

NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, Newport, Rhode Island

**HOW DID GENERAL SCHWARZKOPF APPLY THE NINE PRINCIPLES OF WAR?**

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract of

HOW DID GENERAL SCHWARZKOPF APPLY THE NINE PRINCIPLES OF WAR?

The principles of war do translate from the classroom to operational planning. Reviews of General Schwarzkopf's planning for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm provide excellent examples of their integration into an operational plan. One can also see how external factors affect the incorporation of the principles of war. Based on recognition of these external factors and the complexity of current operations, prior planning is suggested as the tenth principle of war.

## I. INTRODUCTION

While he was the Commander of Central Command during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, did General Schwarzkopf institute "the principles of war" in the operational planning for Desert Shield and Desert Storm? Army doctrine specifies nine principles of war that are essential for planning at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. But is this just book learning, or do these principles get carried out to the field?

The acronym commonly used to remember the nine principles of war is "MOOSEMUSS"—Mass, Objective, Offensive, Security, Economy of Forces, Maneuver, Unity of Command and Effort, Surprise, and Simplicity. Not one of the principles is a separate entity, but rather each is interrelated, interactive and interdependent. Depending on the operation, the principles will weigh differently in levels of importance during different phases of planning and operations. In looking at the planning for Desert Shield and Desert Storm, "MOOSEMUSS" is sequenced as "OUESOMMSS" (could be pronounced "awesomes"), by looking first at Objective, followed by Unity of Command and Effort, Economy of Force, Security, Offensive, Maneuver, Mass, Surprise, and Simplicity. A review of each principle includes its applicability in General Schwarzkopf's planning for both operations. The conclusion presents additional factors that influence the application of the principles of war, and proposes the addition of a tenth principle of war.

## II. OBJECTIVE

*Direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective.*<sup>1</sup>

The National and International responses to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait were rapid and direct in their objections and set the stage for formulating national strategic objectives. The National Security Advisor opened the National Security Council meeting on the third of August 1990 with a "strong admonition that the discussion of options would be based on the recognition that Iraq's invasion was unacceptable and if allowed to stand, would fundamentally alter the balance of power in a vital part of the

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<sup>1</sup>Department of the Army, *Field Manual 100-5*, (Washington, D.C.: 1993), 2-4.

world.”<sup>2</sup> The United States quickly put forth its National Strategic Objectives, which were widely publicized nationally and internationally: Iraq must withdraw from Kuwait completely, immediately, and without condition; Kuwait’s legitimate government must be restored; the security and stability of the Persian Gulf must be assured; American citizens abroad must be protected. The President, Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff plus additional advisors next met with General Schwarzkopf to define these objectives in operational terms. Again, at this meeting, the President reiterated his “concern for Kuwait and the plight of Americans trapped there. He also argued that Iraqi aggression could not be allowed to go unchallenged by the United States and the rest of the world.”<sup>3</sup> General Schwarzkopf was getting the insider’s view on the National Strategic Objectives, which he would carry into his planning. Five days after the Iraqi invasion, the President approved the deployment of combat forces to Saudi Arabia, under the Secretary of Defense directive assigning Central Command the mission to deter and counter any Iraqi aggression against Saudi Arabia. With the National objectives now translated to broad operational terms, General Schwarzkopf and his planners got to work. They named the operation, “Desert Shield”, which provided a continual reminder to all involved that their objective was to defend and protect against further Iraqi aggression.

The objective was clear, and the Coalition “drew a line in the sand”<sup>4</sup> that Iraqi forces did not cross. By mid-October it was time to reevaluate the strategic and operational objectives. There continued to be hope in Washington that the show of force, economic sanctions and diplomatic efforts would be successful in convincing Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. Also in Washington, November elections were imminent, and the President would not publicly commit to additional operational objectives until after the election date. Meanwhile, at the operational level, the coalition forces and particularly the Saudis were questioning the direction of the operation. General Schwarzkopf was concerned about how

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<sup>2</sup>T. Friedman, and P. Tyler, “The Path to War,” *The New York Times International*, 03 March 1991, 1:3-5.

<sup>3</sup>H. Norman Schwarzkopf, *It Doesn't Take a Hero* (New York: Linda Grey Bantam Books 1992), 300.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, 308.

long his forces would be asked to defend, while the Saudis wanted reassurance that forces would not leave while the Iraqi threat remained.

