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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, R.I.

JOINT TASK FORCE PROVEN FORCE: AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS

by

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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 personnel views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Joint Task Force (JTF) Proven Force, which primarily consisted of 5,000 sorties flown by U.S. aircraft from Turkey against strategic targets in northern Iraq, was an integral part of air operations in the Persian Gulf War. There has been little analysis of this JTF's value to the Gulf War, and a close review is warranted from a historical and operational art perspective. I analyzed JTF Proven Force's impact on the war's campaign and termination. My research showed that JTF Proven Force had a broad impact on the Gulf War far beyond the military targets it destroyed for the following reasons: (1) it forced Saddam to consider the threat of offensive military action from his northern border, resulting in the positioning of about one-fourth of his army in northern Iraq away from the Kuwait Theater of Operations; (2) it prevented Saddam from having a safe haven in northern Iraq, allowing for a more effective air offensive throughout the entire theater; (3) it strengthened post-war Persian Gulf security by increasing Turkey's geopolitical influence and contributing to the rapid response to the post-war Kurdish revolt in northern Iraq. In concluding, I discussed a few key concepts about JTF Proven Force's threat, execution and political impact that commanders should remember when planning future operations.

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## PREFACE

The sources used in this paper to describe the Persian Gulf War's military operations were all unclassified and included official reports, books, periodical articles, and interviews. The official reports were those commissioned by Congress, the Air Force and United States Air Forces in Europe after the war was over. The books reviewed were biographical and general knowledge. The military articles used in periodicals were generally written by professional military analysts or people directly involved in Gulf War operations. Interviews were conducted with people who planned air operations in the Gulf War. The sources for information about Turkey's politics and post-war impact ranged from journals to research reports to professional studies. All information was from 1990 to 1994. Incorporated in this paper was my first-hand knowledge of military operations in Turkey, acquired while supporting 52th Fighter Wing aircraft deployed to Turkey for JTF Proven Force and Operation Provide Comfort from 1990 to 1993. There were no sources that directly analyzed JTF Proven Force's impact on the Gulf War's campaign and war termination. This report contributes to both a historical and operational art perspective of JTF Proven Force and the Gulf War. Therefore, the reader is cautioned that the assessment of the JTF's broad value in this paper is original. However, when making this assessment the general knowledge taught at the United States Naval War College on policy, strategy and principals of war was considered.

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# JOINT TASK FORCE PROVEN FORCE: AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS

## CHAPTER I

### GULF WAR OBJECTIVES AND MILITARY PLANNING

#### *INTRODUCTION*

In the history of military warfare, there are but a few examples where opening a second front with limited military capability greatly influenced the disposition of an enemy's forces and the outcome of a campaign.<sup>1</sup> Joint Task Force (JTF) Proven Force, which primarily consisted of 5,000 sorties flown by U.S. aircraft from Turkey against strategic targets in northern Iraq, was such a historic operation in the Persian Gulf War. This was also the first time air power was exclusively used to establish a second front. JTF Proven Force had a broad impact on the Gulf War for the following reasons: it fixed one-fourth of the Iraqi army away from the Kuwait theater; it prevented Saddam from having a safe haven in northern Iraq; and it strengthened post-war gulf security.

Overview: To support my position of JTF Proven Force's broad impact on the war's campaign and termination, I will first discuss the war's strategic objectives and military planning to provide the foundation upon which to make an assessment. Next, I will analyze how both the threat and execution of JTF Proven Force significantly contributed to achieving the war's theater objectives at low cost and moderate risk. Then, I will show how this JTF influenced Turkey's geopolitical stature and the rapid response to the post-war Kurd revolt, which improved Persian Gulf security and stability. Finally, I will summarize a few key concepts from Proven Force that should be remembered by commanders when planning future operations.

