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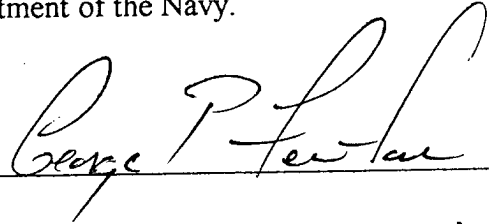
-- MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNITS (SPECIAL OPERATIONS CAPABLE) --
AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL IN
MILITARY OPERATIONS OTHER THAN WAR

by

Lieutenant Colonel George P. Fenton USMC

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the the Department of the Navy.

Signature: 

16 June 1994

(Date of graduation at the Naval War College)

Paper directed by Captain D. Watson
Chairman, Joint Military Operations Department

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Abstract of

MEU (SOC)-- AT THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL IN MILITARY OPERATIONS
OTHER THAN WAR

The Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) is best known as enabling force designed in size and strength to seize airfields and ports for follow-on forces that will transplace from far off distances. The most noted capability of the MEU is the Non-Combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO). To any of these ends, the MEU, a sea-based force, stands poised ready to respond to NCA tasking. Yet, in times of regional crises when military operations other than war (MOOTW) seems to be the action du jour, is the MEU not capable of more? This paper presents, through analysis of the Somalia case study, how a MEU can be employed at the operational level of war, specifically in MOOTW. Selected aspects of military art are analyzed. More specifically, the MEU is discussed in terms of *operational objective, operational task, operational maneuver, operational reach, and operational isolation*. The MEU, traditionally recognized as a tactical unit, is able to transcend the tactical, operational, and even the strategic levels of war. In the final analysis, the MEU, a force of tactical means, is capable of operational consequence.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNITS

-- ON THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL IN MOOTW --

INTO THE 1990's AND FORWARD NAVAL PRESENCE	1
ON THE EDGE.....	2
SOMALIA-- THE BACKGROUND	4
SOMALIA-- UNITAF and UNOSOM II.....	4
ON THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL IN MOOTW ...in support of UNITAF.....	5
ON THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL IN MOOTW ...in support of UNOSOM II	11
OPERATIONAL VALUE	12
END NOTES	14
BIBILIOGRAPHY	16

APPENDICES

ARG/MEU CAPABILITY MISSIONS	A
SOMALIA, ARG/MEU MISSION SUMMARY	B
MAP OF SOMALIA	C-1
MAP OF KISMAYO HRS	C-2

MARINE EXPEDITIONARY UNITS
-- ON THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL IN MOOTW --

The bread and butter of the Marine Corps has always been the amphibious landing... Guadalcanal, Tarawa, and Iwo Jima of World War II, and the Inchon Landing of the Korean War are the more celebrated landings of 20th Century history. Even today, the Marines still continue to come from the sea. Reshaping the force in the 1980's, their "new world order" form is neatly packaged in relatively small tactical Marine Air-Ground Task Forces known as Marine Expeditionary Units.¹ But just what can such small forces do beyond the tactical capability inherent in their nature? Can a force of nearly 2200 Marines and sailors make a difference at the operational level of war? Can a tactically sized unit be capable of operational consequence? This paper addresses how the Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU (SOC)) has been employed at the operational level of war, specifically in military operations other than war. The 1992-94 Somalia relief effort serves as the primary case study.

INTO THE 1990'S AND FORWARD NAVAL PRESENCE

Two complementary strategic concepts, in support of the National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, are overseas presence and power projection.² *Forward naval presence*, a subset of overseas presence, is accomplished through the overseas deployment of Carrier Battle Groups (CVBGs) and Amphibious Ready Groups (ARGs) with embarked MEU (SOC)s. With an uprise in regional crises, the NCA expressions, "Where is the carrier?" and "Where is the MEU?", have become the intuitive crisis response phrases. Joint Task Forces (JTFs) have become the *modus operandi* for the unified commanders (CINCs) responding to regional crises. MEUs and CVBGs find themselves as the force centerpieces for the Commander of the Joint Task Force (CJTF). Regional crisis response, typically in the realm of Low Intensity Conflict, is the present expectant form of conflict. Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW), is the term du jour³. Yet, just what can a

MEU force offer the CJTF at the *operational level* of war in MOOTW? MEUs are best known as enabling forces designed in size and strength to seize air fields and ports for follow-on forces. The mettle of the MEU is the amphibious raid built around a reinforced rifle company designed to come from the sea, over-the-horizon, to operate at night in complete electronic silence, and to execute the mission within six hours of being told to do it. Because of such versatility, flexibility, and speed, the MEU is capable of operational consequence. Although the MEU's tactical worth can be expounded in a discussion of its 21 mission profile, the discussion herein remains on the operational level.