Early in the planning process, General Schwarzkopf had proposed an offensive option, and in mid-October General Powell ordered him to "prepare contingency plans for an offensive, thus providing a military option in case diplomatic and economic sanctions failed."<sup>5</sup> With the same National Strategic objectives as the goal, General Schwarzkopf's planning now focused on the offensive. This operation was codenamed Desert Storm, thus focusing the shift from defense to offense.

Planning for the offensive was conducted covertly until the United States, Saudis and coalition forces agreed to an offensive option. Subsequent to agreement and after the elections in November, President Bush publicly announced that the United States "would send additional armed forces to Southwest Asia to provide the coalition with a ground offensive option."<sup>6</sup> Finally the United Nations Security Council vote on November sanctioned the use of force if Iraqi troops were not out of Kuwait by the fifteenth of January 1991.

The operational planning objectives for the offensive were more forceful and explicit: "...ousting the Iraqis from Kuwait and reinstating Kuwait's legitimate government, destroying the Iraqi ground forces' offensive capability, and restoring the regional balance of power."<sup>7</sup> The plan focused on destruction of the Iraqi Republican Guard as the main operational objective of the ground attack, largely due to General Schwarzkopf's direction. As he clearly stated to his planners, "...first go after his command and control; number two, we've got to gain and maintain air superiority. Number three, we need to cut totally his supply lines. We also need to destroy his chemical, biological, and nuclear capability. And finally...I want you to *destroy* the Republican Guard. When you're done with them, I don't want them to be an

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<sup>5</sup>J. Pimlott and S Badsey, *The Gulf War Assessed* (London: Arms and Armor Press), 147.

<sup>6</sup>F. Schubert and T. Kraus, *The Whirlwind War*, (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History), 101.

<sup>7</sup>Schubert and Kraus, 106.

effective fighting force anymore.”<sup>8</sup> The operational planners now had clearly defined objectives toward which to direct their planning.

The clarity of the objectives also determined the termination of Desert Storm. The National Command Authority set the cease-fire when the United States and coalition forces had achieved their stated objectives. Even setting a cease-fire, however, resulted in a restatement of objectives. The cease-fire was “contingent on an end to Iraqi fighting and Scud missile attacks, the immediate release of military prisoners and Kuwaiti civilian hostages, compliance with all the United Nations resolutions, and other conditions... ”<sup>9</sup> Once these objectives were achieved the allies would terminate Operation Desert Storm. After the war, and even today, the question remains, why did we not *destroy* Saddam Hussein? The simple answer is that killing Saddam Hussein had never been an operational objective. Operational planning depends on clearly defined objectives, and achievement of those objectives leads to the conclusion of the operation.

### III. UNITY OF COMMAND AND EFFORT

*For every objective, seek unity of command and unity of effort.*<sup>10</sup>

How does a multinational coalition achieve unity of command and effort in an area characterized by instability and warring factions, an area distantly removed from many of the countries providing forces? At the strategic level, the international response to Saddam’s invasion of Kuwait was immediate, forceful and strongly in opposition to his actions. General Schwarzkopf stated, “to his surprise and disappointment, Iraq’s invasion and occupation of Kuwait acquired an international dimension that the Iraqi president had not predicted.”<sup>11</sup> Under the auspices of the National Security Council, the United States and its allies quickly built coalitions with the Arab countries to form a united response against Iraq. Summarizing from President’s Bush address in September, 1990:

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<sup>8</sup>Schwarzkopf, *Hero*, 381.

<sup>9</sup>Schwarzkopf, *Hero*, 470.

<sup>10</sup>FM-105, 2-5.

<sup>11</sup>Friedman, and Tyler, 1, 3-5.

These goals are not ours alone...this is not, as Saddam Hussein would have it, the United States against Iraq. It is Iraq against the world. America and the world must defend common vital interests. President Gorbachev and other leaders from Europe, the gulf, and around the world understand that how we manage this crisis today could shape the future for generations to come. We have sought to fashion the broadest possible international response to Iraq's aggression. The crisis in the Persian Gulf...offers a rare opportunity to move toward a historic period of cooperation.<sup>12</sup>

The international community had quickly achieved unity of effort, and its strength was most visibly demonstrated when Israel did not retaliate against an Iraqi Scud missile attack, but rather worked with the coalition and trusted coalition forces to deter further attacks.

