who had inherent command, control, transportation, and support. Specialized skills and equipment for engineering, debris removal, water purification, messing, and medical support would be particularly useful when any form of disaster strikes. There was ample precedent for the Army's fielding as many as 30,000 soldiers at a time to provide humanitarian relief. The post–9/11 period would be no exception to this recurrent yet unpredictable aspect of homeland security.

A few homeland security tasks that had historically come the way of the Army were not features of the Army's post–9/11 environment. The Army was not asked to intern enemy aliens. No specific nation was identified as enemy, and individuals suspected of terrorism or violations of immigration policies were few enough in number to render Army involvement unnecessary. There were no domestic disturbances associated with the disaster: the American people seemed more united

REBUILDING THE PENTAGON

When Flight 77 slammed into the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, the first portion of a twenty-year renovation project had recently been completed. Much of the section the aircraft hit had been reinforced with Geotech antifragmentation panels and featured blast-resistant windows. Under Lee Evey, program manager for the Pentagon Renovation, building contractors quickly reoriented to rebuilding the shattered corridors. Three thousand workers, some laboring around the clock, cleared 50,000 tons of debris and quickly repaired the outer three rings of the building. Named Project Phoenix, the rebuilding exceeded expectations; by September 11, 2002, the once-wrecked portion was open for business.



September 11, Henrietta Snowden, 2001

than ever. There was no expectation of economic intervention or reconstruction on the part of the Army, with the exception of the Pentagon. Here, the Corps of Engineers took charge of a challenging project to rebuild and restore the shattered section of the building within a year of the attack. They met this timeline, and the newly rebuilt portions of the Pentagon reopened with ceremony and fanfare—and with the same large garrison flag hanging alongside the restored facade.

It had been some time since Americans had been attacked on their own soil, so there was understandable confusion with respect to who was in charge of what. The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) had supervised defense against aerospace strategic weapons, while the Army had been the DOD Executive Agent for military support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Shortly after the September 11th attacks, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld reiterated and refined these arrangements, making the Joint Forces Command responsible for the land and maritime defense of the continental United States and appointing the Secretary of the Army the DOD Executive Agent for Homeland Security, including homeland security and military support to civilian authority. Homeland security implied the direct application of military forces with DOD as the federal government's lead agency, whereas military support to civilian authority encompassed supporting the lead of local officials or other federal agencies. These arrangements proved satisfactory for the time being. In due course, President Bush proposed and Congress approved the reorganization of many different federal agencies involved in homeland security into a single overarching Department of Homeland Security. The DOD is continuing to work out its relationships with this new agency.

Operation Enduring Freedom leaflets, 2002

AFGHANISTAN: THE WAR AGAINST THE TALIBAN AND AL-QAEDA

Even as the World Trade Center still smoldered and the first rush to reinforce homeland security was on, American intelligence ascertained that Osama bin Laden's Islamic extremist al-Qaeda (literally "the base") terrorist network had organized the devastating September 11th attacks. Al-Qaeda was ferociously hostile to Israel and to the American presence in the Middle East, and was already suspected of numerous attacks, including the spectacular and deadly car bombings of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the suicide ramming of the USS *Cole* in Yemen in 2000. The American response to these attacks had been cruise missile strikes against suspected terrorist training camps in Afghanistan—which were so ineffectual they seemed to reinforce a smug sense of invulnerability within the al-Qaeda leadership.

Al-Qaeda had reason to feel confident in its capabilities. Its worldwide network of cells and supporters was so secretive as to evade detection, and its base of operations was comfortably tucked into the protection of Afghanistan's pathologically fundamentalist Taliban regime. The Taliban had emerged victorious in vicious factional fighting following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989. Their brutally strict regime offered safe haven to some the world's most deadly Islamic terrorists.

Neither the Taliban nor al-Qaeda fielded standing armed forces in the modern sense. Taliban leaders surrounded themselves with a core of experienced fighters to which further volunteers and conscripts were added in times of strife. Recruitment generally followed clan and ethnic lines, though several concentrations of foreign troops who shared their religious views were present as well. Of these, the estimated 7,000 Pakistanis were the most numerous, and the 3,000 multinational al-Qaeda the most deadly. Perhaps 20,000 additional fighters constituted the core of the Taliban proper, and the regime was able to field as many as 50,000 for major operations. The Taliban had taken over a considerable inventory of Soviet heavy equipment when they seized Afghanistan, but it was not in good shape and they did not use it well. Their preferred tactical unit was around ten militiamen armed with

assault rifles and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) mounted in the back of pickup trucks with heavy machine guns mounted over the cabs. Swarms of these sped through the countryside, terrorizing the civilian population or fighting a fluid war of movement as circumstances might require.

Opposition to the Taliban within Afghanistan came from a loose coalition of tribal adversaries alienated by the Taliban's heavy-handed methods and its domination by Afghan's majority ethnic Pashtun. The opposition's United Front, or Northern Alliance, included ethnic Tajiks, Uzbeks, and Hazaras led by their own warlords and reinforced by semiprofessional leftovers from the old regime and anti-Soviet *mujahideen* ("holy warriors"). The Northern Alliance fielded a core of perhaps 10,000 fighters and controlled about 10 percent of the country in the north and northeast. Guerrillas associated with the Northern Alliance operated in much of northern Afghanistan, taking advantage of both the rugged nature of the country and of increasing resentment against Taliban rule.

An American air and missile campaign against the Taliban began on October 7, 2001, heralding the start of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). That evening, twenty-five fighters from two aircraft carriers, fifteen long-range bombers, and fifty cruise missiles struck airfields, air defenses, and purported command and control facilities. At the same time, two C–17s dropped 37,500 humanitarian daily rations into Afghanistan to reinforce the point that the campaign was against the Taliban regime and not the Afghan people.

The initial air and missile strikes seem to have been no more effective than their predecessors in 1998 had been. There were simply too few discrete high-value strategic targets in Afghanistan critical to the grip of the Taliban regime, with the possible exception of the lives of the leaders themselves. This ineffectualness changed quickly beginning October 19, when several twelve-man American Special Forces Operational Detachment A Teams helicoptered through difficult mountains in the darkness to link up with the leaders of the Northern Alliance. Soon there would be eighteen A Teams plus four company-level (B Teams) and three battalion-level command units (C Teams) in Afghanistan, about 300 soldiers all told.

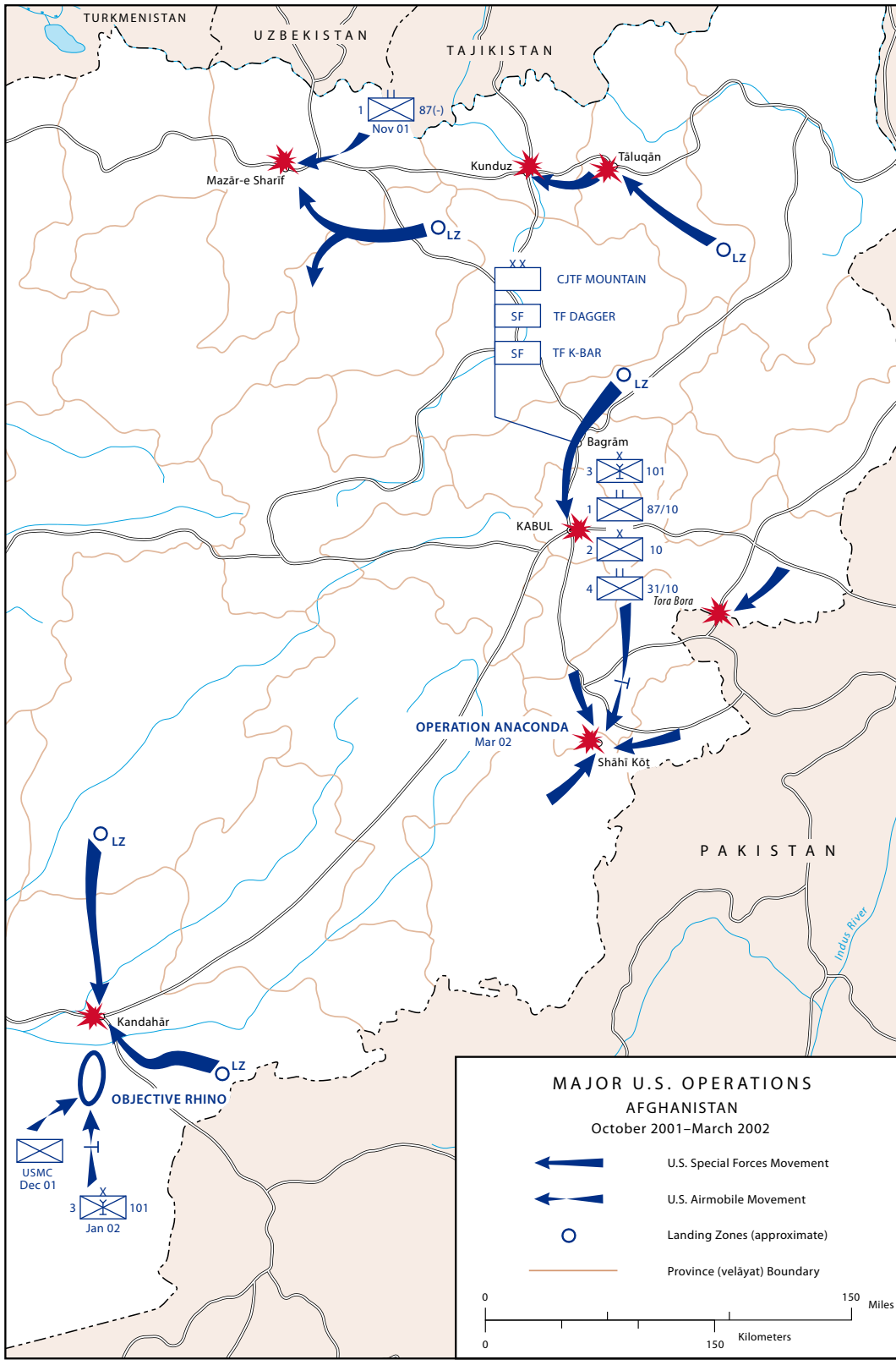
The arrival of Special Forces teams had a dramatic effect on the fortunes of the Northern Alliance. Almost overnight its tactical circumstances transformed from desperate inferiority to an overwhelming firepower advantage. The Special Forces teams accompanied the tribal warriors by foot, in pickups, or even on horseback, carrying with them the reach-back capabilities of satellite communications. Armed with laser designators and state-of-the-art optics and global positioning system (GPS) technology, they brought in precision-guided munitions (PGMs) on one target after another. PGMs were considerably less expensive than they had been during Desert Storm and could be delivered en masse from the bellies of B–1 and B–52 bombers as readily as from nimbler fighter-bombers. Absolute air supremacy and artfully positioned air-to-air refueling tankers enabled supporting aircraft to loiter while targets were being sorted out and then to strike with deadly effect. Because the PGMs were cheap, small knots of troops or individual bunkers were cost-effective as targets; and entire lines of defense were immolated by cascades of precisely directed 2,000-lb. bombs. The 2,000-lb. bomb was the workhorse munition but not the upper limit; that distinction went to the monster 15,000-lb. BLU–82 "Daisy Cutter" introduced into the campaign on November 5. What was seen was hit, and what was hit was killed.

Although the footprint of American personnel on the ground within Afghanistan itself was by design tiny, by November more than 50,000 service members were in the theater and associated with the campaign. Of these, half were at sea on the ships providing carrier air strikes and seaborne cruise missiles. About 2,000 soldiers of the 10th Mountain Division secured Karshi Khanabad Air Base in Uzbekistan; 3,000 more service personnel, including a battalion of rangers, staged out of Oman. Detachments helped secure air bases and other facilities in Pakistan as well, while about 400 aircraft were based in the region. From time to time, these forces intervened directly in the ground fighting, as was the case in a spectacular televised ranger parachute assault on October 19, 2001, into a compound belonging to Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar; but more often they guaranteed the unrelenting flow of air and logistical support to the predominantly Afghan fighters on the ground. The Muslim leaders of Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and Oman had taken some risks to cooperate with the American campaign; it was important that American forces be viewed as assisting in a national liberation rather than invading a nation.

The fighting in Afghanistan fractured into several miniature campaigns as each allied Afghan warlord advanced on his own objectives, carefully protecting the tiny contingent of Americans who gave him such awesome firepower (*Map 34*). In the north, Uzbek General Abdul Rashid Dostum pounded his way into Mazar-e Sharif behind a curtain of American 2,000-lb. bombs. In the west, warlord Ismail Khan liberated Herat to the delight of his local followers. In the northeast, Generals Fahim Khan and Bismullah Khan, Tajik successors to slain Northern Alliance leader Shah Ahmed Masoud, followed up on massive air strikes to break through a protracted stalemate that had developed around Bagram Airfield. Capitalizing on U.S. air support, they next rushed into Kabul when the Taliban unexpectedly abandoned that capital city. Not far away, the Northern Alliance forces also seized the city of Taluqan handily and then fought a see-saw battle around Kunduz—to include infighting between Taliban who wanted to surrender and al-Qaeda who did not—until that city finally fell after a twelve-day siege. In the far east, Haji Abdul Qadir captured Jalalabad the day after the Northern Alliance entered Kabul. The loosely cobbled-together Northern Alliance then controlled half of Afghanistan.

As heartening as the speedy liberation of northern Afghanistan was, it raised the risk of permanently alienating the Pashtun south if a Pashtun face could not be associated with the process of liberation. Fortunately, two Pashtun expatriate leaders, Hamid Karzai and Gul Agha Sharzai, had infiltrated Afghanistan after the onset of the fighting to raise adherents of their own and take on the Taliban. Karzai based himself north and Sharzai south of Kandahar, the most important city of the Pashtun south and the spiritual home of the Taliban.

Karzai's experience with Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) 574 illustrates the teamwork that developed between tribal militias and Special Forces operatives. Karzai had been deputy foreign minister in the pre-Taliban government and had returned to Uruzgan Province north of Kandahar to rally opposition to the Taliban. The twelve-man Special Forces team commanded by Capt. Jason Amerine accompanied Karzai to help him organize and to procure equipment and ammunition. When Karzai took possession of the town of Tarin Kot, 110 kilometers north of Kandahar, the Taliban awoke to the


TURKMENISTAN
UZBEKISTAN
TAJIKISTAN
1
87(-)
Nov 01
Mazār-e Sharif
Kunduz
Tāluqān
LZ
LZ
CJTF MOUNTAIN
SF
TF DAGGER
SF
TF K-BAR
LZ
Bagrām
3
101
1
87/10
KABUL
2
10
4
31/10
Tora Bora
OPERATION ANACONDA
Mar 02
Shāhī Kōt
LZ
PAKISTAN
Indus River
Kandahār
LZ
OBJECTIVE RHINO
USMC
Dec 01
3
101
Jan 02
MAJOR U.S. OPERATIONS
AFGHANISTAN
October 2001–March 2002
U.S. Special Forces Movement
U.S. Airmobile Movement
Landing Zones (approximate)
Province (velāyat) Boundary
0
150
Miles
0
150
Kilometers

Map 34

SPECIAL FORCES OPERATIONAL DETACHMENT A

Special Forces units that served in Afghanistan were built around twelve-man teams of soldiers trained in unconventional warfare. A captain (18A) and warrant officer (180A) generally led the team. Typically, the other members were team sergeant (18Z), 2 weapons specialists (18B), 2 engineers (18C), 2 medics (18D), 2 communicators (18E), and an operations/intelligence expert (18F). Most teams in Afghanistan were augmented with Air Force tactical air controllers to aid in close air support. Special Forces, area-oriented and language-trained, were specially configured for missions behind enemy lines and the ideal force for operations in Afghanistan.

Hamid Karzai (*middle row, third from left*) and Special Forces

danger his insurgency posed and dispatched about 80 vehicles and 500 troops to crush him. Captain Amerine, protected by several dozen of Karzai's men, set up his laser target acquisition equipment on a ridge overlooking the approach to Tarin Kot. When the Taliban column swung into view, he locked onto the lead truck and guided a bomb from a carrier-based Navy F–14 Tomcat onto a spot between its headlights. The truck disappeared in a horrific explosion, killing all aboard it and demolishing the antiaircraft gun it was carrying for fire support. Amerine repeated this performance along the length of the valley, displacing from one position to another as tactical circumstances required.

Meanwhile, Karzai's men defending Tarin Kot proper had beaten off a flanking attack that had attempted to encircle the town. As the Taliban attempted to break contact, Amerine's men continued to hammer them with laser-guided munitions. The Taliban, who had expected an easy win, left behind about 300 dead and over 30 destroyed vehicles. Needless to say, Karzai's men were favorably impressed with the lethality of their newfound allies, and this battlefield success radically enhanced Northern Alliance recruiting. Karzai's offensive rolled on toward Kandahar as an ever-increasing torrent of armed men carefully positioned their valuable Americans to watch over positions whenever a few precisely delivered bombs might best be used.

One aspect of the campaign that the Americans had not anticipated was the extraordinarily negotiable aspect of Afghan warfare. Adversaries often knew each other personally, in many cases were related, and shamelessly communicated with and offered deals to each other during the course of the fighting. Radio traffic exchanging interpersonal bluster and family news alternated with calls for fire and the coordination of troop movements. The tactical bartering did have the salutary effect of reducing bloodshed. One side would convince the other that it was totally overmatched: a quietly

arranged surrender might well ensue or, more often, the weaker side would fade into the darkness while the stronger triumphantly took possession of the geographical prize. Fighters who surrendered en masse were seldom searched and segregated and often wandered off the battlefield under their own recognizance or joined their former adversaries after a decent interval. Combat itself could be sharp and vicious and retaliations gruesome, but there often seemed to be a way to talk things out as well.

The rapid collapse of the Taliban had much to do with deals struck by confident warlords newly empowered by American arms, but Afghan habits led to some curious embarrassments as well. Al-Qaeda and its Pakistani adherents did not play by the same rules and occasionally bloodily suppressed arrangements worked out among the Afghans. At Kunduz, for example, hard-core fighters ambushed Northern Alliance forces advancing to accept a surrender that had been arranged; and in Mazar-e Sharif, Pakistanis gunned down twelve Islamic mullahs sent into their barracks to finalize terms. Loosely secured foreign prisoners staged a spectacular revolt at the Qala-i-Jangi fortress at the end of November that was bloodily suppressed by Afghans and PGMs. Another uprising by armed patients turned a Kandahar hospital into a battle zone in January 2002, long after the rest of the city had been secured. In these cases, Afghan retribution against the foreign fighters was severe.

Perhaps more consequential, however, the much-anticipated surrender of Kandahar turned into a nonevent. Hundreds of Taliban troops with their leader Mohammed Omar simply vanished into the night to make way for Karzai's and Sharzai's triumphant fighters. For weeks thereafter, men wearing the black turbans of the Taliban mingled unmolested on the streets with allies of Karzai and the Americans. All things considered, the negotiative aspect of Afghan warfare seems to have worked out better for the Afghan warlords who won with it than it did for the al-Qaeda and Pakistanis massacred during its course or for the somewhat baffled Americans.

Osama bin Laden also slipped the noose presented by encircling Afghan forces. Some time after the fall of Kabul, al-Qaeda and Taliban forces fled into the rugged Tora Bora cave complex south of Jalalabad. Here, the terrorists had built up stockpiles of weapons, ammunition, and other supplies in hundreds of cave complexes they had heavily fortified. Local anti-Taliban forces under Hazrat Ali undertook to root them out, assisted by several Special Forces teams providing advice and air support. Their advance moved painfully forward over rocky, convoluted terrain between 10,000 and 12,000 feet in altitude. AC–130 Spectre gunships and PGMs proved useful, but the depths of the caves and extremes of relief limited their effectiveness considerably. The enemy fought stubbornly as the terrain he controlled shrank into smaller and smaller pockets over a period of eight days. When the fighting finally sputtered out, hundreds of al-Qaeda and Taliban were dead, but even more had retreated across the trackless mountains into nearby Pakistan. There is some evidence that bin Laden may have been at Tora Bora; if so, he was among those who escaped.

The enemy fought stubbornly as the terrain he controlled shrank into smaller and smaller pockets over a period of eight days.

By this time, conventional ground forces were present in Afghanistan in increasing numbers. A company from the 10th Mountain Division had deployed from Uzbekistan to assist with the prisoner revolt at Qala-i-Jangi, and marines had arrived to secure facilities southwest of Kandahar shortly before it fell. Other conventional forces soon followed to secure the Kandahar airport, the Bagram airfield, facilities in Kabul, and prisoner screening

Karzai reviews the troops at the first graduation of the Kabul Military Training Center, Afghanistan, July 23, 2002.

and holding areas. A deployable reserve was established as well. The facility with which Omar, bin Laden, and many of their adherents had eluded capture by encircling Afghan forces suggested the desirability of having tightly disciplined American ground forces to pursue critical targets. The newly allied Afghan warlords seemed receptive to having a modest number of Americans on the ground in Afghanistan pursuing diehard al-Qaeda while they themselves went about the business of consolidating their grip on the rest of the country.

On December 11, 2002, Hamid Karzai was sworn in as the prime minister of the interim government of Afghanistan during ceremonies held in Kabul. His ascendancy had the general support of both the people and the warlords—the concurrence of the latter having been the result of considerable negotiation. Over the next several weeks a UN International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) that would ultimately number about 5,000 soldiers from 18 nations deployed into Kabul, while an American force of about that size fanned out to work the hinterlands looking for al-Qaeda. In 76 days of operations, a few hundred American special operators and a handful of conventional units, supported by 6,500 strike missions expending 17,500 munitions, had provided the margin of reinforcement necessary for a Northern Alliance victory over the theretofore dominant Taliban regime. The Global War on Terrorism was by no means over, but at least terrorists were no longer safe in Afghanistan.

GLOBAL OPERATIONS

The speedy American victory in Afghanistan bolstered operations against terrorism worldwide. President Bush's administration clearly recognized that military operations would be only part, and perhaps a lesser part, of their ultimate success. Effective counterterrorism would require extensive diplomatic, financial, legal, public relations, and perhaps humanitarian efforts as well. Initiatives within each of these venues were already well under way when the fighting in Afghanistan began, but the overthrow of the Taliban generated intelligence and an atmosphere that reinforced the American hand in each of them. It also suggested or encouraged further military action.

