

Running Head: U.S. MILITARY NOT PREPARED TO EXECUTE PRIMARY MISSION

U.S. Military Not Prepared to Execute Its Primary Mission

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Class 58

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18 March 2008

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Outline: U.S. Military not prepared to execute its primary mission at the outbreak of hostilities of Operations.

Thesis: We didn't have contingencies for after combat actions.

- I. How did we get involved in this war
 - a. Disarming Iraq
 - b. U.S. Government and its support
- II. U.S. Military readiness for war
 - a. Lessons learned from other wars
 - b. Operation Desert Shield & Storm
 - c. Operation Gothic Serpent
- III. NCO involvement in training the force
 - a. Leadership responsibility
 - b. NCO's not sticking to standards
- IV. Prepared for our primary and follow missions
 - a. Police and borders
 - b. Office of Humanitarian and Reconstruction Affairs
- V. Conclusion

Abstract

The U.S military has repeatedly been unprepared to execute its primary mission at the outbreak of hostilities. We have been prepared for the initial outbreak of any war. I think we have not been prepared for the aftermath of the invasion. We, the United States, have a bad habit of not really learning from history. My question would be why we don't? Is it our leadership that should understand? Do our military leaders learn from our past mistakes? We spend a lot of time in our schools studying previous lessons learned.

U.S. Military Not Prepared to Execute Its Primary Mission

The objectives for getting involved in the Iraq war were to disarm Iraq weapons of mass destructions. We also needed to end Saddam's total support of terrorism. The terrorist had already caused damage to America and its people and our way of life. The third objective was to free the Iraqi people from a dictator.

I would say that the attack on America already had our Government impatient. We had some intelligence that Iraq was still making weapons of mass destruction. We sent in inspectors who were denied access to inspect. We imposed sanctions that were ignored. Saddam just did what he wanted to do to make himself look as if he was not scared of the United States.

Our government had full support of the invasion because we had some clear objectives before starting the initial invasion in Iraq. Other countries were opposed to this. But they didn't get attacked like the United States. Some other countries stated that there was not enough evidence to invade Iraq. Other countries in the United Nations did not participate in this war. I think it was due to fear of repercussions from Iraq.

We as a military force were ready to invade. I don't think we were ready to sustain operations for a long period of time. Our initial goal was to get to Bagdad and take down the regime of the Ba'ath party. We were traditionally trained for a force on force war. We were trained that the enemy was on the other side and we are going to get them. Meaning we had a distinct force we were up against. So we trained as such at the National Training Centers and the Joint Readiness Training Centers. We really thought we had this figured out.

Desert Shield / Desert Storm

We were going off of past history, Desert Shield and Desert Storm which took place in 1991. That was a good and a bad war. This was a good war because of the decisive victory.

The noncommissioned officers were directly held responsible for the training of the all Soldiers. They were at all the training centers preparing the Army for that war. They were providing the force with key lessons learned and Soviet Doctrine.

It did not take long to finish the ground war. Yet, we were still unprepared to handle all of the prisoners of war we came across during the ground campaign. We had to set up a lot of make shift detainee facilities to control the flow. Then the decision was made to just disarm them and let them walk back to Bagdad. We were not prepared for the follow on mission. We did liberate Kuwait and push the Iraqi army out of that country.

We cannot be totally prepared for everything that goes on after the outbreak of a major conflict. But we should have contingences to act upon once we have finished our initial goal for that country we are fighting in or for. Again could we blame this on not leaning from history or just being too powerful of a military force? Our leaders are the people that make these decisions at the strategic level.

Operation Gothic Serpent

Operation Gothic Serpent in Mogadishu, we can say that we weren't prepared for what we got into. We underestimated the force we were against. We went in that country to help the people of Mogadishu; they were being control by warlords and local young gangs. They could not live their lives in any form of freedom. The warlords and the gangs were killing people because they could without any form of repercussion.