At the operational level, General Schwarzkopf and the CENTCOM staff deployed from their headquarters in Tampa Florida, to establish forward headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The President had designated General Schwarzkopf as the unified commander for the operation, supported by the other unified commanders, specified commands and services. The forward headquarters formed the initial command and control structure for deploying forces. Culture, politics, and personalities largely influenced the remaining command and control structure. As General Schwarzkopf clearly understood, "for the alliance to have a prayer of working, we needed a hybrid system...[with Americans under American commanders, and Saudi troops under Saudi commanders]...though this approach violated an age-old principle of warfare called unity of command...I knew I could make it work."<sup>13</sup> Respecting Saudi culture and the politics of the region, General Schwarzkopf shared command with the Saudi king's oldest nephew, Lieutenant General Prince Khalid Bin Sultan al-Saudi, commander of the kingdom's air and defense forces. General Schwarzkopf established unity of command by meeting with the Saudi commander and Coalition forces commanders every day. Additionally he formed a Coalition Coordination Communication Integration Center which enabled combined staffing and planning between the United States, Saudi and Coalition staffs.<sup>14</sup> General Schwarzkopf recognized the cultural differences

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<sup>12</sup>Presidential Address, 11 September 1990.

<sup>13</sup>Schwarzkopf, *Hero*, 313.

<sup>14</sup>Schubert and Kraus, 131.



and made the hybrid system work through communication among the coalition forces. The constant communication and respect for cultural differences enhanced unity of effort.

The forces were united in their effort to defend and deter against further Iraqi aggression. However, the United States had to work closely with the Saudis and coalition to gain unity of effort in an offensive plan. Offensive planners focused on what actions the forces could take that would be acceptable to the Arab governments and people. General Schwarzkopf organized an "Arab reaction seminar", which concluded that the offensive plan had to satisfy two conditions: involvement of Arab forces and winning. Based on this analysis, General Schwarzkopf further directed the planners to ensure that in any ground offensive, to plan that Arab forces would be the liberators of Kuwait City.<sup>15</sup> At the strategic level, the Secretary of State met with the Saudi king and gained approval for offensive operations. Subsequently, General Schwarzkopf briefed the Secretary of State regarding command and control: "should military operations commence, a joint command as currently exists will continue; however, the commander of the U.S. forces will have final approval authority for all military operations."<sup>16</sup> At the operational level, the Arabs followed CENTCOM's lead, but never formally relinquished authority to General Schwarzkopf. Upon the commencement of Desert Storm, General Schwarzkopf passed on the following message to the air, ground and naval forces, which exemplified "unity of command and effort" at the tactical level:

This morning at 0300 we launched Operation Desert Storm, an offensive campaign that will enforce United Nations resolutions that Iraq must cease its rape and pillage of its weaker neighbor and withdraw its forces from Kuwait. The President, the Congress, the American people, and indeed the world stand united in their support for your actions.<sup>17</sup>

By this one message alone, General Schwarzkopf affirmed his command of the forces, and projected the unity of command and effort from the international level to the troop level, all directed toward the objectives of the offensive.

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<sup>15</sup>Schwarzkopf, *Hero*, 355.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 373.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 413.

#### IV. ECONOMY OF FORCE

*Economy of force is the judicious employment and distribution of forces.*<sup>18</sup>

Upon the commencement of Operation Desert Shield, General Schwarzkopf's planning focused on rapid deployment of mass numbers of forces into the theater of operations. Other than a headquarters staff, Central Command had no assigned forces during peacetime. The initial planning needed to determine what types of forces to request, based on the objectives. General Schwarzkopf was convinced that "Saddam Hussein was unlikely to sit idly by during a US build-up."<sup>19</sup> Rather than the traditional request for logistical support to establish support bases, he quickly asked for fighter aircraft and combat forces to commence defensive operations. Although risky, this plan was effective in deterring further Iraqi aggression.

As the operational objectives shifted toward the offensive, the planners developed a plan that would utilize all of the coalition forces within the theater. Applying "economy of force" they devised a plan "whereby Coalition air power could be used to reduce Saddam's war making capability in general, and the effectiveness of his forces in the Kuwait Theater of Operations in particular...thereby compensating for the Coalition's presumed quantitative inferiority on the ground."<sup>20</sup> Although the use of air power would diminish Iraq's capabilities, the planners determined they would still need additional forces within the theater for a successful offensive operation. Upon review of the offensive plan, the Secretary of Defense approved deployment of additional forces. Ultimately, the planners achieved "economy of force" with an all encompassing offensive plan which "judiciously employed" ground, air and naval forces from over a dozen countries.