Operational Art: I will briefly describe "operational art," since this concept must be understood when assessing the effectiveness of military operations. Operational art is the link that connects the operational level of war to the strategic and tactical levels of war, and is defined as:

The employment of military forces to attain strategic and/or operational objectives through the design, organization, integration and conduct of strategies, campaigns, major operations or battles. Operational art translates the joint force commander's strategies into operational design, and, ultimately tactical action, by integrating the key activities of all levels of war (Joint Pub 3-0).<sup>2</sup>

### ***STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES***

After Saddam successfully invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, President Bush vigorously led the world community and the United States in opposing this invasion. The United Nations Security Council passed U.N. Resolutions 660 and 661 on 2 and 6 August which condemned the invasion, demanded the removal of Iraqi forces, and imposed an almost total economic embargo against Iraq.<sup>3</sup> After a meeting between Secretary of Defense Cheney and General Schwarzkopf with King Fahd on 6 August, Saudi Arabia formally requested the United States' help and Operation Desert Shield began. Summarizing the events on 8 August, President Bush spoke to the American people and clearly outlined the following four objectives that guided United States' policy.

First, we seek the immediate, unconditional, and complete withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Second, Kuwait's legitimate government must be restored to replace the puppet regime. And third, my administration from President Roosevelt to President Reagan is committed to the security and stability of the Persian Gulf. And fourth, I am determined to protect the lives of American citizens abroad.<sup>4</sup>

These four strategic objectives never changed throughout the Gulf crisis. They were in agreement with 14 other United Nations' resolutions passed by the Security Council from 9

August 1990 to 19 April 1991.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, the ensuing military campaign and Proven Force's contribution must ultimately be assessed by how well it contributed to achieving these strategic objectives.

### ***U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND (CENTCOM)***

With Iraqi forces massed for possible offensive action along Saudi Arabia's border, General Schwarzkopf, Commander in Chief U.S. CENTCOM (CINCCENT), began creating the campaign plan. The immediate mission, defined as defend and deter, was to secure Saudi Arabia against invasion. If Iraq invaded, U.S. and coalition forces would exact a high price against the Iraqi military, while protecting specific ports and airfields in Saudi Arabia needed for a future force buildup.<sup>6</sup> After the arrival of more U.S. and coalition forces, the planning changed from the deter and defend mission of Desert Shield to the offensive mission of Desert Storm to achieve those strategic objectives. CENTCOM's mission was now:

#### **CONDUCT OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS TO:**

- Neutralize Iraqi National Command Authority
- Eject Iraqi Armed Forces from Kuwait
- Destroy the Republican Guard
- As early as possible destroy Iraq's ballistic missile and NBC [nuclear, biological, chemical] capability
- Assist in the restoration of the legitimate government of Kuwait.<sup>7</sup>

Theater Objectives and Campaign Plan: CINCCENT defined the theater objectives to accomplish that mission as follows:

- Attack Iraqi political-military leadership and C2
- Gain and maintain air superiority
- Sever Iraqi supply lines
- Destroy known nuclear, biological and chemical production, storage, and delivery capabilities
- Destroy Republican Guard forces in the KTO
- Liberate Kuwait City.<sup>8</sup>



CINCCENT divided the campaign plan to achieve those theater objectives into four phases:

- Phase I: a strategic air campaign against Iraq
- Phase II: suppressing enemy air defenses in the KTO
- Phase III: preparing the battlefield
- Phase IV: a ground campaign.<sup>9</sup>

Air Plan: The air component of the campaign plan played a predominant role, since it comprised most of the first three phases. The first three phases would occur simultaneously, but with differing emphasis. For example, strategic targets would be attacked vigorously on the first day, but then with diminishing intensity as the war progressed. Conversely, ground forces in the Kuwait Theater of Operations (KTO) in Phase III would be attacked on the first day, but then with increasing intensity. For Phase I, the number of air targets increased from 84 to 237 from August to December 1990, and were up to 535 by 20 February 1991, as air operations took on greater significance.<sup>10</sup> Further, CINCCENT tasked his Air Component Commander in Phase III to degrade Iraq's ground force combat capability in the KTO by 50 percent with air power before Phase IV would start.<sup>11</sup> Some people hoped that air operations alone would be enough to achieve the war's objectives without going to Phase IV, where higher casualties were expected.