ON THE EDGE

"*Send in the Marines*" are the prideful words uttered throughout the United States of America when international times of trouble have pierced the domestic tranquillity of everyday America. Most notably, since the 1991 Gulf War, Marines have continued to capture headlines when our nation's leaders have committed troops to far off shores. For example, four varied employments of MEU forces have captured national attention.

1) In April 1991, at the onset of Operation Provide Comfort, the 24th MEU (SOC) formed the nucleus for Joint Task Force Bravo under Combined Task Force PROVIDE COMFORT, the multi-national relief effort to provide humanitarian aid and security to the Kurds in Northern Iraq.

2) In April 1992, the 24th MEU (SOC) assisted Italian efforts to save the Sicilian town of Zafferana Etnea from an advancing lava flow by utilizing helicopters to transport and drop concrete slabs into volcano vents in order to stem and alter the lava's course.

3) In December 1992, the SPMAGTF CENT (SOC)⁴ made their celebrated landing on the shores of Green Beach, Mogadishu, as American forces were once again committed to foreign shores in pursuit of national interests to promote our own traditional values; and

4) in April 1994, elements of the 11th MEU (SOC) were instrumental in the humanitarian relief operations in Rwanda.

With the exception of the first example, each of these employments was a news-bit action that served to promote national interests (and was justifiably deserving of laudatory praise), but did not necessarily reflect the essence of utilizing the MEU at an operational plane in MOOTW.⁵ However, one other particular case, the employment of the 24th MEU (SOC) in support of Operations RESTORE HOPE and CONTINUE HOPE in Somalia, does provide meaningful insight. As presented in the analysis, the full range of the MEU (SOC) tactical capabilities best lent themselves to the operational aspects in MOOTW. To provide a framework for analysis, the definitions presented in Figure 1 serve as the basis by which the MEU will be discussed in terms of operational art.

*OPERATIONAL TERMS*⁶

- **Operational Objective** is the one whose attainment would bring about a drastic change in a situation in a given theater of operations.
- **Operational Maneuver** is defined as the combat deployment of one's own friendly forces and assets to create a decisive impact on the outcome of a major operation or campaign.
- **Operational Isolation** of an area of operations or theater of operations is accomplished by interdicting uncommitted enemy forces and logistical sustainment.
- **Operational Task** may encompass mobilization, pre-deployment activities, deployment of forces and assets, employment (operational concentration and maneuver, initial and successive battles/operations, and consolidation of operational success), sustainment, conflict termination, post-hostilities actions, redeployment, reconstitution, and demobilization.
- **Operational Reach** is the distance over which military power can be concentrated and employed decisively.

Figure 1

SOMALIA-- THE BACKGROUND

In the latter years of the 1980's, the country of Somalia began to experience wide spread dissension and mistrust of the Siad Barre government. Beleaguered by accusations of fraud, graft, and corruption, President Siad Barre was overthrown and the country fell into civil war. The people reverted back to their nomadic and clan-based heritage, with fighting breaking out among the 15 separate clans. The horror and plight of Somalia became overwhelmingly moving as CNN brought the horror of the civil war and its resulting famine to the world's center stage through TV journalism. President Bush, in the final months of his administration, committed U.S. troops in support of the United Nations' efforts to stabilize the country in order to safely resume the humanitarian relief effort. Aside from the political and civil turmoil and the tragic need for food, the country's vast geography posed a number of challenging problems.

The coastline of Somalia extends approximately 900 miles. In comparison to the United States, it covers roughly an equivalent distance from southern Maine to Jacksonville, Florida. The country is divided into three regional areas: southern, central, and northern Somalia. Southern Somalia, the most developed and populated of the three regions, is home to the two principal rivers that form the agricultural basin, and hosts the capitol of Mogadishu and the major southern port of Kismayo. This region, considered the most volatile as well as the most depressed, became the focus of effort. Central Somalia, an arid wasteland, was to follow once the southern region became stable, and then finally northern Somalia. During the conduct of operations spanning from December 1992 through March 1994, a Marine Expeditionary Unit, the 24th MEU (SOC), was the only operational force to be employed in all three regions, and each time in pursuit of a different operational objective.