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<sup>18</sup>FM-105, 2-5.

<sup>19</sup>Pimlott and Badsey, 83.

<sup>20</sup>Pimlott and Badsey, 151.

## V. SECURITY

*Security results from the measures taken by a commander to protect his forces.*<sup>21</sup>

General Schwarzkopf's planning for Desert Shield and Desert Storm encompassed security by determining not only the capabilities of the coalition forces, but also the capabilities of the Iraqi forces. The basic assumption was that "the Iraqi Army was a formidable adversary, both quantitatively and qualitatively."<sup>22</sup> Against this adversary, the goal was, of course, minimal casualties. However, planning that provides for security of forces is planning that accepts calculated risks. During Operation Desert Shield, the initial troops that hit the ground were at the highest risk--the planning employed air forces and projection of sea power as the minimal protection for these forces. The other fear of Iraq's capabilities was the potential for use of chemical weapons. In response to this threat, "the Army's logistical agencies rushed to meet the requirements for protective gear and antidotes...and training of allied forces...stressed...chemical countermeasures."<sup>23</sup> Initially, during Operation Shield, "there was a moment of vulnerability, but every day that Saddam Hussein delayed, he got weaker and [the coalition forces] got stronger."<sup>24</sup> The security of forces was ensured through sea and air power, and rapid deployment of additional forces.

As the planning turned to the offensive, a four phase plan was developed that began with strategic air attacks on Iraqi ground and air forces and defense facilities, followed by ground attacks, including a marine amphibious landing. The military planners predicted vicious artillery duels, resulting in the deaths of 20,000 American troops. General Schwarzkopf reluctantly briefed this plan to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Secretary of Defense, and the President. Finding the predicted casualties unacceptable, President Bush rejected the plan, specifically the ground phase.<sup>25</sup> The plan was based on the forces currently in theater, and General Schwarzkopf dismissed the plan because it

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<sup>21</sup>FM-105, 2-5.

<sup>22</sup>Pimlott and Badsey, 148.

<sup>23</sup>Schubert and Kraus, 147.

<sup>24</sup>James Kitfield, "The Gathering Storm," *Government Executive*, November 1990, 32.

<sup>25</sup>Dilip Hiro, *Desert Shield to Desert Storm*, ((New York: Routledge 1992), 218.

"committed all U.S. and allied forces, with none in reserve. If a division got in trouble...there would be no help available."<sup>26</sup> In December 1990, General Schwarzkopf "was given, among his operational imperatives in fighting the war, the order to accept losses no greater than the equivalent of three companies per coalition brigade."<sup>27</sup> The principle of security was driving the operational planning. In order to reduce risk during an offensive action, the ratio of attacking forces had to increase. The planners requested additional forces, and focused the beginning of the offensive plan on air attacks aimed at erasing Iraqi surveillance of ground movements, and air attacks directly on Iraqi ground forces. The focus on security was successful: United States casualties totaled 148 killed in combat, and 467 wounded.<sup>28</sup> By capitalizing on employment of additional principles of war, the planners were able to protect forces while successfully achieving the strategic and operational objectives.

## VI. OFFENSIVE

### *Seize, retain, and exploit the initiative.*<sup>29</sup>

The allied forces could not initially focus on the offensive, since the strategic objectives clearly stated "deter and defend", and specifically did not mention "attack". However, even at the earliest planning sessions with the President and his advisors, General Schwarzkopf had introduced the concept of offense.<sup>30</sup> At the operational level, planning for defense and planning for offense are opposite polars in the planning process, and General Schwarzkopf needed the National Command Authority to be aware of this. During his brief he stated, "What I've discussed so far is a contingency plan for the *defense* of Saudi Arabia...If we ever wanted to kick the Iraqis out of Kuwait, we'd have to go on the *offense*—and that would take a whole lot more troops and a whole lot more time."<sup>31</sup> General Schwarzkopf perceived the

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<sup>26</sup>Schwarzkopf, *Hero*, 356.

<sup>27</sup>John Cushman, Jr., "Pentagon Report on Persian Gulf War: a Few Surprises and Some Silences," *The New York Times International*, 03 March 1991, 4.

<sup>28</sup>Cushman, 4.