### ***JTF PROVEN FORCE***

The idea of air operations from Turkey against Iraq began at 52th Fighter Wing, Spangdahlem, Germany in August 1990.<sup>12</sup> The initial concept had a limited tactical focus of disrupting the integrated air defense network over northern Iraq to assist potential CENTCOM operations in southern Iraq. This concept began to grow into a full scale air offensive as the operation was briefed from the Wing to Headquarters U.S. Air Forces

Europe (USAFE) to Headquarters U. S. European Command (USEUCOM) and finally to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>13</sup> JTF Proven Force's mission was:

With government of Turkey's approval/coordination: open second front; destroy centralized air defense command and control; achieve air superiority; and destroy NBC storage and production.<sup>14</sup>

Planning: While the necessary diplomatic coordination was being conducted with Turkey, General Schwarzkopf and General Galvin (USCINCEUR) agreed that the JTF "would be under the operational control of USEUCOM, but that all operations would be under the tactical control of U. S. Air Forces Central Command (CENTAF)."<sup>15</sup> On 27 December 1990, General Jamerson, USAFE Deputy Chief of Staff, was chosen the JTF Commander.<sup>16</sup> Awaiting Turkey's approval, EUCOM could not deploy more than the 48 U.S. aircraft already at Incirlik Air Base. USEUCOM continued to coordinate with CENTAF to include JTF Proven Force aircraft as part of Phase I, the strategic air campaign. At the same time, squadrons were prepared for deployment and logisticians improved Incirlik's capability to support expanded operations.

## CHAPTER II

### JTF PROVEN FORCE -- THE THREAT

JTF Proven Force was an excellent application of operational art, because its "threat" alone greatly contributed to the war's theater objective of liberating Kuwait at low military cost and moderate political risk.

#### *THREAT AND RESPONSE*

The United States had agreements with Turkey that allowed U.S. military forces to be stationed there. These were normally support forces (communications, logistics, etc) that would not pose a threat. USAFE routinely deployed aircraft from bases in Germany and England to Turkey for six-week training exercises. When Desert Shield began, a detachment of F-111E's were operating at Incirlik, and they were directed to remain. They were soon joined by a squadron of F-16's, and were later augmented by F-15's and KC-135's for a total of 48 aircraft, the maximum Turkey allowed.<sup>17</sup> This unusual offensive force at Incirlik, along with the demonstrated ability to quickly deploy more, could now be a credible threat to Iraq.

Iraq's Response: A threat is only effective if an opponent responds. During Desert Shield it was clear from the military actions taken by Saddam that he was concerned with his border with Turkey. Iraq traditionally maintained forces along this border, because of a historic distrust between these two countries and to maintain stability among its own Kurdish people. However, instead of reducing forces here and repositioning them to counter the United States' buildup in the KTO, Saddam increased forces along this border. In September

1990 when Saddam made peace with Iran (another historic foe), which freed up 11 divisions along his Iranian border, he repositioned two infantry and one armored division along his Turkish border. He also moved Scud and Al Hussein missiles here.<sup>18</sup> When Desert Storm started, there were 17-18 divisions in northern Iraq, approximately one-fourth of its military strength.<sup>19</sup>

Analysis: While no one can say with absolute certainty why Saddam reinforced his Turkish border, I contend the following three reasons directly influenced his decision. First, the early U.S offensive buildup to 48 aircraft at Incirlik was an offensive force that had the capability to strike almost as far south as Baghdad. Second, USAFE demonstrated in peacetime training exercises that it had the ability to quickly deploy more aircraft. Incirlik had the infrastructure to accommodate over 100 more aircraft that were located in Europe. Third, the political solidarity between the United States and Turkey would cause Saddam to believe Turkey would allow an U.S. air attack. An air attack, in addition to causing military damage, would create internal control problems that could encourage the Kurdish minorities in northern Iraq to revolt. Absent an air attack, Saddam did not seem concerned with overall control of his Kurdish minorities, since he reduced forces along his Iranian border where Kurdish minorities also lived. Further, Saddam did not have to be concerned with a ground invasion from Turkey. During Desert Storm, Turkey publicly avoided any claims against Iraq, and the majority of her people did not favor war against Iraq.<sup>20</sup>

### ***IMPACT AND RISK***

Fixing about 250,000 Iraqi military forces away from the KTO greatly contributed to the theater objective of the liberation of Kuwait by reducing forces CENTCOM had to fight.