American diplomatic efforts experienced an immediate groundswell of sympathy throughout most of the world in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks, and numerous governments pitched in to help defang al-Qaeda. Operatives and fellow travelers were detained in Germany, Spain, Italy, and Great Britain. A number of key figures in the attacks had important connections in the permissive and liberal environment of Germany, which cracked down with particular severity. Captured documents

and prisoner testimony from Afghanistan facilitated the hunt. In Malaysia, captured materials enabled direct police intervention to break up a pending attack. Muslim nations like Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan went after their own potential terrorists energetically, recognizing that they already had grabbed the proverbial wolf by the ears. Pakistan in particular made some spectacular arrests of al-Qaeda operatives bailing out of Afghanistan.

American operators in central Asia needed and got the tacit approval of Russia and China. These two regional giants had problematic Islamic extremists of their own and were gratified when Americans suddenly found much less to criticize concerning Russian operations in Chechnya or Chinese governance of their western provinces. A major fraction of the al-Qaeda killed or captured in Afghanistan turned out to be Chechnyan in origin, supporting Russian views of that unruly province.

Even such previously hostile states as Iran, Syria, Sudan, and Libya tacitly cooperated with the United States in a calculated sort of way. They seemed inclined to distance themselves from any appearance of affiliation with al-Qaeda after the ferocious American attack on those harboring them in Afghanistan.

In Indonesia and Saudi Arabia, historically tepid cooperation with U.S. counterterrorism efforts became suddenly energetic after further spectacular attacks in those two countries. In the case of Indonesia, more than 200 tourists died in a car bombing in Bali. In Saudi Arabia, coordinated strikes on housing areas featuring foreign workers inflamed the government's ire. In dozens of countries around the world, operations against al-Qaeda and their fellow travelers increased, and the success in Afghanistan contributed in one way or another to that acceleration.

In addition to diplomacy, the United States pursued al-Qaeda in the financial realm. As evidence by the well-funded September 11th attackers, al-Qaeda operations as a whole demonstrated considerable sophistication in raising money and bankrolling operations worldwide. This funding seems to have originated in bin Laden's personal fortune—he was scion of a wealthy Saudi family that had made a great deal of money in construction—but had grown well beyond that original source. Al-Qaeda had been a major financial backer of the Taliban regime and also profited from the drug smuggling so lucrative in otherwise impoverished Afghanistan. Much of al-Qaeda's money moved around in conventional financial channels, but much also moved through a shadowy network of telephone-connected loaners and creditors known as *hawala*. Captured documents and prisoner interviews from Afghanistan sharpened the American understanding of al-Qaeda financial transactions. Investigators uncovered, for example, a callous and cynical sale of stocks in anticipation of a drop in value when the World Trade Center was attacked. It also seemed that money donated to Muslim charities was diverted into terrorist hands, though the extent and foreknowledge of this remains a matter of dispute. In concert with other nations, the United States set about freezing or seizing known al-Qaeda assets and attempted to disrupt suspected sources of income. There is no way to confidently measure the extent of the damage thus done, but it seems to have been considerable.

The most lucrative source of intelligence from Afghanistan was from prisoners caught in the fighting. Their status and disposition, however, raised important legal issues. Conventions relating to prisoners of war had

been designed with belligerent nation-states in mind. Upon achieving a treaty or peace, they could be repatriated to their nations. No nation sanctioned al-Qaeda, and one could argue that they were simply criminals. If so, in what nation would they account for their crimes and against whose standard would they be judged? What was more, since the Global War on Terrorism was ongoing, could the United States detain them until its conclusion—indefinitely?

Criminals in the United States are normally charged; afforded due process in defending themselves from the case made against them; and, if convicted, given a specific sentence. The United States turned over most of the prisoners to the Afghans or to their nations of origin for adjudication but decided to keep the most dangerous, knowledgeable, or influential under its own control. Its Afghan allies were happy to oblige. The United States labeled these prisoners detainees and set about developing its own precedents for handling them. JTF–17 stood up in Guantánamo, Cuba, to house the detainees under circumstances that placed more emphasis on security than on amenities. Sufficient information did not exist to make a case against these individuals in the traditional forensic sense, and the right to confront witnesses who would then be in great danger was out of the question. If trials were to occur, they would be by military tribunal, for which there was some precedent from World War II. By 2003, some 660 detainees were housed in Guantánamo; 1,600 servicemen and women had been dispatched to secure them and exploit them for intelligence. Some of the intelligence drawn from the detainees proved invaluable and allowed timely apprehension of more suspects. The situation became even more complicated when alleged or potential terrorists were apprehended in the United States, the press in various countries of origin became aware of the nationality of their detainees, and the issues of individuals apprehended for violations of immigration laws became muddled with the issue of suspected terrorists.

The uncertain status of the Guantánamo detainees may have caused some public relations issues for the United States, but the far greater issue was to assure that a war against Islamic terrorists was not interpreted as a war against Islam itself. Within days of the September 11th attacks, President Bush appeared among American Muslim congregations to make the point that they too shared the common enemy of terrorism and that religion was not the issue. Educators and commentators went to some lengths to distinguish between the benign tolerance of mainstream Islamic traditions and contemporary extremists who were characterized as having hijacked a virtuous religion for their own evil purposes. Diplomats consciously courted Muslim counterparts to help them emphasize a spirit of cooperation against Islamic terrorism, and one Muslim nation after another demonstrated by its actions that it concurred. Even television and advertising got into the act. Popular shows such as "West Wing" and "Law and Order" aired episodes distinguishing evil terrorists from virtuous Muslims, and President Bush directly engaged a public relations firm to improve the image of America in the Muslim world. All things considered, the effort to separate Islamic terrorism from Islam itself seems to have gone reasonably well. Within the United States, relatively few hate crimes were perpetrated against Muslim citizens or visitors and nothing remotely resembling the abuse and incarceration of Japanese Americans in World War II emerged. Overseas, calls for *jihad* against Americans and Westerners gained rela-

tively little momentum and produced truly dangerous circumstances sporadically rather than generally.

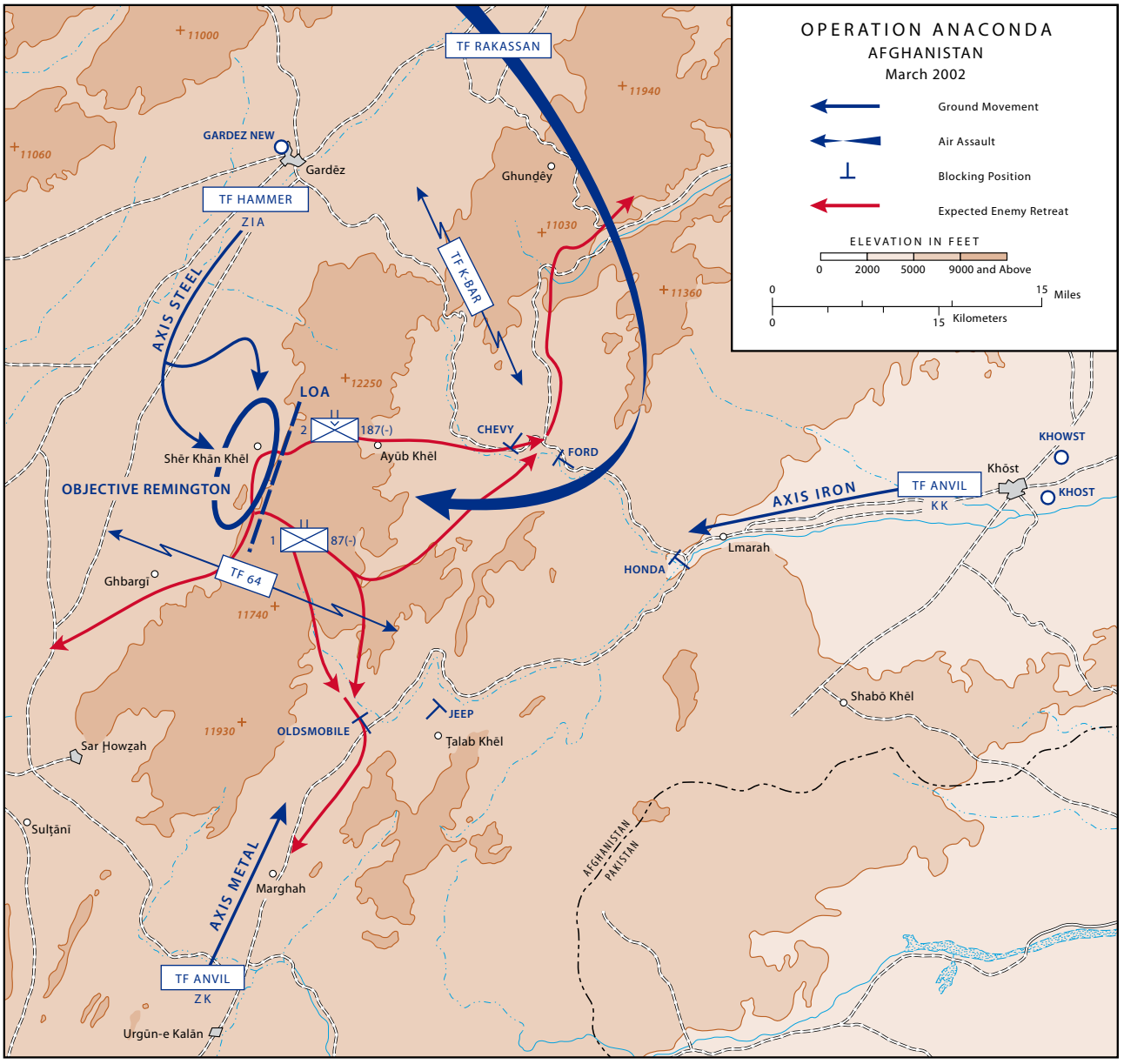
Counterinsurgency and counterterrorist doctrine had long held that there needed to be a carrot as well as a stick in conducting operations; the catchphrase, "draining the swamp" gained popularity among those envisioning a way ahead. The swamp described those countries or regions of the world where poverty, injustice, abuse, and instability drove people to desperation and to identification with the terrorists. Humanitarian intervention to ameliorate such circumstances seemed an appropriate way to drain the swamp. In Afghanistan itself, growing American troop strength afforded the opportunity to divert some efforts to humanitarian relief, and a civil affairs battalion was an important part of the force structure from an early date.

Perhaps even more important was the work done by the UN and nongovernmental agencies when the security environment was sufficiently permissive to allow them to go about their work. As the international, largely NATO, peacekeeping force matured in Kabul and an Afghan army and police force began to take shape, the security of efforts to refurbish the impoverished country became a primary emphasis. American forces shared these concerns and energetically pursued Taliban and al-Qaeda remnants. A striking example of this kind of support to humanitarian relief was presented by the death of Mullah Abdul Satar. Satar, a relatively minor Taliban-sympathetic fighter, shot and killed an Ecuadorian relief worker, a water engineer named Ricardo Munguia. This was the first overt case of an International Committee of the Red Cross employee in post-Taliban Afghanistan consciously killed for the good he was trying to do. In an operation best described as implacable, American special operators strained every intelligence resource available to reliably locate Satar, and then killed him and his adherents during a spectacular night air assault on the village of Safi. Their message was clear.

As the international peacekeeping force matured in Kabul and an Afghan army and police force began to take shape, the security of efforts to refurbish the impoverished country became a primary emphasis.

Recognizing the critical diplomatic, financial, legal, public relations, and humanitarian aspects of the Global War on Terrorism, soldiers nevertheless discovered that there was ample ground fighting yet to do. In Afghanistan, the search for diehard al-Qaeda and Taliban continued, with a particular emphasis on the eastern mountains along the Pakistani border. Operation Anaconda, conducted March 2–19, 2002, proved particularly ambitious, challenging, and rewarding. Reports indicated a residual concentration of about 200 al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters congregating in the Shahi Kot Valley, over a mile above sea level in rugged mountains proximate to Pakistan (*Map 35*). The allies attempted to sweep these remnants into a trap, in which a major thrust of Afghan allies from the west would drive the enemy into the sights of American helicopters positioned in the mountains to the east. It turned out that the al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters numbered closer to 1,000 in well-defended positions supported by elaborate cave complexes featuring huge stockpiles of arms and ammunition. Helicopters labored heavily in the thin mountain air, as did troops struggling to take the battle to the enemy across frozen, rocky ground.

Overcoming initial surprise and embarrassment, the allies piled on. Ultimately, some 1,200 Americans; 2,000 friendly Afghans; and 200 Australian, Canadian, Danish, German, and Norwegian special operators



Map 35

Warfare in eastern Afghanistan became a grim round of patrols and operations in the mountains to keep al-Qaeda and Taliban remnants off balance and under pressure while a new Afghan army was equipped and trained.

were involved in the fight, supported by over 2,500 bombs. They killed about half their adversaries, while the other half exfiltrated to further mountain hiding places or into Pakistan. Warfare in eastern Afghanistan became a grim round of patrols and operations in the mountains to keep al-Qaeda and Taliban remnants off balance and under pressure, so that a new Afghan army could be equipped and trained, relief efforts could stabilize the economy and society, and Karzai's government could establish a grip. Occasionally, Americans and their allies were ambushed, sniped at, mortared, or rocketed, but the quality of intelligence available to the Americans improved over time and they ground down their adversaries, a few guerrillas or arms caches at a time.

Military success in Afghanistan inspired military efforts elsewhere. The most immediate need was to preclude Pakistan from becoming a refuge for guerrillas operating in Afghanistan. Particular risks existed in the so-called tribal regions, wherein the population was inclined to favor the largely Pashtun Taliban and the mandate of the Pakistani central government never ran strong. The Pakistanis were very sensitive about visible American involvement in their country, yet the hundreds of miles of mountainous border was virtually impossible to police. Fortunately, the tribesmen were not particularly partial to the largely Arab al-Qaeda and the Pakistani hand could be reinforced by largely invisible assistance from American Special Operations Forces. Workable, cooperative, cross-border arrangements emerged with time, and soon the Pakistanis were apprehending guerrillas in flight from the Americans and their Afghan allies.

Thousands of miles away in the Philippines, fanatic Abu Sayyaf Islamic militants seemed another dangerous source of potential terror. Hostile and separatist at least since the Moro Wars in the early twentieth century, Islamic extremists had waxed and waned in their defiance of central government over the years. Recently they had taken to piracy, theft, and kidnapping for ransom to fund their agendas and had acquired demonstrable links to international terrorism. Indeed, they were heavily implicated in a barely failed plot to simultaneously destroy a dozen aircraft over the Pacific. Conscious of Filipino sensibilities, the United States undertook logistical, intelligence, and training support to the Philippine Army in its post–9-11 efforts to crush Abu Sayyaf. Combined "training" operations on a battalion scale in the midst of territory theretofore dominated by the Abu Sayyaf became an important feature of this renewed cooperation.

Similarly, the U.S. Army and Special Forces greatly expanded their logistical, training, and intelligence cooperation with numerous Muslim nations such as Oman, Yemen, Djibouti, Indonesia, and Jordan to reinforce their hands against the mutual threat of terrorism. Most of these military-to-military relationships had already existed, and some were quite mature; but 9-11 lent them a special urgency insofar as the United States was concerned.

BACK TO IRAQ

Since the liberation of Kuwait in Desert Storm, Saddam Hussein's Iraq had remained a nagging threat to American security. Many expected Saddam to be overthrown in the aftermath of his overwhelming defeat, but in the absence of a sustained American military presence he had bloodily suppressed his internal adversaries and remained in power. Tens of thousands of Shi'ites and Kurds were murdered, and a police state already consciously modeled on that of Stalin became even worse. His internal brutality was matched by external belligerence; time and again he demonstrated against or bullied Kuwait, defied disarmament obligations under the terms of the cease-fire, and fired on allied aircraft enforcing a no-fly zone in northern and southern Iraq. He seems to have been involved in an attempt to assassinate President George H. W. Bush in 1993 and ultimately forced UN weapons inspectors out of the country in 1998. The new Bush administration expressed great concern that he would further develop weapons of mass destruction—he had already employed chemical munitions against the Kurds—and either use them himself or pass them along to international terrorists. Either prospect would be horrific.

Key leadership was psychologically prepared and units physically prepared for Iraq even before they knew of a decision to go.

Shortly after 9/11, Chief of Staff General Eric K. Shinseki had directed the Army to assume a wartime footing, with all other priorities being of lesser import. Every effort was made to bring units to full strength, and every division and cavalry regiment ascertained its preparedness to fight a war that had not yet been decided upon with a force list that had not yet been specified. War plans for Iraq came and went, and commanders likely to be involved war-gamed the plans separately and together. Key leaders were psychologically prepared and units physically prepared for Iraq even before they knew of a decision to go. In-theater investments, such as a state-of-the-art command and control facility in Qatar and a fuel farm on the Iraqi border, furthered that preparation.

For all his bluster, Saddam's capacity for conventional warfare had dramatically declined since his invasion of Kuwait. UN sanctions and a weapons embargo had dried up his access to modern arms and spare parts. Rather than the 950,000 troops, 5,000 tanks, and 800 combat aircraft of 1990, he mustered 280,000 troops, 2,200 tanks, and virtually no combat aircraft in 2003. The equipment was poorly maintained and the troops demoralized. Postwar interviews suggest that discipline was maintained by fear. Iraqi soldiers tell of being tortured and abused and, if they deserted or went absent without official leave, of their families' being incarcerated or beaten. The regular army was in tatters, though the elite *Republican Guard* was somewhat better.

Saddam recognized his weakness and seems to have been inspired by America's Somalia experience in planning his way ahead should the allies attack. The regular army would be considerably reinforced by the irregular *Fedayeen* and by the *Special Republican Guard* operating as special operations forces. They would take maximum advantage of urban terrain, ambush, surprise, and proximity to civilian targets. Pickups modified with machine guns and RPGs, the Iraqi version of the Somali "technical," would allow for speedy movement and appreciable firepower. *Fedayeen* and Ba'athists hiding among the population would use terrorism to discourage cooperation with allied authorities. If the regular army could preoccupy units leading the allied advance, the *Fedayeen* could strike its vulnerable rear, increasing American casualties. If eighteen men killed in a Mogadishu firefight had precipitated an American withdrawal from Somalia, how much easier would it be to force a withdrawal from a challenge as complex as Baghdad?

In the aftermath of the 9-11 attacks, Americans were perhaps less averse to casualties than they had been; certainly, the stakes were higher. President Bush decided a regime change in Iraq was necessary, in part because of the potential threat of weapons of mass destruction in Iraqi hands but also because of potential Iraqi links with international terrorists, Iraq's continuing threat to the stability of the Middle East, and a sentiment that Saddam Hussein represented unfinished business. Not all of America's allies perceived Saddam as an imminent threat; many argued instead for granting more time to UN weapons inspectors whom Saddam, under pressure, had recently readmitted. Bitter wrangling ensued in the UN and elsewhere as the United States and Britain insisted on speedy intervention and other major powers declined to support such a notion. Perhaps most consequential, at the eleventh hour the Turkish parliament refused to allow the U.S. 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) to move through Turkey en route to establishing a front in northern Iraq. This obviated a major feature of the

preferred war plan, left the division's equipment out of play as it hastily transshipped from standing offshore from Turkey to Kuwait, and disrupted deployment schedules because the ships carrying 4th Infantry Division equipment were not available for other purposes for prolonged periods.

The theater commander, General Tommy R. Franks, and his ground component commander, Lt. Gen. David D. McKiernan, faced a quandary as combat operations became imminent. With approximately 200,000 ground troops available in theater at the time—as opposed to the 600,000 of Desert Storm—they did not enjoy massive and overwhelming ground combat force. With the Turkish option gone, their conventional ground attack would have to originate in Kuwait and progress 300 miles to Baghdad, and then perhaps 200 more to the vital oil fields around Mosul. The major headquarters that would control the fight were the U.S. Army V Corps and the U.S. Marines I MEF (Marine Expeditionary Force). On hand in Kuwait they had but a single American heavy division, the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized); an equivalent number of marines with some M1A1 tanks but including awkward Amtracks as troop carriers; and a British force built up around the U.K. 1st Armoured Division including the 7th Armoured Brigade. Lighter forces included the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), one brigade of the 82d Airborne Division, the 11th Attack Helicopter Regiment, and a fistful of other units. This seemed a small force considering the challenges involved. Franks and McKiernan did, however, have 1,600 combat aircraft in theater as compared to Desert Storm's 2,100, representing an air force proportionally much closer in size to that of the earlier war. Conventional wisdom held that combat operations would begin with a prolonged air campaign while the 4th Infantry Division made its way to Kuwait and then its newly freed shipping opened up a flow of follow-on heavy divisions.

General Franks examines a weapons cache that the 101st Airborne Division discovered in Najaf.

General Franks was not partial to waiting, and not just because to do so would mean operating in the terrible heat of the Iraqi summer. In his mind mass was firepower more so than troops; and, as we have seen, the widespread availability of inexpensive joint direct-attack munitions (JDAMs) had radically increased the effectiveness of his firepower. The Afghan experience convinced him that he could drive jointness to the lowest possible level and that a brigade supported by JDAMs could do what it had

taken several to achieve before. What was more, the Iraqis likely expected a lengthy air campaign and perhaps anticipated time to shift their forces from northern Iraq to keep pace with the redeployment of the 4th Infantry Division. One of General Franks' contingency plans envisioned a rolling start, wherein he began the campaign with modest forces already on hand and fed in reinforcements as they arrived and as needed. Iraqi dispositions and circumstances indicated that the United States would not face significant resistance south of Baghdad, so why not sweep up relatively uncontested terrain with a lesser force and augment it over time?

Factors beyond JDAMs and strategic surprise suggested the need for the rolling start. In effect, the United States had already waged a prolonged air campaign. Time and again since Desert Storm, the Americans had reacted to Saddam's provocations by bombing Iraq. Desert Fox in December 1998 had featured four intense days of air and missile strikes; and when retaliating for potshots at planes enforcing the no-fly zones, the Americans had taken the opportunity to further dismantle Iraqi air defenses and communications systematically. Over twelve years, many of the purposes an air campaign might otherwise have served had already been achieved through these operations, called Northern Watch and Southern Watch. American ground forces were acclimatized for operations in Iraq and poised for a rolling start. Since Desert Storm, they had repeatedly sped into theater to defend Kuwait against Saddam's provocations and had developed a routine deployment and training program labeled Intrinsic Action that rotated robust battalion combat teams through rigorous exercises in the Kuwaiti desert. American soldiers had long since figured out how to get the best results out of themselves and their equipment in this harsh environment. Most of the soldiers who would cross the line of departure had already been living in the desert for some time as diplomatic crises ebbed and flowed. Another argument for a rolling start lay in the memory of catastrophic damage retreating Iraqis had inflicted on Kuwaiti oil fields during Desert Storm. If the coalition moved quickly enough on the ground this time, it could secure the nearby Rumaylah Oil Fields before Saddam Hussein could set them on fire. McKiernan gave his Marine Expeditionary Force an on-order mission to seize these oil fields within four hours of notification, and Special Operations Forces infiltrated to monitor and perhaps interfere with any attempts at demolition prior to the marines' arrival.