SOMALIA-- UNITAF and UNOSOM II

In December 1992, the U.S. Central Command formed Joint Task Force (JTF) Somalia to conduct military operations in southern Somalia. The basic mission of the JTF was to provide a secure environment for the conduct of humanitarian relief operations.⁷ The

mission was named Operation RESTORE HOPE. The United Nations, which authorized the peacekeeping operation under UNSC Resolution 794, endorsed the United States as the principal state to lead the effort. The multinational force arrayed to begin the mission was known as the Unified Task Force, otherwise known as UNITAF. UNITAF, commanded by Lieutenant General Robert B. Johnston USMC, was to hand off the operation to a United Nations' force once southern Somalia was deemed stable. The United Nations force was known as UNOSOM II. Following the hand-off, UNOSOM II was to continue the relief effort into central and northern Somalia, thus the operational name, CONTINUE HOPE. The transition eventually took place in the first week of May 1993.

ON THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL IN MOOTW... in support of UNITAF

In March 1993, the 24th MEU (SOC) was deployed to the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR) for a six month assignment with orders to conduct bilateral exercises with Arab states of the Gulf region.⁸ Enroute to the Arabian Gulf, the MEU was scheduled for 10 days of familiarization/orientation training in Somalia in the event they were needed. Yet, because of the volatility of certain areas in Somalia, the CJTF obtained authorization from the CINC to have the MEU/ARG remain on station for what eventually became a period of nearly five weeks.

The MEU's first *operational tasking* was received as it sailed along Somalia's central regional coastline enroute to Mogadishu. Its mission-- show of force. According to intelligence reports, illegal arms were being smuggled into the country through central Somalia's small coastal towns, specifically Hobyo. Other illegal arms and munitions were suspected of coming across the border from Ethiopia, and then being transported down the singular hard surface road traversing the northern and central regions and crossing into the southern region. The concept of operations called for Harrier jets to fly routes along the inland road network, specifically along the main hard surface route that included the politically sensitive, central Somali town of Galcaio. A heliborne force consisting of Cobra

gunships, utility UH-1N aircraft, and CH-46 troop transports conducted visual reconnaissance directly overhead of Hobyo.

The daylight show-of-force mission served two *operational objectives*. First, the mission was to demonstrate to the central-region warlords the United States'/United Nations' resolve to curtail illegal arms flow through the introduction of a rapid, flexible military force that could come from the sea without warning; and second, to demonstrate that while southern Somalia was now becoming fairly stable, central Somalia would become the follow-on focus of effort. Up to this time, no U.S. or U.N. military force had been introduced into central Somalia. The CJTF, whose mission was expressly oriented on southern Somalia, did not want to introduce land forces into central Somalia, specifically at a time when UNITAF would begin transferring control over to UNOSOM II. To do so would distract from the specified mission to stabilize southern Somalia. Additionally, if troops became committed and engaged, the new operation could serve as a quagmire and make transfer of control all the more difficult. Although LtGen. Johnston was under political pressure from the United Nations to extend UNITAF operations into central Somalia (specifically to the town of Galcaio), it was not part of the ongoing security operation and it was clearly far beyond the UNITAF zone of action.

Galcaio was approximately 375 miles from Mogadishu and most likely would have required an intermediate support base. The cost to go to Galcaio would have been enormous; UNITAF would have had to expend indispensable resources, assets, and personnel needed elsewhere for continued stability operations in the south.⁹ The alternative solution was obvious-- a sea-based force, capable of *operational maneuver*, which could get in and out without tying itself down, and which could open the door for eventual military operations into the central region. A strong, visual signal could be given to the warlords that they were not impregnable. To this end, the MEU could explore and show a presence in central Somalia without distracting from the other operational forces of UNITAF. The operational maneuver signalled the "oncoming" of a major operation intended for central Somalia. The

decisive impact of operational maneuver in this particular instance, thus it could be argued, was gained in the preparation and signaling for the continuance of peacekeeping operations into central Somalia, rather than on the "outcome of a major operation" as suggested in the definition. Thus, the interpretation of the definition is taken liberally in the context of MOOTW. Complementing the operational maneuver of the MEU was its capability for *operational reach*.