Once the war started, air power, along with intelligence to direct air power against vulnerable moving targets, would prevent major repositioning of Iraq's ground forces. If many of these military forces were redeployed in the KTO, CINCCENT would have needed at least two more ground divisions and ten air squadrons in theater.<sup>21</sup> An alternative would have been to take more risk and extend air operations by a few more weeks to destroy these repositioned ground forces. Either course of action would have jeopardized the 17 January start of Desert Storm or 24 February ground offensive. A delay would have created additional operational problems, because time was a critical factor for the following reasons: (1) delays in action would place more stress on coalition solidarity; (2) pressure by political leaders for the ground campaign to start in February soon after air operations; (3) February was a good month for ground operations due to historic weather patterns.<sup>22</sup>

Low Cost: Establishing the threat against Iraq was an outstanding example of economy of force. The military resources dedicated to JTF Proven Force were small when compared to the results achieved. Most of the time only a maximum of 48 offensive aircraft were committed. These aircraft, along with aircraft USAFE later deployed to Turkey, were not needed by CENTAF for the southern theater. There was an excellent logistics infrastructure at Incirlik, which ranged from a large aircraft parking area to capable fuels and munitions storage facilities. The added supplies sent to Incirlik to improve its ability to support current and future aircraft operations were mostly from USAFE resources. Much of these supplies were transported to Turkey with theater transportation resources, which eased the transportation burden to an already overtaxed U.S. strategic transportation system.

Moderate Risk: I assess the risk as moderate, for it created internal political turmoil

within Turkey that could effect its commitment to remain an active member of the coalition against Saddam. Turkey's current enforcement of United Nations' sanctions was creating economic hardship. Enforcement of sanctions was estimated to cost Turkey \$1.5 billion annually in lost oil pipeline revenues and another \$1.4 billion in tourism, construction and transportation.<sup>23</sup> In December 1990 as Proven Force was being coordinated with Turkey, the Chief of Turkey's General Staff resigned. Overall, opposition parties to President Ozal complained that Turkey was bearing too much of the burden against Iraq, and generally most people did not favor offensive action.<sup>24</sup> This added stress placed on Turkey's government to support Proven Force was partially offset by current and promised assistance. The United States and Germany provided some immediate economic help, and more aid was expected from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.<sup>25</sup> In a show of political support, NATO agreed to deploy 42 aircraft from its Allied Mobile Force to Turkey. These aircraft, which arrived on 14 January 1991, were for defensive use, and they were not part of JTF Proven Force.<sup>26</sup> In summary, I believe the political risk was worth taking for two reasons. First, the second front threat was having great military impact against Saddam, and war was expected to start soon. Second, when the war was over Turkey would expected long-term economic and military benefits, that would more than compensate it for the short-term risk. In addition to economic aid already promised, Turkey expected military assistance from the United States and NATO countries to modernize its forces. Turkey would also benefit from an Iraq (a historic foe) that was no longer a dominant regional power.

## CHAPTER III

### JTF PROVEN FORCE -- THE EXECUTION

When Desert Storm started, the threat became reality. JTF Proven Force directly contributed to the war's theater objectives of achieving air superiority, attacking Iraq's political-military leadership, severing supply lines, and destroying Iraq's NBC capability at low military risk and little added political risk.