<sup>29</sup>FM-105, 2-4.

<sup>30</sup>Friedman and Tyler, 1:3-5.

<sup>31</sup>Schwarzkopf, 301.

possibility of going on the offensive, and he requested his planners early on to begin offensive planning so they were ready when it was directed by the National Command Authority, several months later.

Even as early as the sixteenth of August 1990 he was "scribbling notes, laying out the concept for an offensive campaign."<sup>32</sup> General Schwarzkopf and his military planners were concerned they did not have the "classic 3:1 ratio of advantage which military tradition says an attacker should have in order to guarantee victory, not to mention the 5:1 ratio of advantage supposedly needed against a defender in well-entrenched positions."<sup>33</sup> In fact, General Schwarzkopf and his planners could not devise an offensive plan with the forces available that could achieve success with minimal casualties.

Acknowledging their defeat in producing a plan, he made an unprecedented move of requesting planners from the School of Advanced Military Studies.<sup>34</sup> Based on the forces available, this group of planners also developed a frontal attack plan, similar to the plan previously discarded due to the risk to attacking forces. Notably, the principles of security and economy of force were detracting from a successful offensive plan.

At this point, the National Command Authority was unwilling to publicly commit to an offensive, or to commit additional troops. As mentioned previously, the President wanted to wait until after November elections to gain public support for both actions. Two days after the election, on the eighth of November, 1990, the President announced that he had ordered a major reinforcement of American forces in the Persian Gulf to give them an offensive capability.<sup>35</sup> The time had come to switch from defense to offense. Once the planners knew they would have the forces they needed, the plan for the ground war developed into an envelopment of the Iraqi army with a huge flanking movement west of Kuwait.<sup>36</sup> An air offensive would shape the battlefield for successful ground operations.<sup>37</sup> The additional forces enabled

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<sup>32</sup>ibid., 320.

<sup>33</sup>Pimlott and Badsey, 140.

<sup>34</sup>Schwarzkopf, 354.

<sup>35</sup>Friedman and Tyler, 1, 3-5.

<sup>36</sup>Schwarzkopf, 380, 366.

<sup>37</sup>Schubert and Kraus, 156.

the planners to conceptualize an operation that employed and protected the forces and incorporated the principles of maneuver, mass and surprise.

## VII. MANEUVER

*Place the enemy in a position of disadvantage through the flexible application of combat power.*<sup>38</sup>

Maneuver was a key principle to the success of the offensive plan for Operation Desert Storm. General Schwarzkopf developed the "Hail Mary play, and it involved going around Iraqi defenses rather than through them."<sup>39</sup> The offensive plan was to conduct a flanking attack around Iraq's front line<sup>40</sup> followed by an envelopment of the Iraqi ground forces.<sup>41</sup> General Schwarzkopf presented the plan to his ground commanders in November 1990. "He whisked the drape from a map board covered by broad blue arrows sweeping in a giant arc hundreds of kilometers from Saudi Arabia through southeastern Iraq into northern Kuwait. Schwarzkopf intended to outflank Iraqi defenses along the Kuwaiti-Saudi border by sending the bulk of his forces well to the west [flanking movement] and then trapping the Iraqi Army in Kuwait in a giant pincer [envelopment]."<sup>42</sup> Following the principle of maneuver, the operational plan employed air and naval forces to facilitate the maneuver of ground forces and put Iraqi forces at the disadvantage. Initially, the air forces knocked out Iraq's capability to detect movement of ground troops. Secondly, air attacks on ground forces would render the Iraqi troops incapable of moving.<sup>43</sup> The coalition ground forces on the Kuwait-Saudi border conducted preliminary attacks to keep Iraqi forces fixed on the southern border. Meanwhile, a Marine amphibious force demonstrated off the coast of Kuwait to divert Iraqi attention from the western flank.<sup>44</sup> The artful employment of maneuver remained focused on the operational objectives: "to hold the Iraqi forces in the

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<sup>38</sup>FM-105, 2-5.

<sup>39</sup>B. Watson, B. George, P. Tsouras, and B. Cyr, *Military Lessons of the Gulf War*, (London: Greenhill Books, 1993), 92.

<sup>40</sup>Friedman and Tyler, 1:3-5.

<sup>41</sup>Schubert and Kraus, 107.

<sup>42</sup>Pimlott and Badsey, 98.