The *operational reach* of the MEU, i.e., its ability to span great distances, was largely enhanced due to the flexibility inherent in the ARG. The ARG was simply able to sail up and down the coast and choose the optimum point from which to launch its aviation assets. Its reach was certainly far beyond what UNITAF forces may have been able to provide to the CJTF. Yet, the employment of the MEU provided the CJTF a means to satisfy, in part, the United Nations' desire to enter central Somalia without compromise of JTF forces fixed in southern Somalia. This is what the CJTF wanted; this is what he needed. In the words of LtGen. Johnston, "The MEU was a 'golden asset' diverse of ownership, which was directly responsible to the CJTF."¹⁰

Following their operation in central Somalia, the ARG/MEU arrived off Mogadishu to begin their 10 day orientation training. Within 24 hours, they were ordered to backload and sail for Kismayo, approximately 250 miles down the coast south of Mogadishu. At this point in time, UNITAF was in the final month of preparations for the transition to UNOSOM II.

One of the key criteria for the hand-off was that each of the nine humanitarian relief sectors (HRS) be stable. However, within the Kismayo HRS, friction and unrest between the two major regional warlords, Jess and Morgan, forebode an explosive situation that had potential to spill over to Mogadishu. Each had ties with Mogadishu warlords Aideed and Mahdi respectively. The Belgian contingent of the multi-national peacekeeping force had responsibility for the Kismayo HRS, but had neither the resources nor the personnel to stabilize any part of the vast area other than the city proper. LtGen. Johnston's order to the

24th MEU (SOC) was clear and mission-oriented-- stabilize the Kismayo HRS! The *operational task*-- stability of the Kismayo HRS-- was critical to the CJTF's desired end state of a stable "...environment in which the U.N. could assume full responsibility for the security and operation of the humanitarian relief efforts in [all of] Somalia."¹¹

The MEU defused Kismayo, and thus freed the CJTF to focus on Mogadishu which he considered the center of gravity.¹² Again, *operational maneuver* was a result of the nature and capability of the ARG/MEU. To this end, a decisive impact was made by deploying friendly forces to influence the outcome of a major campaign, i.e., the stability of southern Somalia. Operational maneuver was exercised by positioning the ARG off the coast of Kismayo, thus allowing the MEU to reach inward to the hinterland in order to conduct tactical operations against the warring factions. Successful in its military actions, the MEU's tactical operations as had operational consequence. In this instance though, operational maneuver was gained, in part, through *operational isolation*.

Operational isolation of the Kismayo HRS was gained by conducting military actions designed to keep the warring factions separated and disarmed, while at the same time initiating medical and dental programs designed to pacify the indigenous populace. (Kismayo warring factions could be viewed, in a sense, as uncommitted "enemy" forces, capable of not only disrupting the stability effort in their own region, but also of providing logistical sustainment, political initiative, and momentum to their respective Mogadishu allies.) The MEU's military and humanitarian actions created conditions for stability while lending credibility to the new on-scene force.

The operational advantage of the MEU was gained through its inherent tactical capability. Each of its three principle forms of entry from the sea was openly demonstrated in broad daylight. Some operations were broadcast well in advance through psychological operations (leaflet drops). Heliborne raids, long-range mechanized motor marches, and riverine small boat operations were conducted to demonstrate the MEU's force and firepower. Each tactical action was a signal to the warring factions that the MEU was capable of

"reaching out and touching someone!" A balance of military and humanitarian operations was conducted against both Jess and Morgan in order to show no favoritism.

Following the pre-announced show-of-force operations, the MEU transitioned to unannounced cordon and search raids with entry into the target area under the cover of darkness so as not to be predictable. Another reason for the change from advertised to surprise maneuvers was to demonstrate the seriousness and resolve of the MEU, on behalf of UNITAF, in actively enforcing peace between the warlords. Such an approach was in contrast to the Belgian concept of operations which focused primarily on permanent roadside check points and casual motor patrolling in the city of Kismayo.

The relatively small, tactical (sea-based) MEU was capable of *operational reach* throughout the vastness of the Kismayo HRS.¹³ Given the legs of its heliborne forces, the MEU was able to reach out to distances of 150 miles on a daily basis. In one particular instance, the MEU dispatched a 450+ manned, motorized-mechanized force on a two-day, 300-mile round-trip operation across the wastelands of the southern desert area. Their mission was to "reach out and touch" the Kenya border town of Dhoobley in order to get in the face of warlord Morgan. The rapid movement of a heavily mechanized force across the barren desert to Morgan's headquarters served two purposes. First, without warning, the MEU could place a substantially large, ground force in the far corners of his area of influence within a single day. (Morgan had already seen the lighter heliborne forces at his other stronghold of Hoosingow during a cordon and search raid. Kismayo, also under his control, was already subject to MEU foot patrols). Second, the MEU was *ably willing* to go to Dhoobley. Dhoobley was vital to Morgan because it was his entry point from Kenya into Somalia. (Intelligence reports suggested that Morgan had used Kenya as a refuge for his forces much the way the North Vietnamese had used Cambodia during the Viet Nam War.) By demonstrating an aggressive, offensive capability, the MEU hope to quell any thoughts Morgan may have harbored about stirring up trouble. Similar operations were mounted in

Jess's sector of influence against his strongholds in Jilib, Kamsuuma, Goob Weyn and Afamadow.