AMBUSH OF A CONVOY

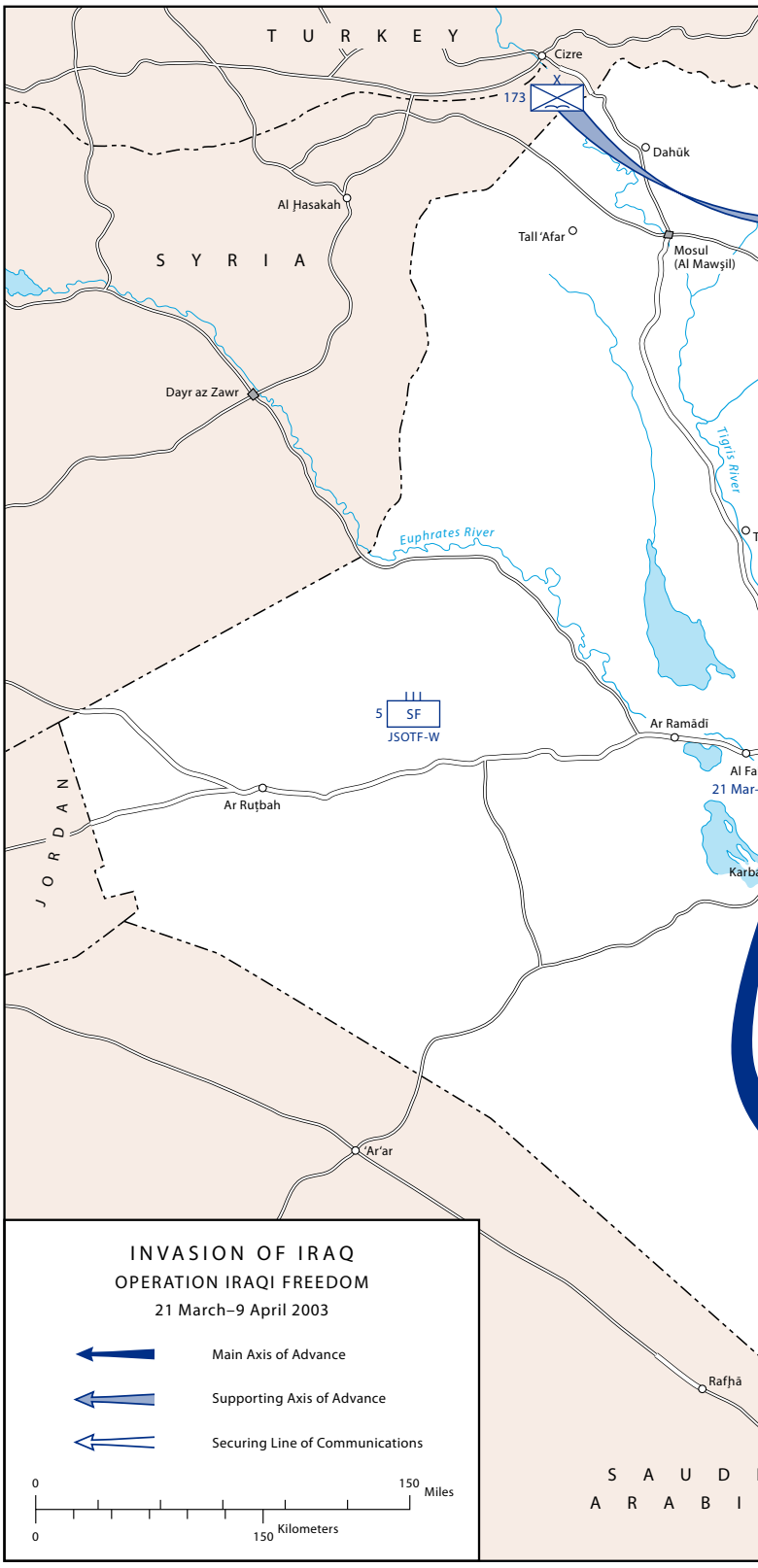
When the 507th Maintenance Company entered An Nasiriyah before dawn on March 23, 2003, it was not prepared for combat. The few Iraqi soldiers on duty, surprised to see the convoy drive through town, held their fire at first. When the convoy commander realized he was off course and started to turn his company's vehicles around, the Iraqis began taking potshots at the Americans. As the gunfire escalated, the Americans tried to return fire, but many of their weapons jammed because they had not been properly maintained. Eight vehicles escaped An Nasiriyah, but ten were disabled by hostile fire. Although sixteen Americans managed to reach friendly lines, the Iraqis killed eleven and captured seven. The ambush was a reminder that all soldiers have to be ready for combat.

The final logic for the rolling start was fortuitous. Intelligence reports seemed confident that Saddam, his influential sons Uday and Qusay, and other regime leaders were in the same bunker at the same time and that the coalition knew where it was. The allies seized upon this opportunity to decapitate Saddam's regime with a single blow. Simultaneously, thirty-six Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAMs) hit the complex early in the morning on March 20. Unfortunately, later reports proved that the intelligence was faulty: Saddam and his sons were not in the bunker. Further combat operations followed immediately, and the main bodies of the 3d Infantry Division, 1st Marine Division, and U.K. 1st Armoured Division were rolling across the line of departure within twenty-four hours.

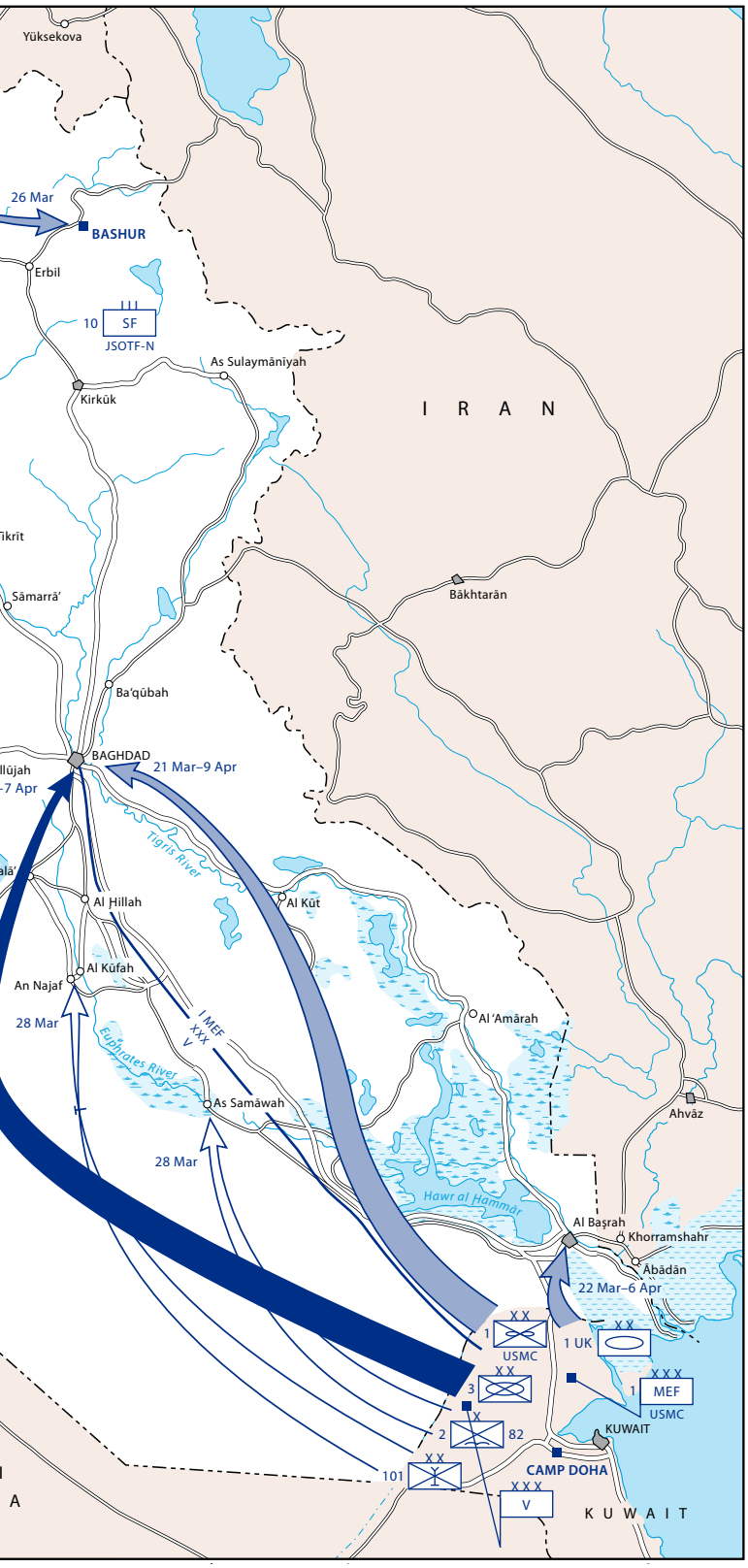
The 3d Infantry Division streaked up the west side of the Euphrates River toward Baghdad, blowing through light resistance to cover 200-plus miles into the vicinity of An Najaf within twenty-four hours (*Map 36*). During this same period, the marines overran the Rumaylah Oil Fields, handily mopping up fragments of defenders and securing the facilities virtually unscathed. The British captured 750 dispirited defenders of Umm Qasr without much of a fight and set about preparing that port to receive humanitarian supplies. Far to the west, the Special Forces already had infiltrated to compromise Iraqi efforts to launch missiles from western Iraq into Israel; to the north, special operators in Kurdistan had laid groundwork to bring in the Kurds as a second front. Most of this drama and activity was televised worldwide by embedded media correspondents traveling within units, yet linked to their home stations by satellite technology. Their real-time, gripping, and sometimes breathless commentary added to the sense of momentum and success.

Unfortunately, the campaign did not stay easy. Many had thought that overwhelming American air strikes would so shock and awe the Baghdad regime that it would quickly fold with minimal ground effort. The Iraqis anticipated the allied advantage, surrendered control of the air from the beginning, hid much of their valuable equipment amid the civilian populace where the allies were loath to strike, and pushed deep underground what command and control they could sustain. The allies were far too sensitive to world opinion to risk serious damage to civilian infrastructure and instead used spectacular firepower on selected government buildings and military facilities. The Arab world recoiled from footage of massive plumes of smoke over the fabled city of Baghdad and of hapless civilian victims of occasional errant munitions, when in fact little real damage was being done to the city or its citizens. Strategic bombing was also doing little real damage to Iraqi warfighting capabilities. The air power that would matter would be joint and in support of the ground advance.

Ground troops soon enough found themselves in need of the advantages air power could bring. Although the Iraqi regular army quickly faded from view south of Baghdad, by desertion more so than through combat or surrender, *Fedayeen* and *Special Republican Guards* counterattacked with vengeance. Attacks against lead elements of the 3d Infantry Division seem almost suicidal in retrospect. Swarms of pickup trucks with mounted machine guns and packed with light infantry raced to close with the Americans, only to be swept away by hurricanes of tank and Bradley fire. Ambushes more rationally sited amid buildings and vegetation were speedily shredded by phenomenal American gunnery, the product of thermal sights, state-of-the-art equipment, and years of training. The heavy


T U R K E Y
Cizre
173
X
Dahūk
Al Ḥasakah
Tall 'Afar
Mosul
(Al Mawṣil)
S Y R I A
Dayr az Zawr
Tigris River
Euphrates River
5
SF
JSOTF-W
Ar Ramādī
Al Fa
21 Mar-
Ar Ruṭbah
Karba
J O R D A N
'Ar'ar
Rafḥā
S A U D
A R A B I
INVASION OF IRAQ
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM
21 March–9 April 2003
Main Axis of Advance
Supporting Axis of Advance
Securing Line of Communications
0
150
Miles
0
150
Kilometers

Map 36


Yüksekova
26 Mar
BASHUR
Erbil
10
SF
JSOTF-N
As Sulaymānīyah
Kirkūk
I R A N
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Ba'qūbah
BAGHDAD
21 Mar–9 Apr
llūjah
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Tigris River
Al Hillah
Al Kūt
Al Kūfah
An Najaf
28 Mar
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Euphrates River
Al 'Amārah
As Samāwah
Ahvāz
28 Mar
Hawr al Hammār
Al Başrah
Khorramshahr
Ābādān
22 Mar–6 Apr
1
USMC
1 UK
3
1
MEF
USMC
2
82
KUWAIT
101
CAMP DOHA
V
K U W A I T

armor of the M1A1 tanks was proof against almost any munitions in the Iraqi inventory, and the lighter armor of the Bradleys protected their crews from most projectiles. Shootouts with American armor inevitably went badly for the Iraqis.

Unfortunately for the Americans, their armor could not be everywhere and their rapid advance had exposed a lengthy supply line. While some *Fedayeen* were demolishing themselves fighting lead elements in and around An Najaf, their brethren were having somewhat better results attacking trailing logistical assets around An Nasiriyah. One maintenance company became disoriented as it attempted to move through that enemy-held town and lost eleven killed, seven captured, and nine wounded in a chaotic gun battle. The Iraqis presented the dead bodies and the prisoners on television for the world to see. Marines rushed in to assist in securing An Nasiriyah found themselves embroiled in stiff fighting with wily and ruthless opponents and took significant casualties as well. The *Fedayeen* and other irregulars routinely dressed as civilians, pretended to surrender and then opened fire, hid among civilians, attacked from ambush, and operated out of hospitals, schools, and mosques. They knew and exploited the American rules of engagement. As major fighting ceased, they persisted with sniping and encouraged suicide attacks against isolated American checkpoints.

March 24, 2003, was a discouraging day for coalition arms. The damage inflicted upon the ambushed maintenance company was becoming clear, and attacks along the elongated supply lines continued. An Nasiriyah in particular remained a hotly contested scene of carnage and confusion. The 11th Attack Helicopter Regiment attempted a deep attack on the *Republican Guard Medina Division* defending Karbala and overflew a mammoth air defense ambuscade of machine guns and shoulder-fired air-defense weapons coordinated by cellular telephones. Although all but one of the

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS PAUL R. SMITH (1969–2003)

Sfc. Paul R. Smith of Company B, 11th Engineers, 3d Infantry Division, was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for his heroic actions on April 4, 2003, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. During an attack to clear a compound near Baghdad International Airport, his platoon was attacked by approximately sixty Iraqi fighters. Sergeant Smith led his men from the front as they fought off the attackers with small arms and grenades. In a decisive moment, Sergeant Smith mounted one of his platoon's armored personnel carriers and in that exposed position directed .50-caliber machine-gun fire against the enemy until he was mortally wounded.

redoubtable AH–64 Apache helicopters made it out of the battle area, in one battalion only six of eighteen aircraft remained mission capable and in another only one. Weather reports anticipated the imminent arrival of a massive sandstorm, yielding several days of winds up to fifty knots and visibility measured in inches rather than miles. Such appalling weather conditions could negate American technical advantages and allow Iraqi attackers a close combat opportunity with American troops. Perhaps most troubling, Iraqi Shi'ites who had been so terribly abused during Saddam Hussein's regime did not rise to greet the allies as liberators but rather seemed to present an overall attitude of sullen indifference. Allied postwar plans depended heavily on Iraqi cooperation: If those most aggrieved with Saddam remained distant, what hope was there for an agreeable outcome? It was in this context of troubling surprises that V Corps Commander Lt. Gen. William S. Wallace made his now-famous remark that the Iraqis were "not the enemy we war-gamed against."

Allied postwar plans depended heavily on Iraqi cooperation: If those most aggrieved with Saddam remained distant, what hope was there for an agreeable outcome?

Wallace's remark was discouraging only to those who believed that wars are supposed to unfold as planned. Wallace's 34-year career included service as the commander of the Operations Group and then commanding general at the National Training Center, where he became acutely aware how often plans must change to accommodate a dynamic battlefield. His soldiers demonstrated that flexibility now. With respect to exposed logistics, within a few days V Corps drew on lessons learned in Vietnam and elsewhere—in some cases drawing on materials e-mailed from archives in the United States—to reconfigure convoys into a more defensible posture. Wallace resisted the temptation to redirect leading armored elements back into securing their own lines of communication and instead brought forward elements of the more lightly armed 101st and 82d Airborne Divisions to deal with rear-area security. The 377th Theater Support Command pushed a hose-reel fuel system over fifty miles to the vicinity of An Nasiriyah, thus reducing the turnaround time for fuel-bearing trucks. This further capitalized upon a million-gallon fuel farm the Army had already quietly built up just short of the Iraq-Kuwait border. The 11th Attack Helicopter Regiment set about repairing or replacing shot-up aircraft, and their pilots conducted a video teleconference with the attack helicopter pilots of the 101st Airborne Division to discuss the innovative Iraqi defenses and to communicate lessons learned.

The 101st Division had more success with far less damage when their own opportunity for deep attacks came. The gigantic sandstorms did slow the American advance to a crawl and allowed some Iraqi *Fedayeen* and irregulars to get close, but these found the Americans as formidable close up as they had been at a distance. Even degraded thermal sights were better than the alternatives, and American gunners were quick on the trigger. American dismounts were well trained and organized, equipped with night-vision goggles, and heavily armed with automatic weapons. Perhaps most important, their newly improved Kevlar body armor was proof against fragments and munitions up through the ubiquitous 7.62-caliber round of the Iraqi AK47. Dozens of American infantry who would have been fatally wounded in earlier wars remained in the fight. The close-in battles that did occur were lopsided in the favor of the Americans.

With respect to Shi'ite reticence, the British pioneered a go-slow technique around Basra that developed insights useful elsewhere. The allies had a free hand in the open desert and could surround populated

Low visibility during a sandstorm in southern Iraq.

areas to enter them at their own pace. It turned out that the Shi'ites were not so much hostile to the allies as they were frightened of a Ba'athist hard core in their own midst. The British gathered intelligence on the surrounded population, conducted nighttime forays to neutralize identified Ba'athists, and built the confidence of the Shi'ite remainder. Ultimately, the British, supported by the local populace, swept the Ba'athists out of Basra and entered the city as liberators. All things considered, the allies effectively shifted their paradigm from the enemy in their war games to the one on the ground in Iraq.

Allied air power continued to hammer away at the Iraqis during all this adjustment. The rapid advance of the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized) along the Euphrates and of the marines up the Tigris and between the rivers had drawn out the *Republican Guard* to defend the environs of Baghdad. They may have thought themselves concealed by the dust storm and by moving at night, but they were not. Satellites, unmanned aerial vehicles, and aerial reconnaissance detected their movements; Special Operations Forces and the leading ground forces established their front-line trace. Relentless air bombardment with PGMs seriously weakened the *Republican Guard* before it could achieve substantial ground contact with the Americans.

As vital as air power was to the advance from the south, it was even more instrumental to allied successes in the west and north. In the west, thinly supported Special Operations Forces quickly overran airfields and neutralized potential Iraqi missile strikes. Packing little organic firepower themselves, they depended heavily on aerial precision strikes to offset their weaknesses. In the north, the Air Force airdropped a reinforced battalion of the 173d Airborne Brigade, airlanded an M1A1 tank–equipped company team to support it, and then sustained this host and their Kurdish *Peshmerga* allies by air

THUNDER RUNS IN BAGHDAD

Urban combat can bog down armies, and the campaign to seize Baghdad in April 2003 required audacity to prevent a slow, set-piece battle. The American Army mounted two armored raids, nicknamed Thunder Runs. First, on April 5 an armored battalion attacked swiftly up Highway 8 into Baghdad and then withdrew. Two days later an entire heavy brigade of Abrams tanks and Bradleys roared into downtown Baghdad and stayed, fighting off all counterattacks. These raids—armored vehicles speeding down highways—brought mayhem: tanks blasting thin defenses, suicidal assaults on armor, and vast expenditures of ammunition on suspected enemy locations. They were a key element in toppling the regime of Saddam Hussein.

as well. Again, much of the necessary fire support came from airborne PGMs. All these resources—tanks, paratroopers, *Peshmerga*, and PGMs—operated under the supervision of the handful of special operators already deployed in the north, inducing the Army's vice chief of staff, General John M. "Jack" Keane, to quip that it was like attaching a naval carrier battle group to a SEAL team. Operations in both west and north progressed well, while the climactic battle was shaping up in the south.

Satan's Sandbox, Elzie R. Golden, 2003

By April 4, the 3d Infantry Division had battered its way through the fragmenting *Republican Guard* to seize Saddam Hussein International Airport. Meanwhile, the marines had continued up the Tigris to cut off Baghdad from the east. (*See Map 36.*) The following day the 3d Infantry Division dispatched a battalion task force on a raid into central Baghdad, taking advantage of the relatively open construction of major highways into the city. This foray turned into a spectacular media event as the tanks and Bradleys sped through town, blazing away to the left and right, destroying twenty armored vehicles, sixty-two trucks, and hundreds of troops while losing only four wounded in action themselves. Clearly, organized resistance was collapsing.

By April 7, the division had fought its way into central Baghdad to stay and the following day had closed to the Palestine Hotel in full view of the numerous international media who had set up operations there. The marines moved into the city from the other side, and the continuing rout of the Iraqis in the west and north completed the isolation of the now-fallen capital city. The campaign's cumulative casualties to that point were reported as 42 killed and 133 wounded for the Army, 41 killed and 151 wounded for the Marine Corps, and 19 killed and 36 wounded for the British. On April 9 a tiny contingent of marines and a crowd of jubilant Iraqis pulled down the Saddam monument in the Shi'ite sector of Baghdad while breathless television commentary related the symbolism and decisiveness of the moment. It truly seemed that the war was over and a triumphant peace at hand.