<sup>43</sup>James Ridgeway, *The March to War*, (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1991), 224.

<sup>44</sup>Schubert and Kraus, 143.

Kuwait Theater of Operations in place and crush them, thus not only liberating Kuwait but also destroying Saddam's offensive capabilities in the bargain."<sup>45</sup> Success of the maneuver depended on two additional principles of war, Mass and Surprise.

#### VIII. MASS

*Synchronizing all the elements of combat power where they will have decisive effect on an enemy force in a short period of time is to achieve mass.*<sup>46</sup>

Although the principle of Mass is generally thought of in offensive terms, General Schwarzkopf employed the concept of mass in planning for and executing Operation Desert Shield. In this defensive operation, large numbers of combat forces were deployed as quickly as possible to defend the Kuwait-Saudi borders against further Iraqi aggression. The objective was to draw a line in the sand which the Iraqis would not cross. The overwhelming response, or mass, of the coalition naval, air, and ground forces had a decisive effect in preventing Iraqi forces from attacking Saudi Arabia.

In planning for the offensive operation, once again the planners focused on synchronizing employment of naval, air, and ground forces, culminating in the final attack on Iraqi forces. The plan "called for a timetable to begin a large-scale bombing campaign against Iraq in mid-January followed by a ground campaign late in February."<sup>47</sup> The air campaign had to achieve several key operational objectives to prepare the battlefield for the coalition ground forces: strategic bombing, air supremacy over Kuwait, and finally bombing of Iraqi artillery positions.<sup>48</sup> The attacks on Iraqi ground forces was a unique employment of air forces, aimed at cutting the enemy's strength in half before the start of the ground war.<sup>49</sup> As General Schwarzkopf later stated, "the front lines had been attrited down to a point where all of these units were at 50 percent or below...the bombing campaign [had] to reduce these forces down to a strength that made them weaker, particularly along the front line barrier that we had to go

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<sup>45</sup>Pimlott and Badsey, 149.

<sup>46</sup>FM-105, 2-4.

<sup>47</sup>Friedman and Tyler, 1:3-5.

<sup>48</sup>Pimlott and Badsey, 149; Schwarzkopf, *Hero*, 382.

<sup>49</sup>Schubert and Kraus, 106.



through. Additionally, the air forces continuously bombed bridges and supply lines to isolate Iraqi forces within Kuwait, and to prevent their reinforcement and supply.<sup>50</sup> Strategic air bombing was aimed at disrupting Iraq's centralized command and control, to prevent coordination of Iraqi responses to coalition attacks. The air offensive created optimum conditions for the subsequent ground offensive.<sup>51</sup> The ground offensive was the ultimate achievement of mass.

General Schwarzkopf explained the following four pronged attack to accomplish the envelopment maneuver:

Along the Saudi-Kuwaiti border near the gulf, I wanted two divisions of U.S. Marines and a Saudi task force to thrust straight into Kuwait, with the objective of tying up Saddam's forces and eventually encircling Kuwait City. I'd reserved a second corridor, in the western part of Kuwait, for a parallel attack by the pan-Arab forces led by two armored divisions from Egypt and another Saudi task force...Eventually they would enter Kuwait City [which satisfied the operational objective to let the Saudis be the first forces into Kuwait City]. Meanwhile from the west would come the U.S. Army's power punch. I wanted...the divisions to race north from [the] Saudi-Iraqi border...blocking the Republican Guard's last route of retreat...These division would then head east, to join the attack on the main body of the Iraqi army.<sup>52</sup>

Once the ground offensive of the operational plan was launched on the twenty-fourth of February the only adjustment made was to speed up the timetable. The air campaign had been so successful in devastating the Iraqi army, that the ground offensive moved much more quickly than previously envisioned. Seeing that the Iraqis were at an extreme disadvantage, General Schwarzkopf employed the principle of mass, and pushed his troops forward to attack the Iraqi forces before they had any chance for escape.

The success of Operation Desert Storm is directly attributable to the coalition forces' accomplishment of mass. General Schwarzkopf and his component commanders forced Iraq to fight their kind of war...by matching American military strengths against Iraqi weaknesses. The combination of a powerful air offensive, followed by a fast moving armor-reinforced ground campaign proved extremely

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<sup>50</sup>H. Norman Schwarzkopf, "Schwarzkopf tells of the Strategy behind Operation Desert Storm," *Officer*, April 1991, 19, 25.