Each tactical mission was different. Mission force composition ranged from four to 1200+ men.¹⁴ However, the real tactical strength of the MEU was its raid force packages, built around the reinforced rifle companies which conducted nine cordon and search operations. Each raid company was backed up by a standby (reserve) rifle company, ready for insertion if needed. The raid forces were easily able to conduct their mission in the outlying villages¹⁵. And as with the operations in central Somalia, the air cover packages designed for close-in fires and close air support were the most visible and most intimidating. Thunderous and fast, the Harrier jets and Cobra attack helicopters commanded respect as they sliced through the stillness of the air space overhead. Such awesome displays of air power were unknown in these parts of Somalia.

The day-to-day tactical actions of the MEU, throughout the entire operational plane of the Kismayo HRS, eased the tension between Morgan and Jess forces. With the MEU engaged, the CJTF no longer had to worry about a potential second center of gravity.¹⁶ The MEU's successful accomplishment of its *operational task* contributed to the CJTF's *operational objective* of stability throughout southern Somalia. *Operational maneuver*, *operational reach*, and *operational isolation* were exercised and gained through the tactical capabilities of the MEU.

The MEU remained ashore from 27 March to 22 April, but loitered just over the horizon at sea for an additional three days just in case the warring factions acted up. Sailing north up the coastline passed Mogadishu, the MEU departed Somalia's waters just six days before UNITAF and UNOSOM II officially completed their transition on 4 May, 1995. In the military-operations-other-than-war of Somalia, the tactically structured MEU was clearly capable of operational consequence.

ON THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL IN MOOTW... in support of UNOSOM II

On 28 April 1993, the MEU/ARG departed Somali waters and sailed to the Arabian Gulf to commence the CINC-directed bilateral exercise program. Eight weeks later, the MEU returned to Somalia, following the June ambush and massacre of a Pakistani inspection force. The MEU, under the tactical control of the Commander, U.S. Forces Somalia,¹⁷ would act in support of UNOSOM II peacekeeping efforts. Aside from doing routine demolition and engineer work, the MEU was also asked to employ counter sniper teams at key points throughout the city of Mogadishu as tension mounted between warlord Aideed and UNOSOM II forces. However, two other operations can be considered of operational consequence.

At this juncture in the UNOSOM II effort, Aideed was identified as the responsible agent for the death of the 24 Pakistani soldiers killed in the ambush. As tensions mounted and stability in the city began to unravel, UNOSOM II offered a \$25,000 reward for the capture of Aideed. One course of action considered by Jonathan Howe, chief UN envoy in Somalia, and Turkish Lieutenant General Bir, Commander of UNOSOM II forces, and endorsed by U.S. Major General T.M. Montgomery, USA, Deputy Commander, UNOSOM II, was for military action against Aideed. Aideed's removal from Mogadishu was viewed as critical to regaining stability and peace throughout the city. Clearly, Aideed was the center of gravity. MGen. Montgomery had U.S. forces (trained for this type of operation) inbound from the United States. Until this force was "stood up" and ready for action, however, an interim team was available. 24 MEU (SOC) got the call. Within 24 hours of the initial meeting between MGen. Montgomery and Colonel M. Broderick, USMC, Commanding Officer 24th MEU (SOC), the MEU's Maritime Special Purpose Force (MSPF) executed a direct action mission against Aideed. Keyed by multiple informant sources, the MSPF launched from the deck of the USS Wasp (LHD 1) within 47 minutes of being notified of Aideed's suspected whereabouts. The mission was flawlessly executed, but the target was

not at the target site. While unsuccessful in obtaining the target, the MEU once again demonstrated its capability to pursue an operational objective. However, following the initial situation report back to CINCCENT, instructions were received to not engage the MEU again in this type of offensive operation. The MEU's purpose was to remain as a hip-pocket insurance force for situations of an extreme nature. With respect to targets of strategic sensitivity, such as Aideed, the approval for such a mission henceforth would remain at the four star level (i.e., the CINC), and would not be delegated to the on-scene Force Commander.¹⁸ Unfortunately, immediate communications for time-sensitive operations are not always guaranteed, and the mission was quietly canceled.