PHASE IV

Coalition planners had envisioned IRAQI FREEDOM as a multiphase operation, with Phase IV being the mop-up and reconstruction that followed the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime. The conduct of Phases I through III had been mindful of Phase IV; collateral damage to the civilian infrastructure had been kept to a minimum. Graphic photos and film footage revealed smoke pluming out of precisely drilled military targets while civilian buildings surrounding them remained untouched. Psychological operations repeatedly made the point that the war was against Saddam's regime and not the Iraqi people. Unlike most other wars, there was no

Infantrymen provide security near an essential bridge crossing south of Baghdad.

sudden flight of panicked refugees. The Iraqis stayed where they were and by and large had sufficient food on hand to last them for a week or so. Many thought that the Iraqis would greet the Americans as liberators and that Phase IV would involve a modest and expedient expenditure of resources. Unfortunately, these optimists underrated the resilience of the Ba'athist regime, the complexity of the Iraqi national identity, and the deplorable conditions in which Saddam had left his country.

There was no precise end to Saddam Hussein's regime, no surrender, no cease-fire, no treaty. There was not much formal capitulation at lower levels either. By and large the Iraqi Army deserted and went home rather than surrendering en masse. Regime adherents disappeared back into the population but retained the means to intimidate through threat, arson, and murder. The coalition resorted to the attention-getting tactic of associating a different key regime figure with each card in a deck of cards: Saddam, for example, was the Ace of Spades. In southern Iraq, the Shi'ites well remembered their abortive uprising against Saddam following Desert Storm and the massacres they blamed in part on America's failure to assist at that time. They were understandably wary of cooperating too soon; Ba'athist diehards would have to be rooted out and an expectation of personal security established before cooperation could be expected. In central Iraq, Sunni Arabs had received favored treatment from Saddam's regime; his personal power base had been heavily concentrated in Tikrit and other small towns north and west of Baghdad. (*See Map 37.*) Here, the number of his adherents was larger and their grip on the population more profound than in the south. Only the Kurds in the far north had already virtually extinguished the Ba'athists in their midst and enthusiastically welcomed the Americans as liberators.

The Iraqi national identity was both fragmented and complicated. Profound tensions had long divided Shi'ites, Sunni Arabs, and Kurds; such smaller minorities as Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Turks had their share of historical grievances as well. Iraqis were overwhelmingly Muslim, mindful of centuries of oppression by foreign powers, and wary of, if not outright hostile to, a sustained American presence. Ethnic and political ties extended well beyond their borders, producing additional potential for mischief. Iran's fundamentalist Shia government appealed to many Iraqi Shi'ites, who constituted about 60 percent of the population. A number of prominent Shia leaders had waited out the worst of the Saddam years in exile in Iran and now returned with organizations of followers intact. Kurds lived in Turkey and Iran as well as in Iraq, and those nations worried that a prosperous and autonomous Kurdistan might inspire their own minorities to further separatism. Ba'athists were dominant in Syria as they had

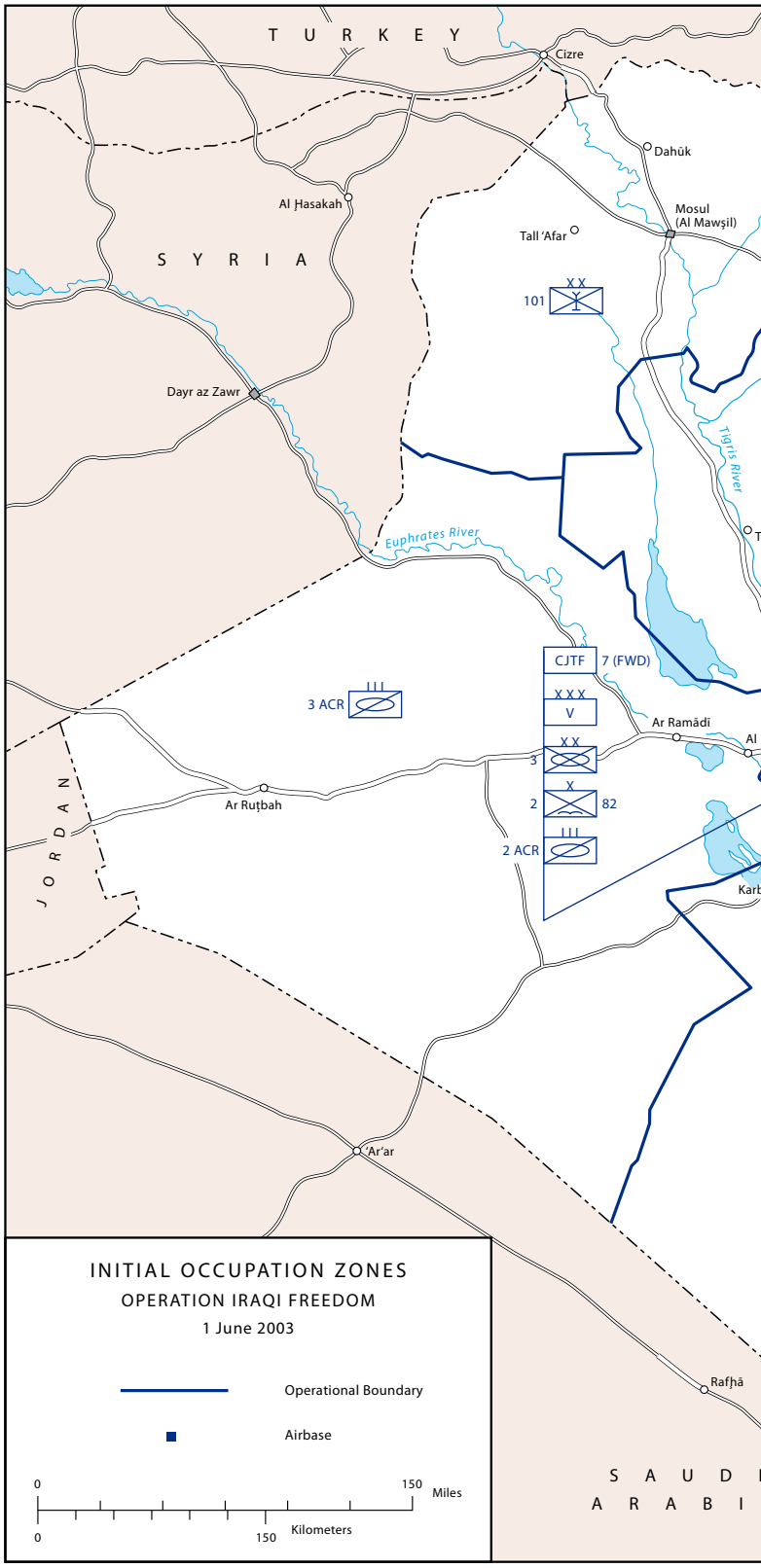
been in Iraq, and armed men flowed back and forth across that porous and troubled border. Pan-Arab hostility to the West was also at play in Iraq, and popular international media networks like Al-Jazeera put a spin on news that did not favor the coalition allies and what they were trying to accomplish. This attitude garnered support from some for the use of foreign mercenaries, zealots, and terrorists, first to defend Saddam Hussein's regime and then, when it fell, to carry on the fight on the part of Ba'athist diehards or in addition to them.

A soldier of the 3d Infantry Division scans the rooftops in Baghdad as part of a patrol to deter looting.

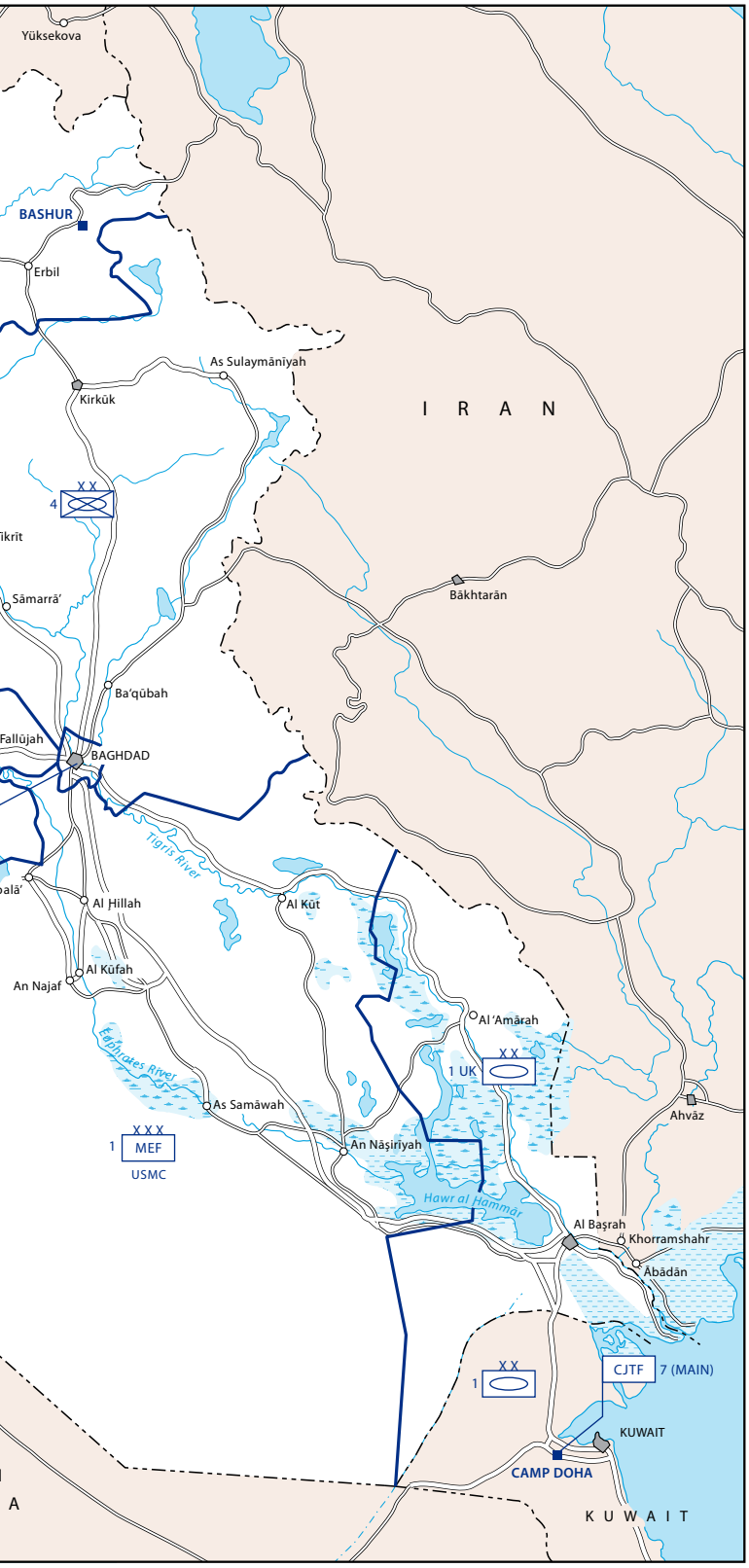
Coalition objectives depended heavily on convincing the Iraqis that they were better off with Saddam Hussein gone. This effort was compromised initially by the sorry state of the country's infrastructure. Saddam's regime had more in common with gangster-like extortion and extraction than it did with responsible government. He had looted the country of billions of dollars and plowed much of that back into magnificent palaces for himself and his family. Much was simply stashed away, some in overseas banks and some in great bundles of money coalition troops found hidden in walls, under floors, or in basements. Given UN sanctions following Desert Storm and Saddam's fiscal style, the black-market economy was in many cases more robust than the conventional economy. Saddam's adherents lived well, but most of the population lived in poverty. Iraq's petroleum, electricity, and transportation infrastructures received little regular government support, and there was not enough private investment to support a healthy economy.

Iraq's economic dysfunction was all too apparent in the rampant looting associated with the regime's fall. As Saddam's security apparatus collapsed and the allies proved too few and too distracted to police the country, impoverished masses saw their one clear chance to seize something—anything—for themselves. Palaces were stripped of furniture, doorknobs, and electrical wire. Diagnostic equipment and medical supplies went missing from hospitals. Power-transmission lines were toppled and the copper and other metals in them melted down for resale abroad. Government buildings were left as empty shells. There was no particular rhyme or reason for most of the looting. It was a simple orgy of the dispossessed stealing anything that could possibly be used or sold. Some of the damage was more sinister, however. In power stations and fuel refineries, coalition forces found evidence of sabotage as well as looting. Regime diehards so wanted coalition efforts to fail that they were willing to inflict untold further suffering on the Iraqi people.

Looting and lawlessness quickly tarnished the allied victory. The breath-taking success of the attack from a rolling start left a relatively tiny force in the midst of a vast country. Further troops had not yet arrived.


T U R K E Y
Cizre
Dahūk
Al Ḥasakah
Mosul
(Al Mawṣil)
Tall 'Afar
S Y R I A
XX
101
Dayr az Zawr
Tigris River
Euphrates River
CJTF
7 (FWD)
XXX
V
3 ACR
III
Ar Ramādī
XX
3
X
2
82
III
2 ACR
Ar Ruṭbah
J O R D A N
'Ar'ar
INITIAL OCCUPATION ZONES
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM
1 June 2003
Operational Boundary
Airbase
0
150
Miles
0
150
Kilometers
Rafḥā
S A U D I
A R A B I

Map 37


Yüksekova
BASHUR
Erbil
As Sulaymāniyah
Kirkūk
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Sāmarrā'
Bākhtarān
Ba'qūbah
Fallūjah
BAGHDAD
Tigris River
Al Ḥillah
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An Najaf
Al 'Amārah
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X X
1 UK
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1
MEF
USMC
Ān Nāṣiriyah
Hawr al Hammār
Al Baṣrah
Khorramshahr
Ābādān
X X
1
CJTF
7 (MAIN)
KUWAIT
CAMP DOHA
K U W A I T

Fallujah, Elzie R. Golden, 2004

Fighting continued on a small scale, and the relatively few units on hand necessarily took some time to transition from a warfighting posture to a security posture. In the interval, lawlessness continued, with much of it more organized, violent, and criminal than had been the case earlier. Ordinary Iraqi citizens found themselves terrorized by tales of robbery, car theft, rape, and murder, many of which were true. Even when reinforced, American troops could not be everywhere. As they spread out to secure schools, hospitals, banks, and traffic-control points, they made themselves increasingly vulnerable to sniping and ambush by diehard Ba'athists.

The original plans for postwar Iraq had envisioned a modest reconstruction effort under retired Lt. Gen. James "Jay" Garner, the man who had supervised the reconstitution of Iraqi Kurdistan during Operation Provide Comfort. As the scale and intractable nature of the lawlessness, factional squabbling, and infrastructure collapse became clear, however, U.S. policymakers soon recognized that Iraq would require a more comprehensive reconstruction effort. Although some progress was being made, day after day the media reported electrical outages, fuel shortages, nonpotable water, crimes of violence, and attacks on American troops.

The Bush administration decided to expand the reconstruction effort by devoting more resources and putting a prominent statesman favored by both the State Department and the Pentagon, L. Paul Bremer, in charge. Bremer determined early that half measures would not do and decided to totally disband the Iraqi Army and to ban a far larger proportion of Ba'athists from government employment than Garner had considered wise. Iraq would not merely be tinkered with; it would be rebuilt from the ground up. Whatever the long-term advantages of such a dramatic renewal, the short-term effect was leaving large numbers of soldiers unemployed and Ba'athists desperate. Many of these Ba'athists had blood on their hands and knew what their fate would be if they gave up local levers of power. These men were fighting for their lives. Others saw livelihoods slipping away and believed they had nothing to lose by joining the diehards.

Iraqis continued to attack American tactical units but had no more success than they had during the course of earlier combat. Even when isolated, Bradley platoons generated volumes of fire that lightly armed assailants could not withstand, and armored reinforcements were generally close at hand. The residual Iraqi resistance soon turned its attention to sniping at convoys. Since most supplies still flowed into central Iraq from far-off Kuwait, there was no lack of convoys to choose from. The RPG was the Iraqi weapon of choice. If the attackers could pick off a truck or two from a distance, they could hope to escape before retaliation followed. The Americans tightened their convoy procedures, embedded tactical vehicles, gravitated toward routes with open shoulders, secured key terrain en route,

and rehearsed countermeasures. Potshots at armed convoys became riskier, with fewer of the attackers getting away. Convoy security did become expensive, however. Bradleys escorting convoys began to average 1,200 miles a month rather than the customary 800 miles a year and thus had to change tracks every 60 days rather than biannually.

Rationalization of the American logistical structure in Iraq inevitably led to elaborate base camps—logistical support areas in which supplies of all types could be secured. These and other facilities became the targets of daring mortar attacks as Ba'athists attempted to lob a few rounds into a base camp and then flee into the darkness. Infantry companies deployed to secure the base camps played cat and mouse to hunt down the mortarmen. At Logistics Support Activity (LSA) Anaconda north of Baghdad, one enterprising Bradley company commander was in pursuit of the source of a recent mortar volley when a helicopter overhead reported a puzzling thermal hot spot on ground from which rounds were thought to have come. Returning to that location, the company commander unearthed a recently fired mortar from the soft sand. The Americans had been attempting to apprehend a mortar party fleeing in a pickup truck or on foot with their weapon, when instead the attackers had fired their weapon, buried it, and then drifted off unarmed. A quick search of the area revealed ten men hiding in a chicken coop. The local farmer who owned the chickens did not know the men, whom the Americans quickly apprehended. They unearthed two more mortars in the course of the night.

Desert boots, 2003

Over time the preferred Iraqi method of attack shifted from direct fire and mortars, both increasingly dangerous to use, to improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Often adapted from munitions or mines, these could be planted along roadways to detonate when run over or when triggered by remote control. A few men could employ such a device with relatively little risk to themselves. The devices were indiscriminant, however; as the American soldiers became warier and their vehicles more protected, the victims were often innocent Iraqis.

As grim as the Phase IV combat could occasionally be, it did not approach previous guerrilla warfare in scale or intensity. Even in the seemingly embattled Sunni region north and west of Baghdad, only a tiny fraction of the resident manpower engaged in active hostilities. The proportion of the population actively hostile and under arms was at least two orders of magnitude smaller than the American experience in Vietnam or the Russian experience in Afghanistan. American casualty rates were correspondingly smaller as well.

Street Fight, Elzie R. Golden, 2004

Resistance proved more akin to terrorism than to guerrilla warfare as most envision it. Foreign terrorists flowed into the country to join the fight. Soft targets such as unprotected oil pipelines, refineries, water mains,

and the unarmed Iraqis attempting to restore them became popular for the terrorists. Attempts to assassinate Americans guarding hospitals, banks, and schools transitioned to attacks on the Iraqi security personnel who eventually replaced them. Even UN relief workers, who often eschewed American protection, came under attack. The most egregious such attack was a truck-bombing of a UN compound on August 19, 2003, that killed at least twenty-three people, including Brazilian Sérgio Vieira de Mello, the highly respected head of mission. The terrorists were determined to reverse whatever progress Iraq was making in the direction the coalition preferred, regardless of the suffering the Iraqi people would endure. The terrorists also aimed for purely civilian targets, both to reinforce a sense of insecurity and to promote trouble between the ethnic groups. Horrific suicide bombings of Shi'ite pilgrims and Kurdish well-wishers on respective religious holidays were cases in point.

President Bush had uneven results in attempting to garner international support for his efforts. As of October 2003, the British sustained a division in Iraq and the Poles, Italians, Spaniards, Ukrainians, and a few others each contributed yet another, coming to about 30,000 allied troops as compared to 146,000 Americans. By that time, 60,000 Iraqis also were assisting in coalition-sponsored security. Financial support was problematic, and Bush presented a bill for $87 billion to the U.S. Congress. Many nations did agree to forgive much of Iraq's foreign debt, removing a major obstacle to eventual recovery. Costs in lives and treasure proved contentious as a political issue, exacerbated by a failure to find the weapons of mass destruction so prominent in the original logic for the war. Nations not yet participating indicated an unwillingness to do so without a more substantial role for the UN in rebuilding postwar Iraq, yet there was no guarantee they would be forthcoming with troops and money even if that larger UN role was arranged. For better or worse, the United States had to continue the struggle or face incalculable international consequences.

The American response remained vigorous and attempted a balance between developing rapport with and support from the average Iraqi and smashing diehard Ba'athists and terrorists. Across most of the country, schools and hospitals were functioning normally within a few months.

FUTURE COMBAT SYSTEM

The Future Combat System (FCS) was an unprecedented attempt to capitalize on emerging technologies and to develop and field the majority of a brigade-level unit's combat equipment as a single, integrated package. Its most visible component was a family of combat vehicles sharing a common chassis to reduce logistical and maintenance requirements. The main differences from the existing force were its highly integrated computer networks and unmanned reconnaissance platforms that were to provide the lightly armored force its early-warning and long-distance strike capabilities. The cost of the system, combined with the newly emerging requirements of the War on Terrorism, caused Congress to drop funding for the full program. However, the Army changed its focus and began applying "spinoff" technologies from the FCS to the force in an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary fashion.

Local councils, some elected and some appointed, took on most aspects of local governance. Iraqi police and security guards progressed from coalition-sponsored training through joint patrols with the allies to assuming full responsibility. With police back on the streets, the worst of the crime wave subsided. Many local leaders had their own tribal or clan militias or contingents of personal bodyguards. American soldiers were happy when they no longer found themselves pulling guard in front of schools, banks, hospitals, and museums, or enforcing traffic control or curfews—where they felt like sitting ducks. This freed them for other missions.

If the carrot was nation-building activities, the stick was nighttime raids to seize Ba'athist diehards and terrorist imports. With persistent coalition presence, intelligence improved as a population more confident in its own security became confident enough to inform. One by one, regime adherents identified on the deck of cards fell into coalition hands. Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay perished in a spectacular shootout. Foreign mercenaries were apprehended en route from the borders, flush with cash they had been paid to kill Americans. Tons of weapons and ammunition were uncovered and destroyed. On December 14, 2003, American soldiers pulled Saddam Hussein himself out of a tiny hole in which he was hiding near his hometown of Tikrit. They found valuable documents with him, and bit by bit the Ba'athist terrorist infrastructure was further disassembled and destroyed. Whatever Iraq's future, Saddam Hussein's regime was a thing of the past.

Saddam Hussein shortly after his capture in Tikrit.