<sup>51</sup>Pimlott and Badsey, 156.

<sup>52</sup>Schwarzkopf, *Hero*, 382.



effective.<sup>53</sup> A Pentagon report attributed the allied victory to the use of high-technology weapons and to the tactics of speed and surprise that the weapons helped make possible.<sup>54</sup> General Schwarzkopf applied the principle of surprise as a force multiplier of the principle of maneuver .

#### IX. SURPRISE

*Strike the enemy at a time or place or in a manner for which he is unprepared.*<sup>55</sup>

In fact, by combining their descriptions, it can be seen how surprise will multiply the effect of maneuver--mass the effects of overwhelming combat power at the decisive place and time...in a manner for which the enemy is unprepared. In both Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the principle of surprise worked against the Iraqis. During Desert Shield, the coalition achieved surprise through the speed and extent of their combined reaction. The day of the Iraqi invasion into Kuwait, the United Nations Security Council immediately passed a resolution condemning their actions and urging a cease-fire. The day after the Iraqi invasion, Egyptian troops were on Saudi soil prepared to defend it. Five days later, American troops were deploying to defend Saudi Arabia. Saddam Hussein had never expected immediate and overwhelming reaction. Perhaps his surprise is evident in the fact that he never moved troops beyond Kuwait, even though he initially had superiority in numbers of forces.

In the planning for Desert Storm, surprise was a key element in the operational and tactical planning. Initially, even the planning for an offensive action was kept very low profile on General Schwarzkopf's staff. An initial plan that focused on frontal attack was discarded because it "lacked any element of surprise."<sup>56</sup> With the knowledge that Saddam had not fortified their western flank, General Schwarzkopf focused the operational planning in this area, and devised the "Hail Mary" play. The objective of the maneuver to attack Iraq on its western flank was to start the fighting where Iraqi forces were weakest, then move toward the Republican Guard. The plan relied on Iraq not detecting the

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<sup>53</sup>Schubert and Kraus, 205, 233.

<sup>54</sup>Cushman, 4.

<sup>55</sup>FM-105, 2-5.

<sup>56</sup>Schwarzkopf, *Hero*, 356.

positioning of troops in the west, and being unable to move troops in for reinforcements. The plan included both overt and covert actions to maintain the element of surprise. Iraq kept anticipating a frontal assault, so troop movements were devised to keep Iraq focused on the Southern borders and coastlines. The Marines launched a highly visible amphibious exercise, to keep the Iraqis worried about an amphibious attack. The exercise was even highly publicized to the media, to draw their attention away from the western flank.<sup>57</sup> U.S. Special Forces conducted mine-clearing operations to enforce the threat of an attack from the sea. The planners "made a very deliberate decision to align all of those forces within the boundary looking north towards Kuwait...so it very much looked like they were all aligned directly on the Iraqi position."<sup>58</sup> Additionally, General Schwarzkopf directed the troops moving out to the west to wait until the last possible moment. Air strikes on Iraqi surveillance sites precipitated the troop movement. "With Iraq's ability to perform air reconnaissance wiped out by the air war, Coalition forces shifted to the west unobserved, gaining the vital element of surprise."<sup>59</sup> The plan even included "ghost formations in the areas vacated by the departing forces."<sup>60</sup> When Desert Storm commenced, and the troops began movement toward the west, all of the remaining forces exercised attack movements, to keep the Iraqis focused on the frontal assault and unaware of the flanking movement.

The element of surprise adds complexity to operational planning; it must be interwoven within the principles of war, in order to be successful. General Schwarzkopf achieved surprise by maintaining secrecy, skillfully applying the art of deception, and holding the mass movement of troops until the last possible moment. Attaining the principle of surprise was no simple feat.

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<sup>57</sup>Pimlott and Badsey, 100, 142.

<sup>58</sup>Schwarzkopf, *Officer*, 19.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>60</sup>Pimlott and Badsey, 156.

## X. SIMPLICITY

*Prepare clear, uncomplicated plans and concise orders to ensure thorough understanding.*<sup>61</sup>

How does a general maintain a simple operational plan for an operation that is thousands of miles from his headquarters where he has no combat troops assigned? General Schwarzkopf needed to determine not only how to move troops into the area and provide logistical support, but also, coordinate the employment of those troops with the forces from over a dozen other countries. The operational plan had to achieve the objective of "assuring security and stability in the Persian Gulf," in a region known for its instability. General Schwarzkopf needed to work the plan within diverse political and cultural differences, in order to achieve that objective. The operational plan had to be successful, with minimal casualties, against the formidable forces of the Iraqi guard.