#### *DEPLOYMENT*

The official approval from Turkey to allow more U.S. aircraft to deploy to Incirlik didn't come until 15 January 1991, after a meeting between United States' Secretary of State Baker and Turkey's President Ozal on 13 January.<sup>27</sup> At President Ozal's urging, Turkey's parliament approved the deployment. Almost overnight, the aircraft assigned to JTF Proven Force went from 48 U.S. aircraft at Incirlik to an impressive strike force of 120. Before the war was over JTF Proven Force consisted of 155 aircraft, and most of them were operating from Incirlik.

Organization JTF: The JTF Commander, who had approximately 5500 personnel under his command, organized his task force into four components: Air Force, Search and Rescue, Psychological Operations, and a Patriot Battalion.<sup>28</sup> The Air Force Component Commander, BG Downer, formed a composite wing at Incirlik consisting of 11 different types of aircraft which included F-15 air superiority, F-16 and F-111E interdiction, F-4G Wild Weasel, KC-135 tankers, EF-111 and EC-130 electronic counter measures, E-3 command and control, RF-4 reconnaissance, F-4E attack, and MH-53 helicopters. He

started attacks against Iraq on the night of 17 January, just hours after receiving the formal directive from the Turkish General Staff approving operations.<sup>29</sup>

## **EMPLOYMENT**

JTF Proven Force displayed excellent operational art, because of its effective employment of resources at low risk. I will briefly describe key operations and logistics actions that achieved unity of command, surprise, simplicity and security during employment.

Operations:<sup>30</sup> To achieve tactical unity of command, all aircraft at Incirlik were under one composite wing. To achieve unity of effort with theater operations, all air operations were fully integrated under CENTAF -- first by being part of the theater's air tasking order (ATO), and then receiving broad mission-type orders. Mission-type orders were later used to ease coordination, as the ATO process became unwieldy from CENTAF to Incirlik. As the war continued, JTF intelligence and mission planners were recommending targets to CENTAF. Targets were prioritized and attacks were conducted day and night at staggered times to maintain tactical surprise. Intelligence efforts were integrated with CENTAF. The JTF had the tactical capability to assess battle damage with its RF-4 reconnaissance aircraft. Incirlik was protected against Iraqi air attacks by the Patriot Battalion and F-15 fighters; and against terrorist ground attacks by Turkey and U.S. ground forces. Incirlik's location, almost 300 miles from Iraq's border security. JTF aircraft were able to effectively attack ninety percent of their designated targets with no aircraft losses.<sup>31</sup> The composite wing was so successful tactically that it has been studied after the war for use in future operations.



Logistics:<sup>32</sup> Because of limited billeting space, only the minimum number of personnel directly involved in supporting aircraft sorties were deployed to Incirlik. To simplify support, aircraft maintenance people remained under the control of their fighter commanders to focus on launching aircraft. Each aircraft's home base had the task to fix broken parts beyond local repair capability. A daily logistic express was established between home units in USAFE and Turkey to distribute critical parts. Supply operations were managed from a central computer at Incirlik, so balances of parts for all types of aircraft were known to base logisticians. Due to computer linkage, USAFE logisticians in Germany also knew supply balances at Incirlik. They monitored parts usage and directed resupply actions from USAFE bases to prevent critical shortages at Incirlik. To further enhance security, all deployed people were housed on base, either in existing dormitories or in a temporary "tent city" constructed on base. A noncombative evacuation was done of American civilians at Incirlik with the start of offensive action. In summary, the entire operation was a tremendous logistics achievement.

Risk: There was low military and little added political risk during the execution of Proven Force. First, Iraq would not expand the war and attack Turkey directly, because Iraq's strategy was to make the pending ground attack in the KTO costly. Initiating an attack against Turkey, which had a 650,000 military and could have precipitated direct NATO involvement, would have detracted from Saddam's effort in the KTO. Second, the composite wing at Incirlik employed a formidable package of air power to counter Iraqi air defenses. The air risk may have even been lower than other air operations, because of the synergistic planning and execution benefits of a composite wing.<sup>33</sup> As discussed, overall security of

Incirlik Air Base against attack was formidable. Third, the political debate and subsequent moderate risk to Turkey's support as an active coalition member already occurred during the initial buildup. Little risk was added approving JTF offensive operations because of the way Turkey handled the approval. Turkey's parliament voted to allow JTF's attacks, its military exercised sovereignty over Incirlik's operations, and attacks were restricted until the night of 17th January -- almost 24 hours after the initial air attacks in southern Iraq. Moreover, the deployment of NATO aircraft to Turkey formalized NATO's support. Once the war started and its decisive nature was evident, the country would welcome Saddam's defeat.