The capture of Saddam Hussein did not, contrary to some expectations, "break the back" of the by-now decentralized Iraqi insurgency. In fact, the extent of Hussein's influence in the growing insurgency was doubtful and the insurgency continued to gain strength even after his execution. Each hopeful trend or development that seemed to portend increased effectiveness of the Iraqi government or decreased intensity of insurgent attacks was followed by renewed violence that continued to spiral out of control. While U.S. military and political leaders tried to move quickly to place more responsibility on an interim Iraqi government and its fledgling military and police, the ill-trained Iraqi forces failed time and again to step up to the mark. The drafting of a Transitional Administrative Law in the spring of 2004 seemed a positive step; but the reluctance of the three major ethnic/religious groups in the country—Sunni Arab, Shi'ite Arab, and Kurd—to compromise on power sharing or even to agree on the nature of the proposed new government stymied all attempts at effective governance.

The military situation in Iraq took a turn for the worse in March 2004 when four American contractors were killed in Fallujah, a Sunni insurgent stronghold, and their charred and mutilated remains were hung from a bridge for all to see. U.S. Marine and Army mechanized forces moved to clean out the city during Operation Vigilant Resolve in April; but their initial success was frustrated when under Iraqi pressure, U.S. Coalition Provisional Authority chief Paul Bremer halted and withdrew U.S. units as they were on the verge of success. When ill-led and poorly organized Iraqi Army and police forces were ordered to Fallujah by their government to replace the U.S. units, they were completely unprepared for the reality of battle and most deserted the field. A second attempt to organize an Iraqi counterstrike, the formation of the "Fallujah Brigade,"

failed as well when it was infiltrated by insurgents and its leader, a former Republican Guard general, was arrested for war crimes committed during the 1991 Shi'a uprising. The result was an emboldened insurgency, safe within a new sanctuary, and an embarrassed and weakened U.S., Iraqi, and Coalition force seemingly helpless against it.

The enemy success at Fallujah seemed just one of the instances of the emergence of other factions that sought to capitalize on perceived U.S. weakness. That same month, the radical leader of a Shi'ite group, Moqtada al-Sadr, unleashed his militia—the self-styled Mahdi Army—in a series of attacks on U.S. forces. The militiamen seized radio and television stations, blew up bridges, and threatened numerous U.S. supply routes. Attempts to arrest some key followers of the fiery cleric and close down one of his newspapers failed, leading to greater violence and calls by him for a national "jihad" against the American "occupiers." In response, elements of the 2d Armored Cavalry Regiment pushed into Sadr City, a Mahdi Army stronghold in the northeastern, and poorest, section of Baghdad. Units of the 1st and 2d Infantry Divisions, including the 2d Division's 3d Brigade equipped with the new Stryker combat vehicles, conducted operations to quell violence in An Najaf, Al Kut, and Karbala. But each time U.S. forces would complete an operation and drive off or kill the insurgents and move on to the next crisis spot, the resistance would reemerge behind them. The new Iraqi security forces were unable to hold what had been cleared

STRYKER

In October 1999, General Eric K. Shinseki, the Army Chief of Staff, announced the creation of a prototype organization to pave the way for wide-ranging changes in Army doctrine, organizational design, and leader development. The Army selected a unit at Fort Lewis, Washington, the 3d Brigade, 2d Infantry Division, to convert to the new medium-weight design. On November 16, 2000, the Army announced that the medium-weight brigade would be equipped with a wheeled, third-generation light armored vehicle (LAV III) that the Canadian armed forces were acquiring. On February 27, 2002, the Army christened the medium-weight, wheeled vehicle the Stryker after two unrelated infantrymen with the same last name who had each received the Medal of Honor. The 3d Brigade, 2d Infantry Division, deployed to Iraq in November 2003. The creation of the first Stryker-equipped brigade combat team, from inception to combat deployment, spanned a little more than four years.

by the U.S. military. This led to a series of frustrating "whack-a-mole" operations, so called after the popular amusement parlor game where a player hits the head of an emerging mole to "kill it," another appears, and then still another in seemingly endless succession.

U.S. efforts at pacifying Iraq—while simultaneously attempting to stand up an Iraqi government viewed as legitimate by its own people—at times suffered from self-inflicted wounds as dangerous as the insurgent attacks. It was important that the U.S. forces maintain their standing as an entity that was helping Iraq as a disciplined and ethical military. The U.S. posture in Iraq and around the world was certainly not helped when, in April 2004, graphic photographs were released showing U.S. soldiers involved in physically and psychologically abusing detainees at the Abu Ghraib prison—a facility which already had a notorious reputation as one of Saddam Hussein's torture factories. Further investigations highlighted a breakdown in authority and control within the prison and led to numerous charges and courts-martial. However, the damage was done: no matter how much the U.S. soldiers found culpable were punished, the images remained burned into the minds of the entire world.

U.S. military and political leaders faced dwindling hopes that the occupation could be wrapped up quickly and U.S. troops withdrawn by the end of 2004. The U.S. Army's V Corps, commanded by Lt. Gen. Ricardo S. Sanchez and designated Coalition Joint Task Force–7 (CJTF-7) on June 15, 2003, was the principal headquarters charged with the Iraq mission. But by mid-2004, the deteriorating security situation prompted U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) to create three new headquarters. In preparation for granting Iraq full sovereignty on June 30, CENTCOM redesignated CJTF-7 as Headquarters, Multi-National Force–Iraq (MNF-I), and temporarily placed General Sanchez in command. On July 1, Sanchez was replaced by General George W. Casey Jr. who, as a full general and former vice chief of staff of the Army, served to bring additional prestige, visibility, and clout to the position. Along with MNF-I, Casey had under him two new major subordinate commands: Multi-National Corps–Iraq (MNC-I) to handle the operational and tactical fight and Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq (MNSTC-I) to coordinate the training of Iraq's security forces.

One of General Casey's major goals was to improve the security posture of the country enough so that the national elections, planned for December 2004 or January 2005, would be conducted with a minimum of violence. The ultimate legitimacy of the Iraqi government, and the U.S. hope that such legitimacy would improve the chances for a speedy exit from the country, depended on those elections running reasonably smoothly.

Maintaining a sense of safety in Iraq, however, continued to be elusive. U.S. security efforts, such as Operation Baton Rouge conducted in October by the 1st Infantry Division in the troublesome city of Samarra, about seventy-five miles north of Baghdad, showed the degree to which the Sunni insurgents were dug in. Accompanied by a handful of poorly trained and equipped Iraqi soldiers, elements of the "Big Red One" fought a series of block-to-block, house-to-house fights in Samarra. The division killed dozens of insurgents, discovered numerous caches of IEDs, and captured many stockpiles of small arms. Yet Samarra continued to be a hotbed

of insurgent violence even after what appeared to have been a successful operation. Again, it proved impossible for the fledgling Iraqi security forces, in particular the venal and sectarian-dominated national police, to hold onto the gains made by combat operations.

After Samarra, U.S. forces turned their attention to the troublesome city of Fallujah, where the abortive Coalition offensive operation the previous April had seemed only to strengthen the insurgents. Now in Operation AL-FAJR (The Dawn), called by U.S. forces Operation PHANTOM FURY, U.S. units and their Iraqi counterparts were determined to clear out the city. Beginning on November 8, two U.S. Marine regimental combat teams, each with an attached U.S. Army mechanized battalion, led the way into the urban area. Iraqi Army units, this time better prepared and led, were present to help secure the city once it was taken. The allies had instructed all noncombatants to leave before the attack in an attempt to reduce civilian casualties and have fewer civilians for the insurgents to hide behind. The combined-arms attack with helicopters, artillery, airstrikes, and armor slowly and methodically cleared out the objective block by block. In the final phase of the operation, the Iraqi Army and police established outposts, police stations, and security roadblocks throughout Fallujah and began slowly to allow citizens back in to start reconstruction. With approximately 2,000 insurgents killed and 1,200 captured at the cost of 70 Americans and 7 Iraqis killed, the city was liberated and no longer served as a sanctuary for the insurgents or as a base for their operations.

The promise of an improved security climate in Iraq seemed fulfilled with the peaceful and genuinely popular countrywide elections in January 2005. For the first time, Iraqis got a chance to vote and take charge of their own future. There were remarkably few security incidents as Iraqis guarded the

GEORGE W. CASEY, JR. (1948–)

General George W. Casey, Jr., Commander of Multi-National Forces–Iraq from July 1, 2004, to February 10, 2007, is a member of a distinguished Army family. His father, Maj. Gen. George W. Casey, Sr., Commanding General of the 1st Cavalry Division, had been one of the most senior officers killed in Vietnam when his helicopter crashed on July 7, 1970. The younger Casey was commissioned into the infantry through ROTC at Georgetown University that same year before embarking on a career that encompassed a variety of command and staff jobs including Commanding General, 1st Armored Division; Director of the Joint Staff; Vice Chief of Staff of the Army; and MNF-I Commander. Upon relinquishing command in Iraq to General David H. Petraeus, General Casey returned to Washington in April 2007 to assume the position of thirty-sixth Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army.

polls with U.S. units generally out of sight in a backup role. Proud Iraqis, many shown on worldwide television brandishing their purple-inked forefingers as proof that they had voted, exercised their new franchise despite threats of violence and elected a slate of candidates for a national government. However, the boycott of the elections by the minority Sunnis—no longer the dominant political force in the country—and the mechanism of voting by slates of candidates rather than for individuals (which skewed the vote toward religious party candidates) were ill omens for the future.

Contrary again to all hopes and expectations, the nationwide elections in Iraq did not diminish the level of violence in the country or "defang" the insurgency. If anything, the elections seemed to isolate the Arab-Sunni minority even more. Al-Qaeda in Iraq, now led by a Jordanian terrorist named Abu Musaab al-Zarqawi, capitalized on their fears and began a systematic campaign to terrorize Shi'a Muslims in order to instigate them to conduct revenge attacks on Sunnis in an ever-downward spiral of violence. A few diehard Ba'athists continued their attacks as well, in their attempt to turn back the clock. Added to this lethal mixture was the still-powerful Sadr whose Mahdi Army had not disbanded but had merely taken a lower profile after the rebellion had failed in April and was still strong in Baghdad and Basra. The militiamen had the advantage of being able to infiltrate the Shi'ite-dominated army and national police and use those official covers as they conducted their own terror attacks. In addition, with the Shi'ites in firm control of the government, but the government itself only a shaky coalition, politicians of all parties hesitated to move against Sadr or oppose his followers because of the possible political consequences.

The need to stabilize Iraq while retaining as few troops as possible in that troubled country created a strategic dilemma both to those who wanted to leave Iraq quickly and to those who felt that the United States needed to stay and pursue a new strategy to "win." The result was a measure of strategic policy drift as General John P. Abizaid, the CENTCOM commander who had replaced General Tommy R. Franks in 2003, directed U.S. and Coalition forces to slowly withdraw from the cities into more easily defensible base camps. The goal was to turn over more security functions, and even the administration of whole provinces, as quickly as possible to a slowly improving Iraqi government and army. This would, in time, perhaps allow U.S. forces to leave and in the short run minimize casualties. But in order to ensure that security was maintained, many military thinkers and policymakers foresaw that more U.S. forces were needed in Iraq. However, the stress and strain on the constantly deploying Army units made that politically and practically difficult.

The stress on the force, especially on the U.S. Army, was intense. Even when divided into the more numerous modular brigades, Army units found themselves rotated in and out of Iraq with ever-decreasing time for training and "dwell-time" back at home station. This breakneck pace had a powerful impact on any strategic plan. Enlistment rates were low, and ever-greater incentives were needed to maintain the end strength of the Army. A broken Army could not be expected to be effective in the long run in any attempt to stabilize Iraq. Yet "cutting and running," as some critics referred to it, might well damage the force and U.S. interests even more.

On the positive side, despite the fact that the War on Terrorism was the toughest test yet of the volunteer Army, retention rates continued to be high with more than 100 percent of expected reenlistments being achieved

year after year. Despite family strain, the continuing dangers of death or debilitating wounds, and the back-to-back rotations, the Army was still a well-trained and disciplined force capable of completing a mission that was clearly laid out for it. And in a departure from the national climate during the Vietnam War, the nation continued to provide moral support for the troops even while remaining divided by the policy that had launched them into Iraq in the first place.

Despite the continuing security challenges and under some pressure from Washington, General Casey began planning on drawing down the American forces in Iraq beginning in 2006. He planned to reduce the number of combat brigades in the country from fifteen to ten in the course of the year with the intent of forcing the Iraqis to shoulder more of the responsibility for their own security and governance. The U.S. presence could not be sustained indefinitely, and he and other senior Army leaders were fully aware of the strain on the Army as it faced back-to-back rotations into Iraq with the additional stress of having to maintain a small but important force level in Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and other locations around the world. All of Casey's plans, however, were put on hold when al-Qaeda in Iraq struck again. On February 22, 2006, a terrorist explosion severely damaged the Golden Mosque at Samarra, one of Shi'a Islam's holiest shrines. Zarqawi's hopes of fomenting ethnic and sectarian strife seemed about to be fulfilled.

In the months following the bombing of the Golden Mosque, it appeared that Iraq was sliding into such a high level of ethnic violence and sectarian fighting that some commentators deemed it to be in a state of civil war, with the United States and other members of a dwindling Coalition caught in the middle. The violent sectarian cleansing of neighborhoods accelerated as Sunnis were driven from their homes by Shi'ites and Shi'ites from theirs by Sunnis in a paroxysm of violence and hatred. Internal refugees numbered in the tens of thousands while many of those who could afford to leave the country did so. According to some reports, over 150 bodies of dead Iraqis, murdered execution style, were being dumped on the streets of Baghdad every night to be discovered every morning. The spiraling level of violence did not seem to abate even when U.S. airstrikes killed Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Nor did it help when Iraq had its first regularly elected government put in place on May 20, 2006. The new prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, the leader of a powerful Shi'ite faction who had spent years in exile in Syria and Iran, was viewed with great suspicion by the Arab Sunnis and seen by many outsiders as either a weak tool of the religious parties or a pawn of the Iranians.

Militarily, the United States had few options. It could withdraw as quickly as possible and let the Iraqis sort out their own problems, even if it meant a Shi'ite victory in a civil war with the possibility of increasing Iranian influence as a result. Alternately, it could increase the U.S. force level enough to make a dramatic difference in security levels throughout the country, with the concomitant strain upon the already stressed force. The first strategy hoped that Iraqis would "step up to the plate" once they saw the U.S. forces leaving and further believed that U.S. forces were a part of the problem—an irritant that once removed would help preempt some of the claims of the insurgents that they were only fighting the "foreign occupiers." The second option, increasing U.S. forces, was not without considerable risk.

The second strategy of a "surge" of forces relied upon the belief that a larger force, even if only slightly larger, could prove decisive if used properly. If the additional troops were committed to securing the people in accordance with counterinsurgency doctrine, the result might be a lull in the violence. This could provide the necessary "breathing space" for the new government of Iraq to make the political deals necessary to forge a more broad-based, national, representative government. Either way, the risks were great but the vital interests of the United States in the Middle East—regional security, protection of allies, and the free flow of essential oil—militated against a precipitous withdrawal. Such an exit in defeat from the region would shake the foundations of America's leadership role in the Middle East to the benefit of the terrorists and the states that sponsored them. U.S. casualties remained relatively low but were on the rise in 2006. By the end of that year some 2,400 Americans, most of them Army, had been killed in action and over 20,000 had been wounded. Many had lost limbs or suffered severe head injuries from evermore powerful roadside bombs. The status quo was simply not the answer.

THE DOCTRINE

The U.S. Army, generally one of the quickest militaries in the world to adapt to new battlefield conditions and adjust training, organization, and equipment to new circumstances, had not been complacent as the war shifted from conventional attack to security assistance to fighting an insurgency. In late 2005 and into 2006, the Army and Marine Corps teamed up to revise their doctrine in order to prepare, intellectually and practically, for counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. These operations reemphasized population control, police-like functions, information operations, and nation building. Both services had a long history of fighting such wars, especially the grueling struggle in Vietnam only thirty years before, but both had turned their backs on what they had learned from that conflict as soon as they could in order to focus on new competencies necessary to fight a conventional conflict in Europe. Neither service, despite a temporary surge in interest in low-intensity conflict in the 1980s, had retained the doctrinal focus or training commitment necessary to conduct counterinsurgency operations. Such operations were perhaps the most challenging of all missions to prepare for, given the emphasis on political negotiations, reconstruction activities, regional expertise, languages, and other nontraditional military skills necessary for success. Even the U.S. Army Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, traditionally the Army center tasked to prepare to wage insurgencies and counterinsurgencies, had become dominated in recent years by Rangers and special operations elements that conducted direct-action missions. Those more "glamorous" missions had received much of the attention and funding for the past decade. Those officers who saw the Iraq war turning into a protracted counterinsurgency fight, however, began to turn their minds and energies to writing a new doctrine that would capture their experiences, provide them an intellectual focus, and set in motion the training institutions to prepare the force for that mission.

In late 2006, Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus of the Army's Combined Arms Center and Lt. Gen. James F. Amos, deputy commandant of the Marine Corps' Combat Development Command, put their signatures on a new

DAVID H. PETRAEUS (1952–)

General David H. Petraeus was commissioned into the Infantry from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1974. In addition to the usual assignments of company and battalion command and schooling at the Advanced and Command and General Staff Officers' Courses, Petraeus took the unusual step of earning a doctorate in International Relations at Princeton in 1987 with a dissertation entitled "The American Military and the Lessons of Vietnam: A Study of Military Influence and the Use of Force in the Post-Vietnam Era." Before taking command of Multi-National Force–Iraq in 2007, he served as the Commanding General of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in the opening days of Operation Iraqi Freedom; as the Commanding General of the Multi-National Security Transition Command–Iraq; and the Commanding General of the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth. From MNF-I, Petraeus was given command of U.S. Central Command in Tampa, Florida, in October 2008.

Field Manual 3–24 (Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 3–33.5), *Counterinsurgency*, to provide the doctrinal basis for the reemphasis on this mission. Although not promulgated without controversy (some critics thought it overemphasized soft power and the nonmilitary aspect of operations and thus took the focus off the military's primary mission of warfighting and so-called kinetic, or strike, operations), the new doctrine was widely hailed as reflecting the reality of the struggle in Iraq. It returned the attention of the institutional and operational Army to those skills that had lain dormant for decades but were now needed to fight the continuing Global War on Terrorism in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other locations around the world.

This new counterinsurgency doctrine, together with a companion doctrine on stability operations published in 2009, gave the Army and Marine Corps the intellectual and training tools to prosecute the fight in Iraq. But was it too late? Had the situation in Iraq by 2007 deteriorated so dramatically that no doctrine, however useful and thoughtful, and no Army, however skilled and battle tested, could retrieve the Iraqis from the headlong rush into civil war and chaos? Was the stress on the Army and its family members so severe that its recruitment and retention base would crumble and no longer be able to sustain the fight effectively even if ordered? Would the national resolve continue to back the troops in the fight as the complexity of the struggle only seemed to compound the lack of trust of many in the very rationale for the war in the first place? And even if the military was successful, would it be able to do what was necessary to help solve the critical political questions that had to be addressed in order to establish the basis for a free, independent, and stable Iraq? The very success of the long war in Iraq hung in the balance.

SPEC. ROSS A. MCGINNIS (1987–2006)

On December 4, 2006, while serving as an M2 .50-caliber machine gunner of the 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry, then Private First Class McGinnis was on mounted patrol with his platoon in Adhamiyah in Baghdad. An insurgent threw a grenade into the open hatch of McGinnis' HMMWV (high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle, commonly called a Humvee). Private McGinnis yelled "Grenade!" But then, perhaps realizing that the four other crewmates could not escape the vehicle quickly enough, McGinnis threw himself on the grenade. He absorbed most of the explosion but was mortally wounded while saving his comrades. He was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously and promoted to specialist.

THE SURGE

The crisis in Iraq in 2006–2007 led to a number of critical military and political decisions. On February 10, 2007, the man who was one of the moving forces behind the new focus on counterinsurgency, General Petraeus, took command of MNF–I. He had testified in his confirmation hearings in favor of an increase, styled by some a "surge", of U.S. forces into Iraq. This would be the first necessary step to halt the slide into civil war, to provide the forces necessary for the exercise of a robust counterinsurgency strategy to restore a measure of stability and security for the Iraqi people, and to signal to Iraq and the region the resolve of the United States to finish what it had started. Although far from being the sole originator of the surge idea, it was now General Petraeus who would be most closely identified with its success or failure. He believed that in a counterinsurgency campaign, having "boots on the ground"—units composed of well-trained, culturally aware soldiers—would be the key to local security, support for the host nation's forces, and ultimate success.

The phased arrival of five additional Army combat brigades and two more marine battalions, a total of around 30,000 troops, would provide the extra forces to help train more Iraqi units and begin a series of robust security operations. These operations, focused initially on the key population and political center of the country, Baghdad and its immediate suburbs, would help restore the confidence of the people that their lives and property would be secure. U.S. troops teamed with Iraqi units would staff hundreds of small security outposts throughout the city to stabilize the situation.

Then, a more carefully planned followup by Iraqi security forces to hold those areas and provide a permanent (and helpful) government presence would tip the balance permanently to the forces of stability.

The military operations surrounding the surge of U.S. forces were, however, only one of the essential precursors of the main "battle": the battle for political reconciliation in Iraq without which no military gains would be truly permanent. All of the military aspects of the surge—more troops on the ground, more trainers, more presence of U.S. and Iraqi forces in neighborhoods, more killed or captured terrorists, and more captured bomb factories—were important but could only shape the security conditions on the ground that made political success possible. They could not guarantee that success.

One of the important aspects of that surge, however, was the renewed sense by all factions, and by all the countries in the region, that the United States was committed to finding a solution and was not about to abandon Iraq. This had, it appears, a positive effect on a number of factions previously opposed to the government who now determined it was time to switch sides and work *with* the government. This initiative, beginning in Al Anbar Province and thus picking up the nickname "Anbar Awakening," saw a number of Sunni tribal leaders in the embattled province of Anbar, to the west of Baghdad, determine that they had had enough of interference in their local affairs by heavy-handed and violent al-Qaeda in Iraq and wanted arms to defend themselves. These predominantly Sunni tribes had previously supported Saddam's regime and thus were not trusted by the new Shi'ite-led government. However, even though it was a risk, the United States decided to support these tribal militias, pay them, and work to convince the Iraqi government to integrate them into their security forces in the future.

The Anbar Awakening and similar movements nearby held out the promise that Sunni tribes could fight back against al-Qaeda, maintain order in their provinces, and provide the confidence that they would not be cut out of future political settlements with the national government. Despite mistrust on both sides, this Awakening suggested that the Iraqis could support both security and political settlements, provided the government handled this opportunity well. While not a direct result of more troops in their province, the surge did provide the necessary reassurance of continued U.S. support that made the Anbar Awakening possible, even if it could not guarantee its ultimate success. That lay in the hands of the Iraqi government.