Simplicity was a minor principle employed in the operational planning for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, for many of the factors cited above. General Schwarzkopf later stated, "I'd never dealt with anything so complex, nor had to make so many key decisions so quickly, in my life..."<sup>62</sup> Operation Desert Shield required an immediate, massive airlift and sealift response to move forces into decisive positions to prevent further Iraqi aggression. The mobilization effort required extensive coordination to get the right troops to the right location in minimal time. Since these combat forces arrived before their logistical support, the planners creatively utilized the limited air and naval resources available to provide protection and security, and relied on the host nation for additional logistical support.

In Operation Desert Storm, the flanking movement contradicted the principle of simplicity. A simpler operation would have been the frontal assault originally conceived by the planners, but the risk to coalition forces was too great. In order to protect the troops, yet still achieve the objectives, General Schwarzkopf undermined the principle of simplicity in planning and focused the second aspect of the

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<sup>61</sup>FM-105, 2-6.

<sup>62</sup>Schwarzkopf, *Hero*, 312.

principle, providing concise orders to ensure thorough understanding. The clear command and control structure he had established facilitated clear communication of a very complex operation.

## XI. CONCLUSION

Do the principles of war translate from the classroom to an operational setting? After studying General Schwarzkopf's operational planning for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, it is obvious that the principles of war provided a framework for his planning in both operations. In fact, he frequently referred to the principles of war when briefing the plan and explaining the operation. It is also obvious that the principles of war are not only interdependent, but are force multipliers. In other words, the incorporation of each principle of war built on the other principles in achieving objectives for each operation. When the objectives changed from the defensive to the offensive operation, so the application of the principles changed. To illustrate: in Operation Desert Shield, the planning emphasized a unified effort to mass the necessary forces to defend Saudi Arabia; in Operation Desert Shield, the commander massed the forces through a combination of offensive maneuvers that distracted, weakened, surprised, and ultimately, defeated the opponent.

Not only are the principles interrelated, but there are additional factors which influence how a principle is included in the operational plan. During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, the two dominating external factors were political and cultural dynamics. The international political arena directly influenced the determination of the objectives for Operation Desert Shield, particularly to deter and defend, and *not* to attack. Once the forces achieved the objective to defend, President Bush would not commit to additional troops or an offensive until after congressional elections. In the international political arena, President Bush and his advisors worked with country leaders, while General Schwarzkopf worked with the operational commanders to gain their agreement to an offensive attack on another Arab country. Gaining Saudi commitment to an offensive operation required an understanding of both the political and cultural dynamics.

General Schwarzkopf's understanding of the Saudi culture was critical in achieving the objective to maintain stability in the Persian Gulf. In setting up the command structure, he recognized the need for the Saudis to remain as leaders in their own country, and established an effective command structure that supported those needs. During Desert Shield, he continually reassured the Saudis that he was temporarily in their country for their defense, and would leave when the Saudis were satisfied they had achieved that objective. When the objective changed to an offensive operation, he set up the Arab reaction seminar to formulate a plan that the Saudis could accept.

The point is, operational planning does not occur in a vacuum, but will have strong external factors that may seem like detractors to the planning. What General Schwarzkopf demonstrated is how to incorporate these factors into the planning process. He did not allow these factors to become "show stoppers." There are many factors, specific to a region or conflict that will affect planning.

To recognize the "individuality of each theater of operation"<sup>63</sup> the author proposes a tenth principle of war, Prior Planning. In fact, due to the increasing complexity of operations, it makes sense that a preconceived plan would fit with the concept of the principles of war as a basic framework from which to start operational planning. The recommendation of prior planning as a tenth principle supports the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan, which directs the unified commanders to formulate contingency plans for their areas of responsibility. To set up a plan, each commander asks, what are the possible situations we may face in this region and what factors will influence our reaction? As with the nine other principles of war, prior plans are not "set in concrete," but rather are useful as a basis for planning. The prepared plan becomes one more tool the commander uses to plan for the current situation.

Incorporation of prior planning into the acronym, MOOSEMUSS, remains a problem for further research.

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<sup>63</sup>General F. Woerner, USA (R), Panel. U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 28 January 1997.

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