## RESULTS

From 17 January to 28 February 1991, JTF Proven Force aircraft flew approximately 5,000 sorties day and night, dropping 3,500 tons of ordnance against targets in northern Iraq, without losing a single aircraft.<sup>34</sup> Table 1 shows the targets attacked.

TABLE 1: Type Targets <sup>35</sup>	Number
- Military support, production and storage depots	12
- Oil storage capacity and refineries	10
- Electrical power	11
- SCUDS	2
- Command control and communications	22
- Chemical and biological	6

Table 2 shows the results of these attacks.

Table 2 Results
- Destroyed nuclear and ammunition production and storage
- Destroyed refinery capacity
- Degraded electric service and capacity
- Loss of northern sector air defense system
- Destroyed dispersed aircraft and maintenance facilities
- Inhibited use of SCUD missiles against Turkey
- Degraded communication between Baghdad and northern Iraq
- Degraded ability to produce and store chemical and biological weapons

Other Accomplishments: The JTF also accomplished the following: dropped more than one million psychological leaflets over Iraq; transmitted psychological radio broadcasts; became fully integrated into the SCUD warning network; and conducted search and rescue missions.<sup>36</sup>

Assessment: A review of the results in Table 2 shows how JTF Proven Force directly contributed to four CENTCOM theater objectives of air superiority; attacking political-military leadership; severing supply lines; and destroying NBC production, storage, and delivery capability. In evaluating the JTF's offensive contribution, General Downer stated: "Most of all Proven Force eliminated any pretensions to safety that the Iraqi leadership may have had for the north."<sup>37</sup> Although not impossible, it would have been difficult and risky for aircraft from southern front bases to attack targets in northern Iraq. The distance from bases in Saudi Arabia to targets in northern Iraq was 1000 miles one way, versus 400 miles from Incirlik. An attack from Saudi Arabia would require more tankers, perhaps flying over Iraq, and possibly without electronic warfare support.<sup>38</sup> Consequently, while some missions were planned against targets in northern Iraq, the number and targets attacked greatly increased when JTF Proven Force was approved.<sup>39</sup> While risky to speculate, a safe haven would have allowed Saddam to securely locate weapons of mass destruction or his modern aircraft in northern Iraq. Instead, he was forced to send aircraft to Iran or have them destroyed. As Clausewitz points out, war once started is a series of actions and reactions between opponents.<sup>40</sup> Proven Force eliminated an option for Iraq, while creating one for coalition forces.

Other Benefits: An added affect of having Proven Force aircraft attack targets in northern Iraq was that it allowed CENTAF to better focus its air resources on the KTO. For example, F-15E and F-111 aircraft in Saudi Arabia, because of their endurance and offensive capabilities, would have attacked many targets in northern Iraq. Instead, these aircraft were now available for other critical missions such as SCUD patrol, tank plinking and aircraft shelter destruction. This became significant because the "frictions of war" were causing the air operation to take much longer than planned. The first three phases of the Campaign Plan were estimated to take from a low of nine days to a high of 17 days, but took 39 days.<sup>41</sup> These three phases would have taken longer and achieved less impact without the 5,000 sorties from Proven Force. As discussed earlier, time was important because of its impact on coalition solidarity and the advantages of a February ground start.

## CHAPTER IV

### JTF PROVEN FORCE -- WAR TERMINATION

A successful war termination with the lasting attainment of political objectives is one of the most difficult things to achieve when war ends. I will show how JTF Proven Force made a solid contribution to the strategic objective of a stable and secure Persian Gulf.