Operations such as the Baghdad security plan went into effect in early February 2007, spearheaded by troops of MNC-I commanded by Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno. The U.S. Army also faced the challenge of implementing the ambitious concept of bringing security to Iraq while absorbing the new troops of the surge over a six-month period. As security gained by these troops and the Anbar Awakening spread to more areas, the Iraqi Army began to gain more confidence. The al-Maliki administration finally moved decisively against Mahdi Army strongholds in Baghdad and Basra in early 2008, and it began to look as if a strong national government that represented all the major parties in Iraq was at least possible. With the change of administration in the United States in early 2009 and President Barack H. Obama's decision to retain Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates (who had replaced Donald Rumsfeld in December 2006), an Iraqi political solution and gradual withdrawal of U.S. troops became distinct possibilities. However, as force levels in Iraq slowly decreased, the other

RAYMOND T. ODIERNO (1954–)

General Raymond T. Odierno was commissioned into the Artillery in 1976 at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He served in numerous command and staff positions during his career in Germany, Saudi Arabia, the Balkans, and the United States. He commanded the 4th Infantry Division in the early days of Operation Iraqi Freedom and the III Corps at Fort Hood and later in Iraq as it became the Multi-National Corps–Iraq in 2006. He took command of the Multi-National Force–Iraq from General Petraeus in September 2008.

major front of the Global War on Terrorism, Afghanistan, began to be recognized by more national leaders as needing additional attention.

BACK TO AFGHANISTAN

In early 2002, CENTCOM commander General Tommy R. Franks established a new headquarters to oversee operations in what appeared to be a relatively peaceful Afghanistan. General Franks and his staff were increasingly preoccupied with planning the impending invasion of Iraq. They hoped that a more robust command in Afghanistan would be able to maintain control of operations there while they devoted their attention to the preparation for the march to Baghdad. As things stood, the headquarters that oversaw conventional forces in Afghanistan, Coalition Forces Land Component Command (Forward), was very small, being little more than an augmented division tactical command post of the 10th Mountain Division (Light).

To create a more capable headquarters, in May 2002 General Franks established Combined Joint Task Force 180 (CJTF-180) and placed it in the charge of Lt. Gen. Dan K. McNeill, Commanding General of the XVIII Airborne Corps. General McNeill formed the new headquarters around that of his own corps, which deployed from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and augmented it with joint and Coalition staff and liaison officers. With a larger staff that incorporated international elements, General Franks hoped that CJTF-180 would be more capable of overseeing tactical operations while simultaneously controlling an increasingly complex military and political situation at the operational level.

Taking charge of CJTF-180, General McNeill reorganized the command structure of his subordinate elements. The units of

Maj. Gen. Franklin L. Hagenbeck's 10th Mountain Division, which already was in Afghanistan, continued operations against anti-Coalition forces as Combined Joint Task Force MOUNTAIN. That task force was replaced in June by units of the 82d Airborne Division. The Special Operations Forces units hunting for fugitive al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders—including Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar—fell under the new Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force (CJSOTF). The Combined Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force (CJCMOTF), comprised mostly of civil affairs units and individual augmentees, conducted humanitarian assistance missions in conjunction with international development and relief agencies.

CJTF-180 forces conducted military operations to keep the Taliban off balance throughout 2002, 2003, and 2004. Typically, these efforts involved a series of assaults conducted by heliborne company- or battalion-size units against small bands of insurgents that invariably suffered tactical defeats if they resisted. In August 2003, for example, Operation MOUNTAIN VIPER targeted anti-Coalition forces throughout Afghanistan with the aim of denying them sanctuary and destroying organized resistance. Operation MOUNTAIN RESOLVE followed in November and targeted Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin, a militia led by the Pashtun warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, and other insurgent groups active in the mountainous region of the Hindu Kush near the border with Pakistan. The next month, by striking Taliban insurgents in Operation AVALANCHE, Maj. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin (who had replaced General Hagenbeck in command of the 10th Mountain Division) sought to set favorable security conditions for the grand assembly, or *loya jirga*, which would meet in January 2004 to frame a new constitution for Afghanistan. Operation MOUNTAIN BLIZZARD took place from January to March 2004, targeting anti-Coalition forces operating along the southern and southeastern border with Pakistan. A follow-on operation, MOUNTAIN STORM, began in March 2004. All these operations inflicted heavy casualties on the scattered insurgents and resulted in the discovery of hundreds of caches of weapons and ammunition. When the first units of the Afghan National Army began to operate alongside Coalition forces, they also helped to demonstrate early signs of the viability of Afghanistan's fledgling democratic government. However, the insurgents were resilient and used the terrain and nearby sanctuaries in Pakistan to keep up the fight.

The Afghan National Army (ANA) was one of the first institutions established by the interim Afghan government, and it would soon become an important element of U.S. and Coalition strategy in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. At first, in early 2002, the training of the ANA was the responsibility of NATO's ISAF. During this stage, British and Turkish troops formed the recruits into *kandaks*, battalion-size units of about 600 soldiers. In 2002, the ranks of the ANA numbered between 2,000 and 3,000 volunteers. Initial plans called for five kandaks to report to a corps-level headquarters based in Kabul, but later plans expanded the size of the Army to more than 67,000 soldiers. CJTF-180 received the mission to take control of the training process and assigned it to the Combined Joint-Civil Military Operations Task Force. Later, CENTCOM established an Office of Military Cooperation–Afghanistan in Kabul to oversee training and to coordinate security assistance efforts under the command of Maj. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry.

In July 2003, General Abizaid succeeded General Franks as CENTCOM commander. Abizaid wanted to create a coherent and cohesive strategy by synchronizing the ongoing effort to build the ANA with other international efforts to create a police and judiciary for the Afghan government; to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate armed factions and militias into civil society; and to confront a growing problem of narcotics production. Toward that end, he took steps to forge communications and working procedures between military commands and civilian agencies in Afghanistan. He also began work to establish a new command, initially named Combined Forces Command–Central Asia and then Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan, which would help ensure better cooperation with the Army's international and interagency partners.

Maj. Gen. David W. Barno assumed command of the new organization in October 2003 and immediately formulated a new strategy. The focus in Afghanistan thus shifted from counterterrorism to counterinsurgency. Identifying the Afghan people as its center of gravity, or decisive strategic focus, the approach sought to help win their allegiance to their new government by combining security and reconstruction actions into a coherent master plan. To build support for the approach, General Barno established close connections with U.S. embassy personnel and Afghan government leaders and began a public communications campaign directed at the Afghan people to emphasize the accomplishments of their own government.

The year 2004 began with signs of hope for the campaign in Afghanistan. Since Coalition forces had produced an unbroken string of tactical victories, General Barno wanted to follow them with more robust counterinsurgency and reconstruction operations, which he hoped would bring long-term strategic success. He lacked the forces at the time to implement such an ambitious plan; however, he had some reasons to be optimistic. The *loya jirga* that began in January 2004 approved an Afghan constitution on February 5 that created a new legal and political framework for the fledgling government. In April, the ANA demonstrated its increased effectiveness when its troops quelled a revolt by militia in the Faryab Province located in the north of Afghanistan along the nation's border with Turkmenistan. Cooperation with Pakistan along Afghanistan's unstable southern border also seemed to be improving. Pakistani forces were engaging Taliban and other anti-Coalition forces in their own territory with greater frequency than before.

The situation in Afghanistan, however, was far from secure. The nation's president, Hamid Karzai, had an interim appointment to office, and it would take months to organize and carry out a national election. Determined to disrupt or prevent that election, anti-Coalition forces in Afghanistan were demonstrating an ability to learn from their tactical defeats at the hands of Coalition forces. Recognizing the futility of trying to meet Coalition troops in force-on-force engagements, for example, they had begun to adopt tactics from the rapidly escalating insurgency in Iraq, including the use of IEDs and later suicide bombers. Meanwhile, if the region near the capital of Kabul was relatively safe because of the strong presence of NATO forces, local governance and security were still uncertain for most Afghans.

This lack of security made it more difficult for the Afghan national government and the Coalition to begin the task of rebuilding a shattered nation

still suffering from decades of Soviet occupation, civil war, and Taliban tyranny. To assist in the task, planners from CENTCOM, the Department of State, and the U.S. Agency for International Development established a number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). These groups were composed of small units of troops (for security) augmented with civilian reconstruction, humanitarian assistance, and governance experts. These teams expanded in size and type over the next few years and increasingly included a greater number of teams organized and staffed by NATO partners. By mid-2008, twenty-six teams operated throughout Afghanistan, twelve under U.S. control and the rest under the command of various NATO partners.

New units continued to rotate in and out of Afghanistan as the various Coalition headquarters shifted names and focus over the next few years. Brigades of the 82d Airborne Division were replaced by similar units of the 10th Mountain Division; they in turn were replaced in quick succession by units of the 25th Infantry Division, the 173d Airborne Brigade, the 82d Airborne Division, and then elements of the 10th Mountain Division again. Marine, National Guard, and Army Reserve units augmented the Regular Army forces along with individual replacements from all services. CJTF-180 was renamed Combined Joint Task Force 76 (CJTF-76) in April 2004 to focus on the tactical fight while Combined Forces Command–Afghanistan remained committed to operational and strategic issues. Regional commands were set up in the south, west, and east to combine security with reconstruction responsibilities on an area-support basis. A series of operations followed in 2004 and 2005 (including Lightning Resolve and Lightning Freedom) focused on keeping the Taliban off balance, especially along the volatile border regions in Paktia and Paktika Provinces in the eastern reaches of Afghanistan. Under General Barno's and later General Eikenberry's direction, CJTF-76 (called CJTF-82 in March 2007 and CJTF-101 in April 2008 as the unit headquarters shifted from division to division) synchronized the tactical operations with allied reconstruction and relief initiatives. On September 18, 2005, the soldiers of CJTF-76 replicated the previous year's electoral success by ensuring a largely peaceful parliamentary election.

A CAMPAIGN IN TRANSITION, 2006–2008

Although the Bush administration wanted to ensure that terrorists could not return to using Afghanistan as a base of operations, the pressing need for more troops in Iraq convinced the U.S. government to make major changes to Operation Enduring Freedom. To rebalance their forces, in late 2004 the Americans proposed that NATO expand the ISAF mandate beyond Kabul to encompass the entire country. Even as the U.S. military prepared to remove most of its forces from Afghanistan, it planned to maintain troops in Regional Command–East (RC-East) and continue training the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF).

The Bush administration's decision to hand over responsibility for the campaign from ISAF to NATO changed the overall trajectory of Operation Enduring Freedom in unanticipated ways. Although most NATO members agreed to send troops to Afghanistan for a yet-to-be-determined period of time, individual nations retained the right to decide

how their forces were employed. This arrangement allowed civilian authorities to veto military directives that their electorates would not support. The bifurcated nature of ISAF command and control led to inertia on the battlefield as military leaders sought common ground with politicians at home before launching aggressive operations. The Taliban subsequently exploited the fissures that emerged within ISAF in order to regain the strategic initiative in Afghanistan between 2006 and 2008.

A soldier from the Arizona Army National Guard provides security during a canal assessment mission with the Nangarhar PRT, November 2007.

The deliberate nature of the handover provided all parties involved with the time needed to prepare for a new phase in the Afghan conflict. The process began in October 2004, when the Americans transferred control of Regional Command–North (RC-North) to ISAF, followed by Regional Command–West (RC-West) in September 2005. Safeguarding the first Afghan national elections consumed both ISAF and American attention through October 2005. Following the election, which returned President Hamid Karzai to office, the U.S. military sought to shift responsibility for Regional Command–South (RC-South) in spring 2006.

During the handover process, forces from more than one nation replaced those of others in specific regions. The NATO mission in Afghanistan also had a different mindset from the American approach in Afghanistan: rather than nation building supporting military operations, NATO's military operations would support nation building. That method stemmed from the alliance's experiences in the Balkans, where delivering goods and services to the populace strengthened support for the rule of law. In contrast to the American approach, the ISAF viewed PRTs, rather than infantry and artillery units, as the most important component of maintaining security. Successful transitions in RC-North and RC-West seemed to validate that approach to security in Afghanistan.

The final phase of the transition began in early 2006, when a Canadian task force deployed to Kandahar in southern Afghanistan. The Canadians were to operate under temporary American control until sufficient NATO forces arrived to take charge of RC-South. At that point, ISAF would next take control of RC-East in a largely symbolic handover. The NATO Allied Rapid Reaction Force staff in Kabul would assume command and control responsibilities for RC-East, rather than having troops from other countries replace the Americans.

The United States rotated its maneuver forces as the Canadians arrived. The American contingent in early 2006 consisted of Maj. Gen. Jason K. Kamiya's CJTF-76, built around the Southern European Task Force headquarters. The 10th Mountain Division, commanded by Maj. Gen. Benjamin C. Freakley, took over as CJTF-76 on February 21 at Bagram Air Base. The outgoing 1st Brigade, 82d Airborne Division,

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAMS

PRTs are ad hoc civil-military organizations dedicated to building support for allied governments and American military operations by improving the livelihood of the local populace in a specific province. Normally led by a field-grade military officer, American PRTs in Afghanistan included civilian aid and governance experts, military-civil affairs specialists, engineers, medical staff, public affairs professionals, and logistics experts, with an infantry platoon as security. Although ISAF PRTs had similar orientation and makeup, they often were more robust because some NATO nations saw these forces as the centerpiece of their contribution.

turned over RC-East to the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Task Force Spartan). The 1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, and the Canadian-led PRT in Kandahar City under Brig. Gen. David Fraser took over RC-South from the Southern European Task Force's departing 173d Airborne Brigade. The Canadians agreed to take temporary responsibility for RC-South until the British could redeploy enough troops from Iraq to Afghanistan to assume control of the region.

The Canadian deployment went smoothly, but other ISAF contingents headed for RC-South encountered problems. In the Netherlands, a months-long parliamentary debate prevented the Dutch military from assuming responsibility for Uruzgan Province as scheduled. This delay prompted the British government to temporarily hold off on its own troop deployment until the political issues affecting the Dutch contingent's arrival were solved. In an effort to show support for the Canadians while also reassuring both the British and the Dutch, CENTCOM dispatched to RC-South a composite U.S. organization consisting of the 10th Mountain Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team headquarters, a reinforced infantry battalion task force, and some logistics units. In anticipation of RC-South coming under ISAF control, the 4th Brigade commander became head of the U.S. national command element for that region while also acting as General Fraser's deputy.

The Dutch issue was not the only challenge that ISAF faced in RC-South; a contingent promised by the Romanian government also failed to arrive on schedule. That problem proved easier to solve: in March,

REGIONAL COMMAND–SOUTH

The U.S. (and later ISAF) command known as RC-South covered Daykundi, Helmand, Kandahar, Nimroz, Uruzgan, and Zabul Provinces, as well as a nearly 900-kilometer stretch of border adjoining Pakistan. The outlying terrain is flat and arid, becoming more rugged north and west of the city of Kandahar, and mountainous in Daykundi Province. The Helmand and Arghandab Rivers feed the region's fertile, irrigated farmlands. The population is overwhelmingly Pashtun with small Hazara and Baluchi minorities. Quetta Shura (Afghan) Taliban and gangs protecting opium fields were the main opponents of the region's ISAF forces.

the Americans dispatched the infantry battalion from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, to Zabul Province, where it waited several months for the Romanian mechanized force (Task Force Calugenari). The British contingent, consisting of Brig. Gen. Edward A. Butler's 16 Air Assault Brigade (Task Force Helmand), assumed responsibility for Helmand Province in April. Ultimate responsibility for completing the transfer of RC-South shifted to British General David J. Richards after he assumed command of ISAF in May 2006. Fortunately for Richards, CENTCOM agreed to deploy U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) to Uruzgan Province until Dutch troops (Task Force Uruzgan) arrived there in August.

Although the arrival of the Dutch troops completed the RC-South transition, unanticipated challenges began to emerge about 120 kilometers west of Kandahar city in Helmand Province. Some parts of Helmand are highly arid, but extensive areas are under cultivation, supported by a series of irrigation canals that Afghans had built with American assistance in the 1960s. However, in recent years, the residents of Helmand had turned from farming crops to the far more lucrative business of growing opium. The Taliban played a large part in orchestrating this transition: in a stark reversal of the antinarcotics strategy it had promoted before the September 11th attacks, it skimmed money from the drug trade to finance its struggle against the Karzai government. Unsurprisingly, the Taliban would fight to protect one of its main sources of revenue in Helmand. Consequently, when the British decided to create a secure area encompassing their main base at Camp Bastion, the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah, and the market town of Gereshk

by establishing fortified outposts at key locations, they soon came under constant Taliban attack. These direct assaults were unsuccessful, and so the Taliban sought to cut off the defenders from supplies by laying IEDs along access roads. As a result, the British had to rely on aerial resupply, despite the constant enemy threat against their helicopters. Although the insurgents did not force the British to retreat, fighting around the village of Musa Qa'lah was so unrelenting that tribal elders brokered a mutual withdrawal by the 16 Air Assault Brigade and the Taliban by September.

The Taliban, keenly aware of the difficulties experienced by the ongoing ISAF transition in southern Afghanistan, began targeting Afghan government forces, administrative centers, and the arriving foreign troops. In response to the rising enemy activity, ISAF planned to attack an enemy concentration in Panjwa'i District, about thirty kilometers west of Kandahar city. Dubbed Operation Medusa, the main effort consisted of three Canadian infantry companies supported by a battalion from the 205th ANA Corps. The Canadians also gained permission to use Special Operations Task Force 31 (SOTF-31), consisting of a company headquarters and two operational detachments drawn from the 1st Special Forces Battalion, 3d Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces Regiment, aided by Afghan militia, to conduct a supporting attack to the west. Because General Richards felt that the plan lacked sufficient combat strength, General Freakley detached two U.S. rifle companies to support the Canadians.

The Taliban had made extensive defensive preparations after deducing ISAF intentions, and so Medusa encountered difficulties during its opening stages. The step-off on September 2, 2006, went well, with the attackers establishing positions southeast of a group of farming villages known as Pashmul as the artillery struck suspected enemy positions. However, ISAF reconnaissance efforts did not uncover the Taliban defenders sheltering near Pashmul in covered trenches and bunkers along the thickly vegetated northern bank of the Arghandab River. The following day, inaccurate reports of dispersing Taliban prompted the Canadians to attack earlier than planned. They expected that the Taliban forces would follow their standard tactic of avoiding decisive engagement. Instead of a fleeing enemy, however, the ISAF troops encountered stubborn defenders opposing them from camouflaged bunkers. Following a seven-hour fight, the Canadians pulled back to the southern bank of the Arghandab, having suffered four killed and the loss of several armored vehicles.

While the Canadian forces recovered, SOTF-31 gave the coalition an unexpected opportunity to reclaim the initiative. A small force of eighty-nine U.S. SOF and ANA soldiers assaulted a large hill, Sperwan Ghar, which dominated the entire Medusa operating area. After being repulsed on their first attempt, the combined force took the hill on September 6 and dug defensive positions, expecting a Taliban counterattack. The arrival of additional special operators and infantry from the 10th Mountain Division soon aided the SOF and their Afghan counterparts. Bolstered by the reinforcements, along with artillery and air support, the SOF task force established a firebase atop Sperwan Ghar. They repulsed repeated Taliban efforts to retake the hill, with the attackers suffering hundreds of casualties, including the loss of eight senior commanders.

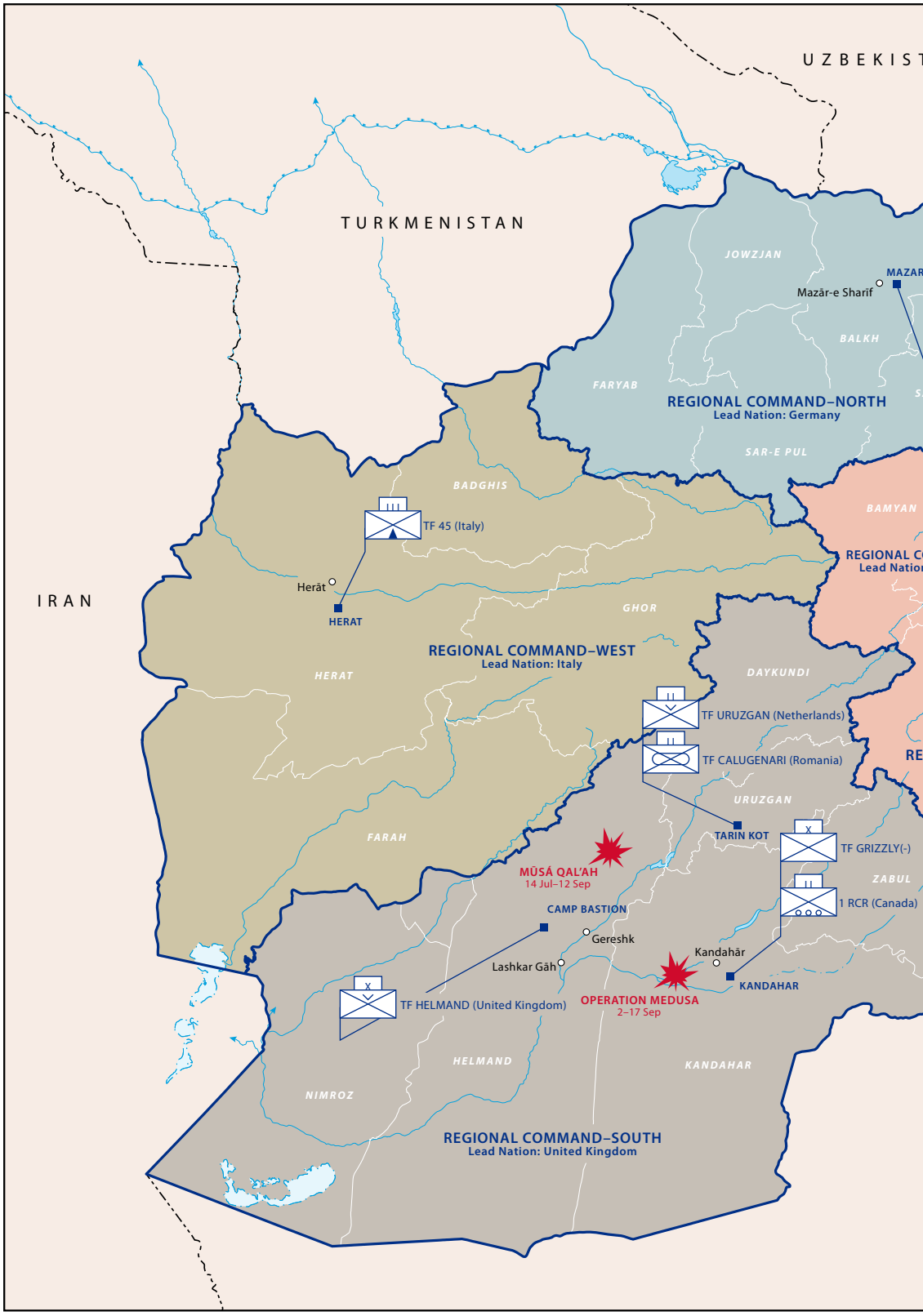
The dramatic victory at Sperwan Ghar led to major changes to the Medusa plan. Following the arrival of Task Force Grizzly, a composite

force of the Alaska Army National Guard's 207th Infantry Group headquarters and the 297th Support Battalion under Col. R. Steven Williams, the Canadians prepared for a renewed assault. With SOTF-31 securing the high ground to the southwest and Williams' troops holding the attention of the main enemy force along the river, the Canadians shifted their infantry to the north in order to strike at the defenders from an unexpected direction. The attackers established a line of advance, identified Taliban targets, destroyed them with air and ground fire, and then sent the infantry forward to repeat the process. As the Taliban lost cohesion, on September 10 the combined task force secured Pasab, northwest of Pashmul, setting the stage for MEDUSA's final phase.