The final military action of operational consequence was the employment of the MEU in Bossaso (also known as Bender Cassim) located in northern Somalia along the coast of the Gulf of Aden. Recognizing that no U.N. effort had proceeded beyond the initial UNITAF boundaries of southern Somalia, UNOSOM II welcomed the opportunity to introduce U.N. sponsored humanitarian efforts into another region of Somalia. Over a period of about a week, the MEU completed a number of minor civil engineering projects, road improvement services, medical and dental programs, and good-will endeavors. The highlight of the visit was a MEU-Somali soccer game in which the MEU was soundly defeated. In this hour and a half spectacle, the entire stadium was jam-packed with local people. Unofficial estimates put attendance at 1500 people! The operational objective achieved with the visit to Bossaso was the auspicious introduction of relief efforts into another region of Somalia. (The distance between Bossaso and Mogadishu was approximately 700 air miles.) The strong endorsement and positive reception by local elders proved encouraging for continued U.N. peace operations to the north. The MEU operations in Bossaso had provided legitimacy for the United Nations in Somalia.

OPERATIONAL VALUE

As seen in this case study, the employment of MEU forces transcends the tactical, operational, and even strategic levels of war.¹⁹ However, not to be considered a panacea,

there are inherent challenges that tether MEU employment options. First, MEU (SOC) forces are sea-based and specifically designed to operate from the sea. When ashore, their life line is to the ARG, with whom they are natural, naval teammates. The consequence of the force ashore being dependent on its seaward teammate is thus a limitation. Second, their sustainment is bounded by 15 days of supply; hence, their staying power is relatively short. This too can prove to be a limitation without some form of resupply. In a regional crisis where there is a strong possibility for naval forces, the CJTF's (joint) staff should be cognizant of both the military capabilities and limitations of a MEU, and be able to propose its employment at the tactical, operational, and even strategic levels in military operations other than war.

The operational value of a Marine Expeditionary Unit in operations other than war was demonstrated by the performance of the 24th MEU (SOC) in Somalia. The operational aspects of *objective, maneuver, reach, and isolation* were all within its capability. The Somalia venture not only validated the strategic concept of forward naval presence, but clearly illustrated how the MEU can be utilized at the operational level in MOOTW.

END NOTES

¹ MEU (SOC) forces are tasked organized; the MEU's centerpiece is the Ground Combat Element consisting of a Battalion Landing Team (a reinforced infantry battalion). The Aviation Combat Element (a composite squadron of helicopter and Harrier jet assets) and the Combat Service Support Element are the other two major elements. A Command Element serves as the headquarters for the MEU. When formed with the Amphibious Ready Group, normally a Amphibious Squadron of three to five ships, the MEU is becomes a sea-based force capable of 23 missions. See appendix A for an ARG/MEU (SOC) capability mission profile.

² Department of Defense, National Military Strategy of the United States of America, February 1995, reprinted at the U.S. Naval War College, Joint Military Operations Department, Executive Summary, n.p.

³ MOOTW is defined, in part, as "...usually involv[ing] a combination of air, land, sea, space, and special operations forces as well as the efforts of governmental agencies and nongovernmental organizations, in a complementary fashion." See Department of Defense, Joint Publication 3-0, "Doctrine for Joint Operations", Washington D.C., 9 September 1993, p.V-1.

⁴ Because the 15th MEU (SOC) was not a "full-up" MEU, it was redesignated SPMAGTF CENT(SOC). In reality, the 15th MEU deployed with less than its prescribed number of personnel and Table of Equipment (T/E) due to shipping constraints, i.e., not enough amphibious shipping available for this particular deployment cycle. The acronym SPMAGTF CENT (SOC) stands for Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force, Central Command (Special Operations Capable).

⁵ The 1991 edition of the 24th MEU (SOC) is an exception to the general observation offered here. This edition of 24 MEU was instrumental in implementing the overall arching strategy of providing security and humanitarian assistance to the Kurds while keeping the Iraqi army at bay. See Colonel James L. Jones' article, "Operation PROVIDE COMFORT: Humanitarian and Security Assistance in Northern Iraq." The Marine Corps Gazette. November 1991, p. 99.

⁶ The first four terms are taken from Milan N. Vego, "Operational Art: A Book of Readings", ("Glossary of Operational Terms," p. 19; , "Fundamentals of Operational Design," p. 13; , "Fundamentals of Operational Design," p. 23, and "Naval Operational Art", p.14.), NWC 4001. Compiled at the U.S. Naval War College, Newport, R.I.: January 1995. The fifth term is taken from JCS Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations, September 1993, p.III-21.