Those two days in October really weren't good for the force that we sent to Mogadishu. Whatever could go wrong went wrong, from the time of going after the targets to the time they had to fight their way back to the stadium. The Somalis seemed to have some intelligence on

what we were about to do. They were prepared to fight. They block off a lot of the roads to the place where the targets were located.

The U.S. forces that were involved in this mission were basically from the Rangers, Delta, Air Force PJ, and one Seal team. They were trained for this type of operation. They were not prepared for contingency. According to reports they didn't take night vision devices because of weight. They also didn't have the plates in the IBA vest. That was leadership's fault, noncommissioned officers and the officers.

Can this be blamed this on the preparedness of the mission? They were prepared properly, they just didn't enforce policies such as the chicken plates in the IBA, no night vision devices, but they had to fight at night. They were outgunned and outmanned. They really didn't have a clear understanding of the enemy. The leadership on the ground messed this one up.

This operation was very hard to execute due to the lack of forces that went into this country. The noncommissioned officer did the best he could with what he had. The leadership did not arm those noncommissioned officers with the best intelligence they could use or have. I am not letting the noncommissioned officers off the hook, in regards to the uniform and the equipment needed for that particular operation. That was our fault we could have saved some lives out of the seventeen that gave their lives.

Here is where we weren't prepared for our primary mission. I talked about three different combat operations. Operation Iraq Freedom, Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm and Operation Gothic Serpent; in all of these operations we incurred the same issues after the initial mission was concluded. We were not prepared for stability operations after we went into a country.

Large scale breakdowns in the public order should have been anticipated in the aftermath of an intervention. Events such as environments emerging from a brutal dictator like Saddam or anyone. United States military forces were not trained or equipped to control civil disorder or perform police actions. Was it really our responsibilities to handle that type of action? Or were we set up in the past only to fight and secure ground?

In the above mentioned operations the local police and security forces are not available or unable to deal with civilian violence and lawlessness. It happens here in the United, during the riots in California we had a police department but even they were unprepared. For Hurricane Katrina, we sent in the mighty fine 82ND Airborne to help out and secure sites.

We must understand without adequate planning and personnel, critical law enforcement needs will not be met, this will affect the success of the mission as we see today. Failure to control looting and civil disorder creates a bad climate and it encourages street crime and violence. We must remember that most of these people have been struggling before we came. This is one of the reasons we were there. The ordinary citizen left with no defense against crime. This in turn has second, third, and fourth order effects.

Another subject we weren't prepared or trained for was border operations. Effective border control is another key in restoring security in post conflict operations. Immigration controls and border patrols are the first line of defense against terrorism. We failed at this mission and now we have a major insurgency happening due to this situation. We now know that most of the insurgency is not coming from Iraq. It is coming from the surrounding countries. We should have secured the borders just after in initial invasion and we would have controlled the insurgency.

The blame for this lawlessness was not the military. The United States had a plan to deal with the reconstruction efforts of Iraq. They had left this up to General (Retired) Jay Garner and the staff at the Pentagon's Office of Humanitarian and Reconstruction Affairs (ORHA). They were under the assumption that the Iraq police and the regular army would stay on duty. The army would assume responsibility for security and maintain public order. This would enable forces to too deal with regime holdouts and pockets of resistance. But the army and police took their weapons and went home and into hiding.

The 3rd Infantry Division just stood by and let the people do what they wanted. We had no orders to stop them until it was too late. The (ORHA) took about twelve days to get to Bagdad. Our assumptions were wrong so then we had to adjust our plan. This did not happen quickly enough for the Iraq people.

Conclusion

The United States experienced similar an issue like Operation Iraq Freedom and Operation Just Cause. Here we had a model to make at least one of the courses of action or a contingency but we didn't. Instead we assumed something else. Has the United States overcome the fundamental obstacles to achieving force readiness prior to the commencement of combat operations? We have done a good job of adjusting to this conflict. We will make adjustments during training for the next war. I would safely assume that we are and will stay prepared for the so called unexpected. We know history.