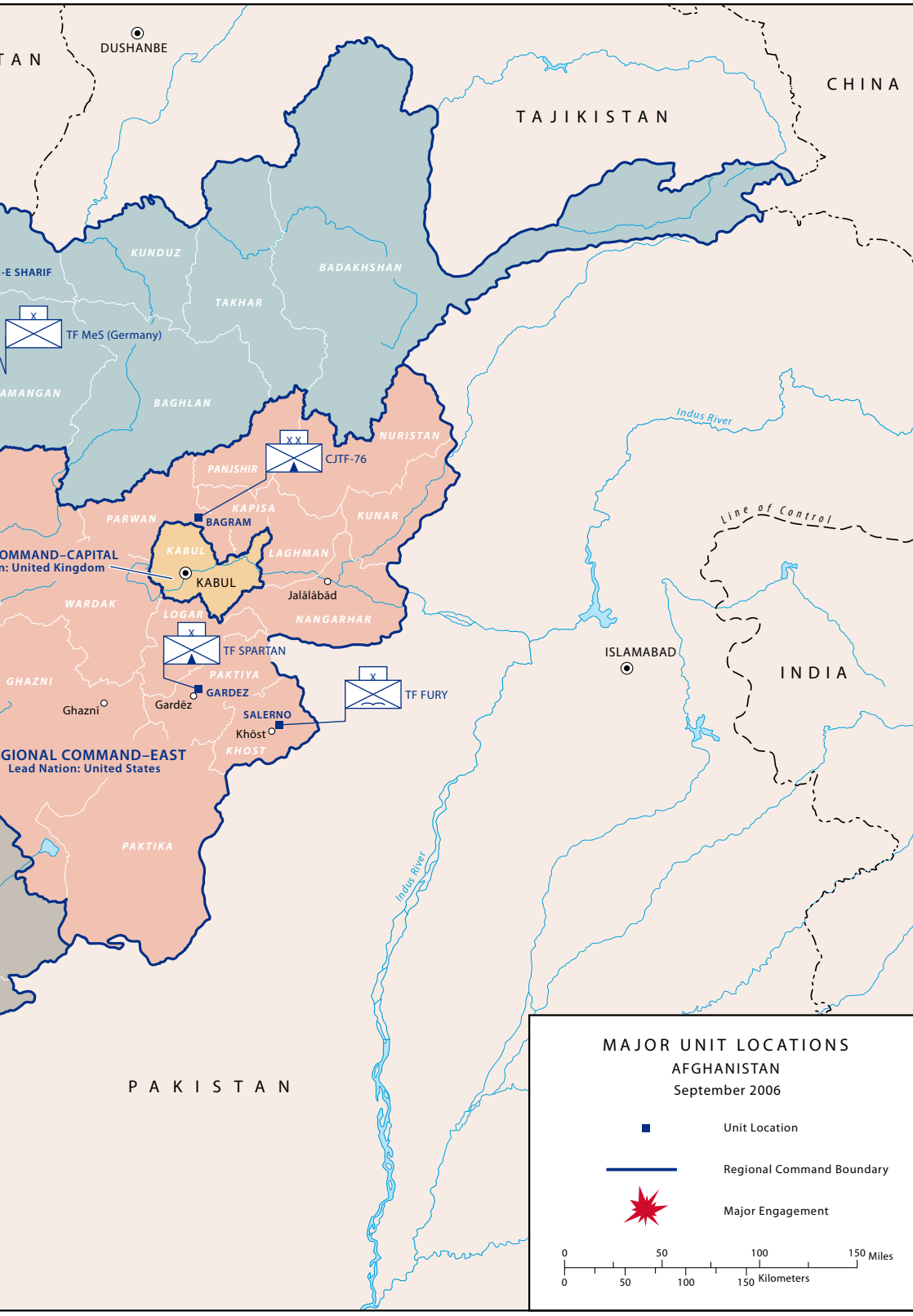
By September 11, Fraser began preparing for the end of Operation MEDUSA. With his northern battle group, aided by SOTF-31, clawing its way south, and Task Force GRIZZLY directing fire on the Taliban from the south and southeast. Fraser ordered Williams to launch a supporting assault on the crumbling enemy position. Against weak resistance, Williams led his men across the river, swept north, and then turned east to seize Bayenzi, immediately south of Pashmul. Meanwhile, the battle group to the north continued its attack. As the Taliban defenses around Pashmul collapsed under the pressure of Williams and the northern task force, Fraser ordered the SOF atop Sperwan Ghar to enter the fight from the southwest on September 12. He designated them as the new "main effort" and "allotted them priority on artillery, aviation, and everything else." When the special operators and Afghan allies forded the river, supported by two ANA companies and a U.S. rifle company from 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, they discovered that the surviving Taliban had departed. As villagers returned to their homes around Pashmul, General Richards announced that Operation MEDUSA had been a success. CJTF-76 then withdrew U.S. conventional forces from RC-South for duty in RC-East (*Map 38*).

Although the Canadian offensive alleviated some of the pressure on Kandahar, by October the Taliban's constant attacks against the British prompted Task Force HELMAND to agree to withdraw from one of the district centers it occupied if the Taliban followed suit. The arrangement, put forward by war-weary locals, called for a temporary cease-fire followed by the withdrawal of all combatants. The Americans openly criticized the decision to negotiate with the enemy, but the British leaders realized they had underestimated Helmand's security needs. The experience convinced London that reconstruction efforts could not flourish unless combat forces established a secure environment. Determined not to repeat earlier miscalculations, the British Ministry of Defence augmented 3 Commando Brigade Royal Marines with 870 additional combat troops, armored vehicles, heavier weaponry, more helicopters, and more aggressive rules of engagement before it relieved 16 Air Assault Brigade in October.

The end of 2006 brought major changes within the Bush administration as Robert M. Gates replaced Donald H. Rumsfeld as secretary of defense. Soon after Gates took office, he delayed redeployment of the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, so it could reinforce Maj. Gen. David M. Rodriguez's incoming 82d Airborne Division. The Fort Drum soldiers would augment the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division (Task Force FURY), during the initial four months of the paratroopers' tour of duty. On February 2, 2007, Rodriguez changed command with General Freakley, and CJTF-76 was redesignated as CJTF-82.


UZBEKIST
TURKMENISTAN
IRAN
JOWZJAN
MAZAR
Mazār-e Sharīf
BALKH
FARYAB
REGIONAL COMMAND–NORTH
Lead Nation: Germany
SAR-E PUL
BADGHIS
TF 45 (Italy)
Herāt
HERAT
GHOR
REGIONAL COMMAND–WEST
Lead Nation: Italy
HERAT
BAMYAN
REGIONAL C
Lead Natio
DAYKUNDI
TF URUZGAN (Netherlands)
TF CALUGENARI (Romania)
URUZGAN
TARIN KOT
TF GRIZZLY(-)
ZABUL
1 RCR (Canada)
FARAH
MŪSÁ QAL'AH
14 Jul–12 Sep
CAMP BASTION
Gereshk
Lashkar Gāh
Kandahār
KANDAHAR
OPERATION MEDUSA
2–17 Sep
TF HELMAND (United Kingdom)
HELMAND
KANDAHAR
NIMROZ
REGIONAL COMMAND–SOUTH
Lead Nation: United Kingdom

Map 38


DUSHANBE
TAJIKISTAN
CHINA
KUNDUZ
BADAKHSHAN
TAKHAR
TF MeS (Germany)
BAGHLAN
NURISTAN
CJTF-76
PANJSHIR
KAPISA
PARWAN
BAGRAM
KUNAR
KABUL
LAGHMAN
KABUL
Jalālābād
WARDAK
LOGAR
NANGARHAR
TF SPARTAN
PAKTIYA
GARDEZ
Gardēz
Ghazni
SALERNO
Khōst
KHOST
TF FURY
Indus River
Line of Control
ISLAMABAD
INDIA
PAKTIKA
PAKISTAN
MAJOR UNIT LOCATIONS
AFGHANISTAN
September 2006
Unit Location
Regional Command Boundary
Major Engagement
0 50 100 150 Miles
0 50 100 150 Kilometers

GENERAL DAN K. MCNEILL (1946–)

General McNeill assumed command of the ISAF on February 4, 2007. Originally commissioned as an infantry officer through ROTC at North Carolina State University, McNeill commanded airborne infantry units at the company, battalion, brigade, division, and corps levels. In addition to his earlier service as commander of CJTF-180 in Afghanistan, he participated in Operations Just Cause, Desert Shield/Desert Storm, and Uphold Democracy. His ISAF command was the first NATO assignment in his career.

The United States assumed leadership of the ISAF on February 4, 2007, when General Dan K. McNeill replaced Richards as ISAF commander. General Karl W. Eikenberry's tenure as CFC-A commanding general had ended two weeks before on January 21. Because the NATO personnel that had made up the core of the ISAF staff departed with Richards, CENTCOM inactivated CFC-A to provide the personnel and equipment needed to reconstitute ISAF. In addition, once CFC-A inactivated, CJTF-82 assumed responsibility as the national command element for U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

Having served as the CJTF-180 commander during 2002 and 2003, McNeill was no stranger to Afghanistan. Yet even though he understood many of the challenges facing the ISAF, he now commanded a coalition force facing an enemy that was determined to take advantage of the changing course of a sustained campaign. Acknowledging the many problems inherent in the ISAF command and control architecture, McNeill spent a great deal of effort, with mixed results, trying to achieve greater unity of command. The complex nature of ISAF command and control did not stem exclusively from operational caveats imposed by European politicians. Although the United States placed fewer restrictions on its military forces, some American policies made it more difficult for ISAF to act in unison. American security force assistance programs, for example, remained under Operation Enduring Freedom because of legal restrictions on funding. American government agencies, such as the State Department, also contended with legal and administrative obstacles that prevented them from fully integrating with their international counterparts.

General McNeill recognized that despite Operation Medusa, the Taliban had renewed the pressure on the Canadians. The enemy now avoided a direct confrontation, instead choosing to infiltrate the territory surround-

ing Kandahar city as a preliminary step to laying siege to it. In response, McNeill deployed his Theater Tactical Reserve, the 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, detached from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, to RC-South. The American unit provided the Canadians and the British with the additional combat power needed to wrest both key terrain and the tactical initiative away from the Taliban.

As the situation in RC-East changed, CJTF-82 modified its campaign plan. The 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team (Task Force Bayonet) returned to Afghanistan in late spring 2007 to replace the 3d Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Rodriguez deployed one of the two brigades under his control in the volatile northeastern portion of RC-East. The other brigade split its focus between the

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 508th Infantry Regiment, provide security during a meeting at the district center in Sabari, Khost Province, March 2007.

REGIONAL COMMAND–EAST

RC-East, which shares a 725-kilometer border with Pakistan, encompasses Bamyan, Ghazni, Paktika, Paktiya, Panjshir, Parwan, Nangarhar, Kunar, Kapisa, Khost, Laghman, Logar, Nuristan, and Wardak Provinces. The area is interlaced with smugglers' trails, which enemy forces used to supply the Haqqani Network and Hezb-e Islami Gulbuddin insurgents operating in Afghanistan's northeastern and central regions. Although the population is predominantly ethnic Pashtun, Tajik, and Hazara, up to 400 different tribes reside there. The Hindu Kush and Safed Koh mountains dominate the region, compartmentalizing its terrain and making ground movement difficult.

Observing possible enemy positions near Forward Operating Base Naray, Kunar Province, July 2007.

provinces east of Kabul and the Pakistan border after insurgents began attacking Afghan Border Police units. The Americans shifted only a portion of their force because intelligence analysts believed that the attacks were designed to draw ISAF troops away from Taliban efforts to surround Kabul in order to intimidate residents and attack Karzai government officials.

CJTF-82 changed its plans again as the winter approached. Rodriguez sought to take advantage of the seasonal lull in insurgent activity to expand security operations and make areas hostile to insurgents when they returned the following spring. The 173d Airborne Brigade Combat Team launched operations in several key districts to maintain a constant ANSF and coalition presence. The 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, first turned its attention to Khost Province while continuing its border security and interdiction efforts in Paktika Province. In mid-December, Task Force Fury pushed westward from Khost while securing critical lines of communication around Kabul. The CJTF-82 effort began winding down in early March as General Rodriguez prepared for the transition to his successor.

SPEC. SALVATORE A. GIUNTA (1985–)

A member of Company B, 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment, Specialist Giunta distinguished himself in action against Afghan insurgents on October 25, 2007. Giunta and his unit were ambushed while patrolling the Koren-gal Valley. Seeing his squad leader fall, Specialist Giunta disregarded intense incoming fire to administer first aid. While searching for a missing member of the patrol, he killed one insurgent and wounded another who had been attempting to drag off the wounded soldier. The Army recognized Giunta's exemplary courage, selflessness, and decisive leadership with the Medal of Honor.

The transition began with soldiers of Task Force Fury turning over their area of responsibility to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Task Force Currahee), in March 2008. In early April, Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schloesser, commanding the 101st Airborne Division, assumed responsibility for RC-East from General Rodriguez as head of the newly renamed CJTF-101. The 3d Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division (Task Force Duke), arrived three months later to replace Task Force Bayonet in northern RC-East. Both of the newly arrived modular brigades consisted of more than 3,000 soldiers serving in two maneuver battalions, a reconnaissance and surveillance squadron, a field artillery battalion, and other supporting units.

Soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82d Airborne Division, conduct a dismounted combat patrol in Ghazni Province, April 2007.

In addition to transferring the fight for RC-East to the 101st Airborne Division, General Rodriguez passed his responsibility as U.S. national command element to his replacement. Both Schloesser and Maj. Gen. Robert W. Cone, who led Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC-A), reported directly to the secretary of defense along the OEF command chain. CSTC-A provided training and security force assistance for the Afghan military and police. However, CJTF-101 also fell under ISAF control, and both the task force and its subordinate units conducted full-spectrum operations—a variety of missions that included combat operations, training allied forces, and nation building—to enhance Afghan security, governance, and development.

BATTLE OF WANAT

As Task Force Bayonet handed over the northern sector of RC-East to Task Force Duke in early summer 2008, the situation in the area was increasingly tense, particularly in the valleys branching off from the Pech River. It had been a trying experience for Lt. Col. William Ostlund's 2d Battalion, 503d Infantry Regiment. Upon its arrival, Ostlund's battalion had assumed responsibility for a number of isolated outposts from the 10th Mountain Division. These outposts had been established to allow patrols to interdict enemy supply routes while also acting as a conduit between the Kabul government and rural population. Once the Americans established contacts among the locals, the paratroopers' interdiction efforts grew more successful, and the enemy responded by increasingly targeting U.S. forces.

As their tour of duty wound to a close during early summer 2008, the paratroopers concentrated on turning over the battlespace to Task Force Duke. Well before the actual handover, Ostlund sought to relocate Combat Outpost (COP) Bella from the isolated upper reaches of Waygal Valley to a new position closer to the battalion's headquarters at Camp Blessing. From there, the battalion could hold the entrance to the Pech Valley from the

Waygal Valley. After months of negotiating, the Americans finally secured a local agreement to construct a vehicle patrol base in the village of Wanat, seven kilometers from Camp Blessing. The village was home to the district governor and police chief, and could be accessed by both road and air.

CJTF-101 approved Ostlund's proposed realignment in the Waygal Valley in late June 2008, and the move from COP Bella to Wanat began on July 8. Helicopters removed personnel and equipment from Bella while a platoon from Company C along with several dozen Afghan soldiers departed Camp Blessing for Wanat. Upon their arrival, the mixed force started building perimeter walls and firing positions. The forty-nine American members of the garrison occupied the northern portion of the new outpost, while the Afghan army contingent and their U.S. marine advisors staffed the southern half. The paratroopers, however, did not know that the decision to leave Bella preempted a deliberate assault against that position by less than a day. Rather than abandon their plans, the enemy began moving toward Wanat. Within four days, the insurgents succeeded in repositioning the original assault force near the outpost without being detected.

The enemy force, estimated at 200 or more fighters, launched a blistering assault against Wanat on the early morning of July 13. Antitank rockets blasted the base's heavy weapons systems, disabling a Humvee mounted antitank missile launcher and the outpost's 120-mm. mortar. Before the initial assault, the attackers used the cover of the area's rough terrain to approach to within hand-grenade distance of an observation post beyond the main perimeter, and took advantage of the opening volley to overrun the fire team at that post. For several hours, both sides fought fiercely for possession of the main perimeter, until the insurgents broke off in the face of attacks by fixed-wing close air support and AH–64 Apaches. Nine Americans were killed, most either defending the observation post or trying to reinforce it, and another twenty-seven were wounded. The Taliban also suffered casualties during the unsuccessful attempt to take the outpost, but were able to evacuate most of their dead and wounded. (*See Map 39.*)

The incident at Wanat garnered widespread attention when the father of the American platoon leader killed in the engagement blamed his son's death on poor decisions by the brigade and battalion chain of command. The grieving father, himself a retired U.S. Army colonel, gained sufficient support from influential members of Congress to trigger a formal investigation. CENTCOM conducted multiple inquiries into the events at Wanat, and following these inquiries the Army issued letters of reprimand to the company through brigade-level chain of command. However, a well-reasoned appeal by Colonel Ostlund eventually led to all reprimands being withdrawn.

Nonetheless, the attack on Wanat was a warning that positioning small groups of American troops in Afghanistan's rural areas was increasingly risky. Because of local hostility toward foreign troops, the Americans abandoned their outpost in favor of launching patrols into the valley from Camp Blessing. Although senior American commanders sought to minimize the risks to deployed units, U.S. forces in Afghanistan continued to face resource constraints as more support went to higher-priority missions in Iraq. The harsh terrain of RC-East also made it far more difficult to respond to unanticipated enemy activity.

THE CONTINUING FIGHT IN RC-SOUTH

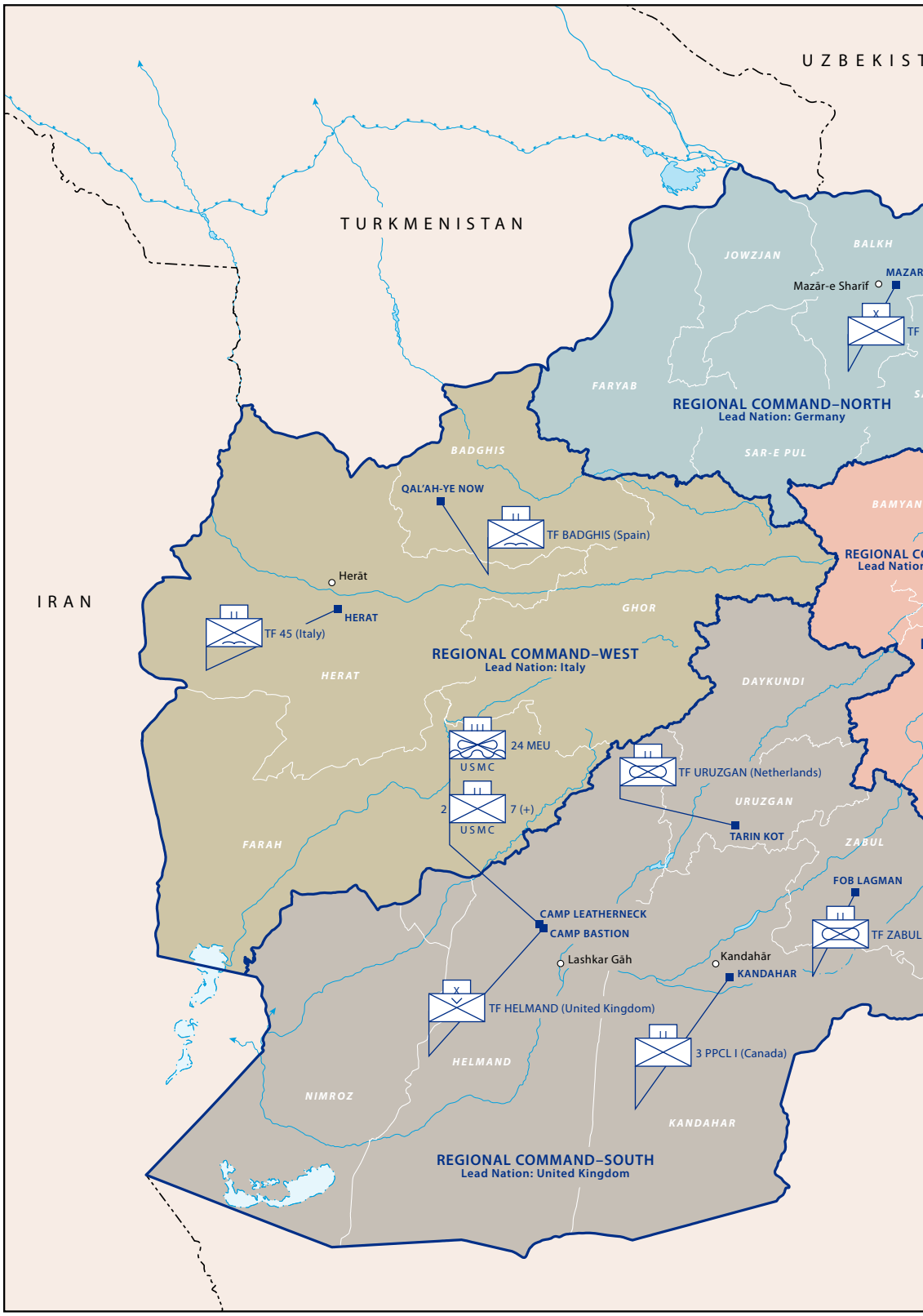
Although American reinforcements had helped the British in Helmand during 2007, ongoing problems in that region convinced the Bush administration to send more troops to aid its closest NATO ally. In January 2008, the Pentagon announced that it would send the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines (Reinforced), and 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) to Helmand in the spring. The arrival of the marines considerably increased the ISAF footprint in Helmand. The 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit alone consisted of a reinforced infantry battalion (1st Battalion, 6th Marines) augmented by tanks, artillery, Harrier attack aircraft, and helicopters. Soon after establishing a position in southern Helmand, the marines launched an aggressive campaign to drive a concentration of Taliban fighters from Garmser District.