⁷ Katherine A. McGrady. "The Joint Task Force in Operation Restore Hope", Center for Naval Analyses, CRM 93-114/ March 1994, p. 9.

⁸ The CENTCOM exercise program for Amphibious Ready Group/Landing Force 2-93 (the WASP ARG with 24 MEU (SOC) embarked) included exercises in Saudi Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar.

⁹ Telephone conversation with Lieutenant General R. B. Johnston USMC, Commander Marine Forces Atlantic (formerly Commander, Joint Task Force, U.S. Forces Somalia, Unified Task Force). Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. 1 May, 1995.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ McGrady, p. 13.

¹² LtGen. Johnston USMC, telephone interview.

¹³ The Kismayo HRS was roughly equivalent to 16,000 square miles. (A 150 mile square is 22,500 square miles by comparison.) Although seemingly vast, the major population centers were along the Juba River with 4 other outlying towns in the desert region itself. See Appendix B for a map of the Kismayo HRS.

¹⁴ The smallest mission profile was a deep reconnaissance team of 4 men; the largest was a cordon and search force of approximately 1200 men.

¹⁵ Never once was a round fired from a friendly or hostile weapon during any of the cordon and search operations. A successful tactic was to have each raid force accompanied by a medical/dental program designed to appease the town's elders, women, and children. The men folk, typically aligned with either Jess or Morgan, were not about to challenge the Marines, particularly if the town elders did not advocate such action.

¹⁶ LtGen. Johnston USMC, telephone interview.

¹⁷ Major General T.M. Montgomery, United States Army, served as Deputy Commander, UNOSOM II. As the senior U.S. commander in country, he was also dual-hatted as Commander, U.S. Forces, Somalia.

¹⁸ Telephone conversation with Lieutenant General T.M. Montgomery, USA, former Commander U.S. Forces Somalia, UNOSOM II. NATO Headquarters, Belgium, 4 May, 1995.

¹⁹ In telephone conversations with LtGen. Johnston and LtGen. Montgomery, each separately concurred that MEU actions, at times, can have "strategic" consequence. In this particular case study, the political sensitivity with regards to apprehending Aideed in the name of the United Nations could have had dynamic consequences. Such a military action eight weeks after the President's decision to withdraw combatant forces (i.e., UNITAF's departure), could have been a domestic as well as an international political embarrassment.

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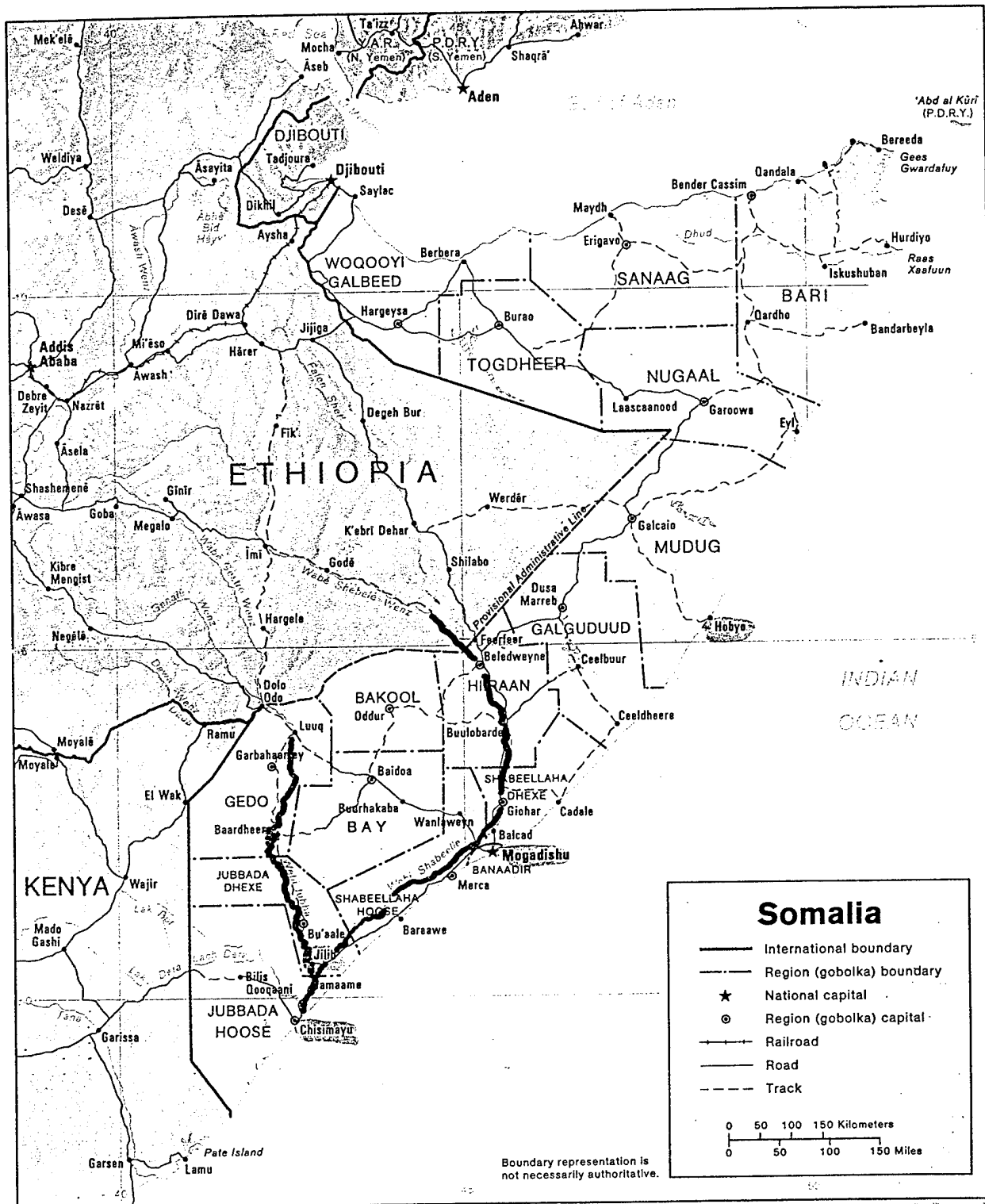
ARG/MEU CAPABILITY MISSIONS