Even as the fighting in Helmand remained intense, the Taliban in RC-South continued to focus on isolating Kandahar City. On June 13, 2008, a surprise attack on the city's Sarposa Prison freed around a thousand prisoners, four hundred of which were Taliban fighters. Following the prison break, the Taliban began to move intelligence agents, suicide bombers, large caches of weapons, and small groups of fighters into the city. The new arrivals targeted police stations on the outskirts of Kandahar, killing some officers and prompting many more to flee.

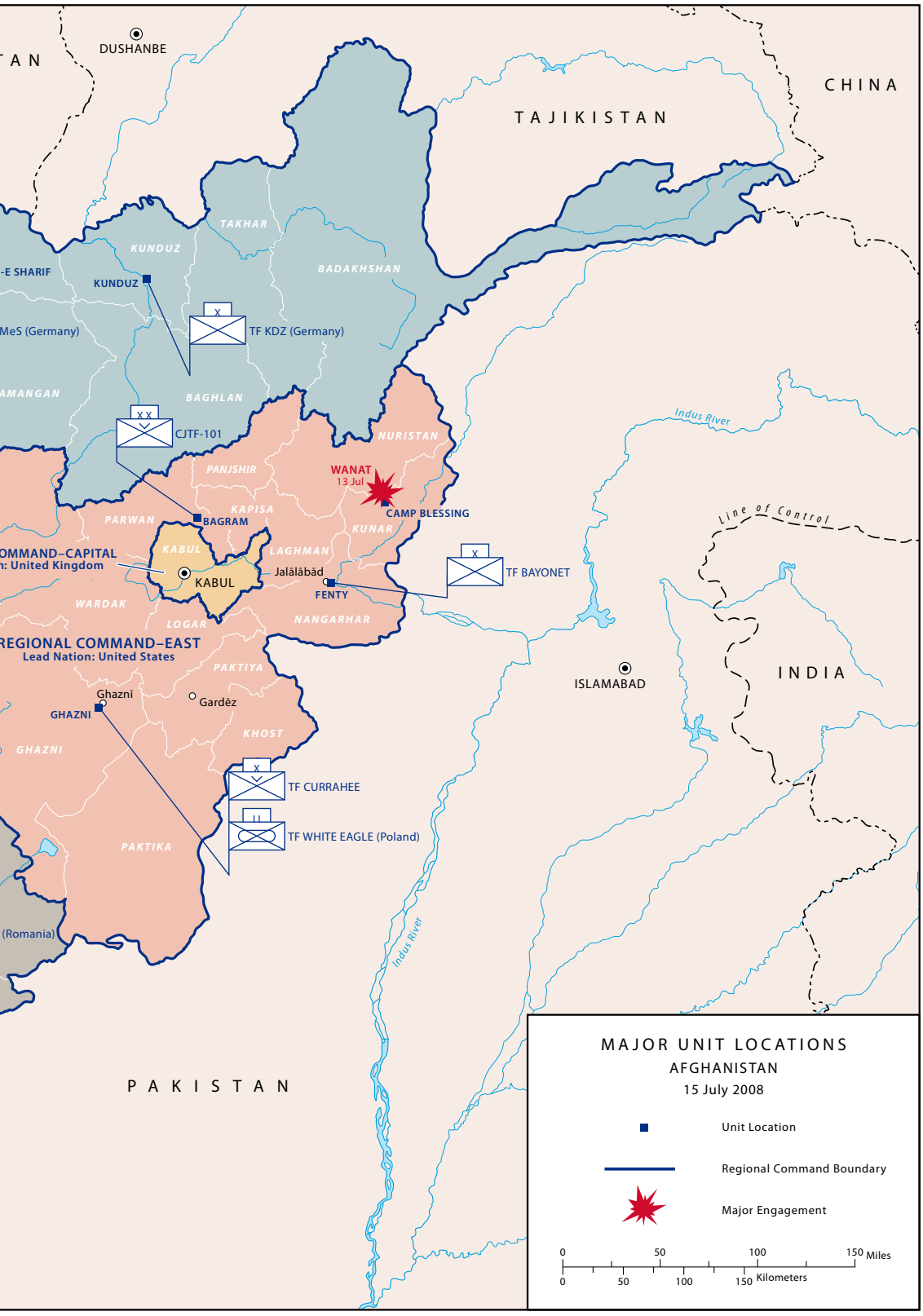
On June 3, 2008, the worsening situation in southern Afghanistan became the responsibility of General David D. McKiernan, who replaced McNeill as ISAF commander. Although McKiernan recognized the need to stabilize RC-South, he initially focused on RC-East. The incident at Wanat had confirmed his belief that CJTF-101 was operating at or beyond its capacity. In October 2008, McKiernan formed a new headquarters, known

GENERAL DAVID D. MCKIERNAN (1950–)

General McKiernan led USAREUR for two years before assuming command of ISAF on June 3, 2008. He entered the Army in 1972 after being commissioned in Armor through ROTC. During his career, McKiernan served in numerous troop and command positions in Europe, the Continental United States, Korea, and Southwest Asia. His assignments included duty in 1st and 2d Infantry Divisions, 1st and 3d Armored Divisions, 1st Cavalry Division, VII Corps, and 3d U.S. Army. In March 2003, McKiernan commanded the coalition ground forces in Iraq that toppled the government of Saddam Hussein.


UZBEKIST
TURKMENISTAN
IRAN
JOWZJAN
BALKH
MAZAR
Mazār-e Sharīf
TF
FARYAB
REGIONAL COMMAND–NORTH
Lead Nation: Germany
SAR-E PUL
BADGHIS
QAL'AH-YE NOW
TF BADGHIS (Spain)
BAMYAN
REGIONAL C
Lead Nation
Herāt
HERAT
TF 45 (Italy)
GHOR
REGIONAL COMMAND–WEST
Lead Nation: Italy
HERAT
DAYKUNDI
24 MEU
USMC
TF URUZGAN (Netherlands)
URUZGAN
2
7 (+)
USMC
TARIN KOT
FARAH
ZABUL
FOB LAGMAN
CAMP LEATHERNECK
CAMP BASTION
TF ZABUL
Lashkar Gāh
Kandahār
KANDAHAR
TF HELMAND (United Kingdom)
3 PPCL I (Canada)
HELMAND
NIMROZ
KANDAHAR
REGIONAL COMMAND–SOUTH
Lead Nation: United Kingdom

Map 39


DUSHANBE
CHINA
TAJIKISTAN
TAKHAR
KUNDUZ
BADAKHSHAN
KUNDUZ
TF KDZ (Germany)
BAGHLAN
CJTF-101
NURISTAN
PANJSHIR
WANAT
13 Jul
CAMP BLESSING
KAPISA
PARWAN
BAGRAM
KUNAR
KABUL
LAGHMAN
Jalālābād
KABUL
FENTY
TF BAYONET
WARDAK
LOGAR
NANGARHAR
REGIONAL COMMAND–EAST
Lead Nation: United States
PAKTIYA
Ghazni
Gardēz
GHAZNI
KHOST
GHAZNI
TF CURRAHEE
TF WHITE EAGLE (Poland)
PAKTIKA
(Romania)
Indus River
Line of Control
ISLAMABAD
INDIA
PAKISTAN
MAJOR UNIT LOCATIONS
AFGHANISTAN
15 July 2008
Unit Location
Regional Command Boundary
Major Engagement
0 50 100 150 Miles
0 50 100 150 Kilometers

U.S. soldiers fire mortar rounds at suspected Taliban fighting positions during Operation Mountain Fire in eastern Nuristan Province, July 2009.

as United States Forces–Afghanistan (USFOR-A), to be the administrative nerve center for both CSTC-A and CJTF-101. The CJTF-101 commander, however, believed the change resulted from McKiernan's discomfort with a subordinate having direct access to the secretary of defense. Regardless of motive, the restructuring centralized administration and reporting, and also helped forge closer ties between McKiernan and the American elements under his command.

With American attention fixed on RC-East, the Taliban shifted its fighters to Helmand Province for a counteroffensive, *Operation Ebrat* (Lesson), designed to secure lines of communication, exert influence over the drug trade, and promote the Taliban's political authority. On October 11, a Taliban force of around 150 to 200 fighters attacked Lashkar Gah. Although more than sixty enemy fighters died in the ensuing battle, the brazen assault demonstrated the Taliban's willingness to exploit any sign of complacency and weakness in the Afghan security forces.

The outbreak of fighting at Lashkar Gah reinforced McKiernan's belief that "whatever the strategy had been, was, and might be in the future, whatever azimuth changes; it was an under-resourced strategy." McKiernan's viewpoint received support when a new National Security Council study, directed by Army Lt. Gen. Douglas E. Lute, recommended deploying more forces to Afghanistan to allow ISAF to switch from counterterrorism operations focusing on enemy forces to counterinsurgency operations designed to separate the enemy from the population. McKiernan's repeated requests for additional troops finally persuaded President Bush to send another brigade to RC-East and some additional forces for RC-South in late 2008. However, Bush deferred sending more than two brigades in order to give maximum latitude to President-elect Barack H. Obama, who took office in January 2009.

TRANSFORMING WHILE AT WAR

The campaign requirements of the Global War on Terrorism understandably had an effect upon Army transformation. Generals Gordon R. Sullivan, Dennis J. Reimer, and Eric Shinseki (in the first half of his tenure) had believed that they were in an interval between wars and that they had been afforded an opportunity to prepare for the next one. Operations in Latin America and the Balkans and security requirements around the globe needed daily attention, but the lion's share of their focus could be on the future. Prolonged campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq forced current operations back into top priority, and new balances had to be struck if the Army was to maintain momentum toward transformation.

By the time General Peter J. Schoomaker became Army Chief of Staff in the summer of 2003, there already was considerable fluidity between the test-bed 4th Infantry Division (Mechanized) experimenting with the most modern digital technologies, the Interim Brigade Combat Teams anticipating Shinseki's Objective Force, and the larger army in the field. Updated versions of many of the advances were available to improve upon legacy equipment. Schoomaker's experience was grounded heavily in the Special Operations community and its marked ability to draw off-the-shelf technology for immediate use. Shinseki's Transformation Campaign Plan had, of course, been used to generate technology to draw upon, especially as more money became available in times of crisis. Believing that the term Objective Force implied a neatness of time frames that would be impossible to sustain in wartime, Schoomaker dropped the use of the terms Objective Force, Interim Force, and Legacy Force in the favor of Current Force and Future Force, while maintaining most of Shinseki's program intact. The Army was no longer in an interval between wars, and technical advances would be applied as quickly as was practical. Development of the Future Combat System would continue, but innovations intended for it would be applied to existing vehicles as well, when practical.

General Schoomaker

The Operation Iraqi Freedom experience related by Lt. Col. John W. Charlton, commander of Task Force 1/15 Mechanized Infantry, offers a graphic example of migrations of technology from selected units to the Legacy Force at large, in this case the 3d Infantry Division (Mechanized). Contractors had adapted the full-up Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Battalion (FBCB2) digital system into a simplified version, called the BLUEFOR tracking system, and installed it in key leader vehicles throughout the division. As Charlton's task force first rolled into combat, he gave little attention to the small screen installed in his turret and instead relied on the old standby of 1:100,000 map sheets—thirteen of them mounted on 18 × 24-inch map boards with task force graphics superimposed.

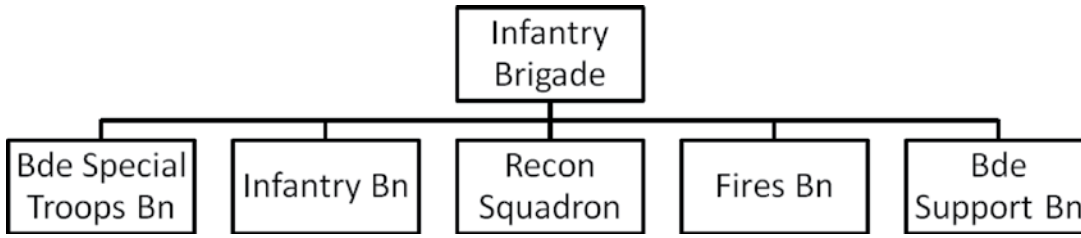
This worked satisfactorily, even with interruptions when crossing from one map sheet to another while on the move, until the task force was drawn into an unexpected hot fight for the town of As Samawa. The 1:100,000-scale maps had no usable detail of As Samawa as an urban area; the task force had no overhead imagery of it either, since it had not intended to fight there. FBCB2, on the other hand, offered digital imagery allowing the viewer to zoom in and out and appreciate the streets in whatever scale. A few days later the task force was caught in the huge sandstorm south of Baghdad. With visibility near zero, vehicles with FBCB2 were nevertheless able to navigate through the sandstorm, following their own plot on the screen as they worked around obstacles and key terrain. For the rest of the campaign, Charlton never used another paper map product. As the campaign progressed, such digital technology became so popular, pervasive, and generally used that the theater as a whole became concerned with lack of sufficient satellite communications bandwidth to accommodate all users. The experience nevertheless underscored the pace at which the Current Force could take advantage of developments intended for the Future Force.

Technology was not the only venue for transformation efforts, of course. Another was achieving an appropriate balance in the expectations of the reserve components. Since the Vietnam War, the National Guard and the

MODULARITY

To meet the force requirements of units constantly rotating to Iraq and Afghanistan, in September 2003 the U.S. Army began converting from an organization centered on divisions numbering from 10,000 to 18,000 soldiers to one based upon brigades totaling at most 3,900. Each division would create four separate brigades mixing combat, combat support, and combat service support in the same brigade to make each capable of independent operations. Each brigade was also "modular" in the sense that as many separate brigades as necessary for a particular mission could be plugged into any division headquarters. The means for doing this became known as *Modularity*, which the Army defined as a design methodology aimed at creating standardized, expandable Army elements capable of being tailored to accomplish virtually any assignment. The new units would be as capable as their predecessors, but they would also be able to transform to meet a broad range of missions. Over the fifteen months that followed, the service completed a design, tested it, and then deployed the first of forty-five new modular brigade combat teams to Iraq.

CHART 3—ORGANIZATION OF A MODULAR INFANTRY BRIGADE, SEPTEMBER 2004



Source: Adapted from *Army Comprehensive Guide to Modularity*, vol. 1, version 1.0, 8 October 2004, p. D–2.

organized reserve had increasingly transitioned from being an inventory of units that could reinforce the active component to being enablers that rounded out the active component's capabilities and were essential for its success from early in an operation. Since Desert Storm, the reserve components had consistently deployed as an important fraction of every major mission and had even routinely assumed some overseas missions.

Since 9/11, many National Guardsmen and reservists had been called up for homeland security and for operations overseas, with the mobilization being particularly large and lengthy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. By September 2003, 144,000 guardsmen and reservists were on duty, with 28,000 of these mobilized for homeland security. Personnel requirements in Iraq dictated a twelve-month tour actually in that country, more than doubling the six-month mobilization many had come to expect. Many reserve component soldiers were mobilized for two years. Not without a sense of humor, a number of reservists in Iraq made national television with a battle-weathered truck sporting the jaunty slogan, "One Weekend a Month—My Ass!!!" Clearly, the operational tempo was muddying the

distinction between service in the active and reserve components. Soldiers who thought they had volunteered in cases of major national emergency now found themselves continually on call. The Army had to reexamine the force structures, roles, and missions of the reserve components if recruiting was to sustain itself in an atmosphere of trust.

The reserve components were challenged not only by the sheer numbers being called up, but also by departures from familiar systems whereby mobilizations and movements were managed and tracked. During the Cold War, contingency planning had been dominated by the expectation of gigantic slugfests in Central Europe and Korea. Comprehensive war plans identified the units involved in elaborate detail and gave each an appropriate mission. Courses of action were supported by an automated time-phased force deployment list (TPFDL) that assured an appropriate mix of combat, combat support, and combat service support units throughout a buildup and married deploying units and transportation in the most efficient manner. TPFDL was the apotheosis of detailed planning, and therefore a bit cumbersome: once initiated, it ran on like a vast and not particularly compromising machine.

The executors of Iraqi Freedom wanted more internal flexibility than TPFDL tended to allow. In some cases, for political reasons, they wanted force packaging to restrict overall force flow, accelerate the arrival of some types of units, decelerate the arrival of other types of units, and rapidly adjust deployment sequences as circumstances suggested. Enormous strides with respect to information management, the argument went, should enable far more flexibility with respect to force flow. Unfortunately, dramatic changes on short notice in the midst of a wartime deployment did not work well. The finite physical hardware of airlift and sealift could not morph as quickly as force packages could be redesigned; hasty reconfigurations typically did not allow for appropriate combat service support. During the invasion of Iraq, troops were not allowed to move through Turkey, which put additional stress on an already challenged deployment. To many a guardsman and reservist, the result seemed to be chaos, with soldiers mobilized in accordance with the TPFDL waiting idly for weeks or months, rushing overseas only to find they had not been time-phased with the arrival of their equipment, or finding an imbalance between the scope of their mission and the resources available. The situation got worse when troops already away from their jobs and families for months awaiting deployment were told they would have to stay at least a year in Iraq to meet force requirements.

The inconveniences associated with the abandonment of TPFDL underscored another of Schoomaker's priorities, the development of more modular units. For generations the combined-arms framework of choice had been the division, the lowest level with a robust representation of all branches and services. It was also the lowest level at which significant joint operations were feasible. This worked well when one's adversary was also a massive multidivisional force. The experiences in the Balkans and Afghanistan and during Iraqi Freedom suggested the need to deploy smaller, nimbler, self-contained units—tactical and operational "small change"—to fit contingency circumstances. Reimer and then Shinseki had experimented with alternate possibilities. The combined-arms framework of choice came to be the brigade combat teamteam. Schoomaker approved of this development, intending it to be more agile than the previous brigade

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combat teams. Subordinate units would be trained to a high standard with the expectation of quickly mixing and matching units to achieve precisely tailored solutions for any type of combat.

Modularity tracked with yet another transformation: unit manning. Since 1907, the U.S. Army had relied on individual replacements to keep units up to strength overseas and in turbulent or casualty-prone circumstances. The system had its advantages and disadvantages. Its critics argued that constant back-and-forth movement of individual soldiers degraded unit cohesion and guaranteed a rapid loss of the value added by combat experience or training. A half-dozen times since World War II, the Army had experimented with systems featuring unit manning and rotation, wherein soldiers stayed together as a unit for a long time and deployed together, without success for various reasons. The emphasis on modularity, the nature and scale of recurrent deployments overseas, and improvements in airlift and sealift all seemed to argue for yet another attempt to make unit manning work. Planners believed that the smaller, nimbler, superbly equipped and painstakingly trained units of the transformed Army should profit from the further cohesion unit manning would bring.

CONCLUSION

By the end of 2008, the United States had been engaged in the Global War on Terrorism for just over seven years. During that time, broad preparations for a variety of possible post–Cold War operations focused quickly on specific adversaries and identified missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Horn of Africa, and the Philippines. At the same time, the Army could not afford to ignore continuing missions where the presence of U.S. headquarters and units were essential to maintaining worldwide U.S. commitments to peace and stability. U.S. Army units continued their watch in South Korea, maintained a peacekeeping battalion in the Sinai, kept a corps headquarters and several brigades in Germany, sustained an active engagement policy in South America, and staffed an essential institutional training base in the United States, all with fewer than 550,000 active soldiers. The continual pace of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan would stretch the force to greater limits than expected as rotation followed rotation in the largest series of unit movements in Army history. The strain on families, the training base, recruiting, retention, equipment, and units continued throughout those years, with only a glimmer of hope at the start of 2009 that the pace might slow in the near future. The Army continued to evolve and transform itself into a more powerful force with new technology that could be ready for the next adversary while coping with the current ones. Expanding only slightly in size (from 485,000 in 2001 to nearly 550,000 at the start of 2009), the active force, powerfully supplemented by the strongest and most heavily deployed reserve and National Guard structure since World War II, was tested and tested again and proved up to its tasks. With no near-term closure in sight, transformation, modernization, and warfighting would have to go hand in hand as the Army continued to prepare itself for whatever missions the nation would ask of it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What impact did the events of September 11, 2001, have on the U.S. Army? How ready was the Army to respond to the initial challenges of the Global War on Terrorism? How did this war increase the need for joint operations?

2. What was the key to success in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom? How did the small numbers of U.S. ground troops in Afghanistan achieve such a quick result, and what can we learn from that success?

3. To what extent was the invasion of Iraq justified by the Global War on Terrorism? What were some other reasons for our attack on Iraq, and how persuasive were they?

4. The rapid military success of Operation Iraqi Freedom was followed by the extensive involvement of the Army in peacekeeping, occupation duties, and nation building. To what degree was the Army prepared to take on these roles?

5. To what extent does the Army role in the homeland security of the United States blur the lines of authority between strictly military and civic authorities in domestic affairs? What are some of the dangers of greater military involvement in such matters?

6. In what ways and how well did allies and alliances play in the Global War on Terrorism?

7. How has the Global War on Terrorism affected the continuing Army Transformation?

8. How did the NATO and CENTCOM missions differ in Afghanistan?

9. How did national and coalition chains of command coexist in Afghanistan and Iraq? How were they similar and different between the two countries?

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