- LIMITED OBJECTIVE ATTACK
- AMPHIBIOUS RAID
- SHOW OF FORCE
- NONCOMBATANT EVACUATION OPERATIONS
- REINFORCEMENT OPERATIONS
- SECURITY OPERATIONS
- MOBILE TRAINING TEAMS
- CIVIC ACTION OPERATIONS
- DECEPTION OPERATIONS
- COUNTERINTELLIGENCE OPERATIONS
- FIRE SUPPORT CONTROL
- INITIAL TERMINAL GUIDANCE
- TACTICAL RECOVERY OF AIRCRAFT,
PERSONNEL, EQUIPMENT
- SIGINT/EW OPERATIONS
- RECOVERY OPERATIONS
- IN-EXTREMIS HOSTAGE RESCUE
- SPECIALIZED DEMO OPERATIONS
- MILITARY OPERATIONS IN URBAN
TERRAIN (MOUT)
- AIRFIELD SEIZURE
- SHIP REINFORCEMENT
- MASS CASUALTY
- MARITIME INTERDICTION
- GAS/OIL PLATFORM OPERATIONS

SOMALIA

ARG/MEU MISSION SUMMARY

- 3 AMPHIBIOUS LANDINGS
- 2 MECH MOTOR MARCH SHOW-OF-FORCE
- 3 HELO CORDON AND SEARCH RAIDS
- 4 GROUND CORDON AND SEARCH RAIDS
- 2 MSPF (ONE PLANNED BUT NOT EXECUTED)
- 2 GROUND RECON
- 2 RIVERINE OPERATIONS
- 3 SMALL BOAT COASTAL INTERDICTION
- 2 FIRE SUPPORT CONTROL
- 3 AIRFIELD SURVEY
- 4 AV-8B AERIAL PHOTO RECON
- 2 TRAPS
- 21 CIVIC ACTIONS:
 - 3 GRAIN DELIVERY
 - 1 EARTHEN DIKE REPAIR
 - 6 ENGINEER/CONSTRUCTION
 - 11 MEDCAP/DENCAP (1479 PATIENTS)
- 2 MTT
- 9 SHIPBOARD SEARCH
- 12 DEMOLITION OPS
- 12 HYDRO SURVEY
- 15 NSW SPECIAL OPS
- 27 DAYS REINFORCEMENT OF EXTERNAL FORCES
- 42 DAYS SIGINT/EW OPS
- 50 DAYS COUNTERINTEL
- 6 DAYS COUNTERSNIPER
- 21 DAYS SPARROWHAWK (1 HR RESPONSE ISO UNOSOM)
- 959 ROTARY WING SORTIES
- 411 FIXED WING SORTIES



KISMAYO HRS