#### *WAR TERMINATION*

The first major issue where Turkey's support was critically needed for post-war regional stability was the Kurdish revolt in northern Iraq in March 1991. The Kurdish revolt was not predicted but should have been, because of actions taken and conditions created during the war. President Bush, on more than one occasion, publicly called for the overthrow of Saddam.<sup>42</sup> Psychological leaflets were dropped during the war that encouraged internal revolt.<sup>43</sup> There was significant damage done to Iraq's military forces, communication facilities and transportation system that weakened Saddam's control over his country. The Kurdish revolt had the potential to escalate into a regional civil war, considering the estimated 16 million ethnic Kurds living in Iran, Turkey, Syria and Iraq.<sup>44</sup> Such a civil war would be disastrous for regional stability.

JTF and Kurdish Revolt: In two key ways JTF Proven Force directly contributed to the successful response to the Kurdish revolt, which prevented it from expanding to a regional civil war. First, the United States owed Turkey politically for the risk it took supporting Proven Force. It could not turn down President Ozal's call for help in late March 1991. Secretary Baker visited a Kurd refugee camp in Turkey near the Iraqi border in early

April and reported his findings to President Bush. It was widely reported that Secretary Baker's visit was the beginning of a change in United States' policy from non-intervention to active assistance to Turkey and the Kurds in Iraq.<sup>45</sup> Second, the experience gained from Proven Force's coordination and operations with Turkey contributed to a quick and effective military operation, once the political decision was made to act.<sup>46</sup> Initial airdrop of humanitarian supplies to Kurds in northern Iraq took less than two days to start. Pilots fresh from offensive action of Proven Force were now flying security missions over familiar territory in Iraq. This protected the Kurds from Iraqi military attacks. It was important to quickly establish a safe zone in northern Iraq for the Kurdish people, to prevent Turkey, Iran, and Syria from being destabilized by the mass Kurdish refugee migration. This quick and decisive response under Operation Provide Comfort, that is still active at a lesser level three years later, kept the situation from escalating. With the imposition of the northern no-fly zone by Operation Provide Comfort that continues today, Saddam does not have control over one-third of his country, thereby decreasing his power without creating civil war.

Turkey's Geopolitical Rise: After the war, Turkey emerged to far greater international prominence. The aggressive way Turkey enforced economic sanctions and allowed use of its country for Proven Force operations directly contributed to its rise.<sup>47</sup> This was at a time when some were predicting Turkey's retreat in world affairs, due to the demise of the Soviet Union's threat to NATO's southern flank that Turkey protected. NATO, which had been lukewarm in assisting Turkey militarily, has started several military modernization programs. Turkey--United States relations have been cemented in ways that would not have seemed possible, especially when one considers the pro-Greek lobby in

Congress that inhibited earlier relationships. Since the war, the United States has helped Turkey's economy and military in various ways to include: reducing import restrictions; giving Turkey excess military equipment; completing an F-16 deal that allows for co-production and export to Egypt; and encouraging joint production projects that enhance Turkey's industrial modernization.<sup>48</sup> Finally, there has been greater support of Turkey's views on regional issues by the U.S. and NATO.

Assessment: As Turkey's minister of National Defense said in an interview soon after the Gulf war: "Turkey will increase its geopolitical and geostrategic role as a source of stability and balance in the region in the coming years."<sup>49</sup> With a geography that spans the European and Asian continent, a democratic form of government, and a large Islam population, Turkey can be the key regional country to help ensure stability. Clearly the relationship that the United States and Turkey developed from working together in Proven Force, and later in Operation Provide Comfort, has helped in responding to regional security problems.

## CHAPTER V

### JTF PROVEN FORCE -- ITS LEGACY

JTF Proven Force was an unqualified success where a limited military operation had great influence on a war's campaign and termination. In concluding, I will highlight a few key concepts that should be remembered from this JTF when planning future operations.

Threat: The threat from an Air Force composite wing of less than 6,000 people, located 300 miles away from Iraq's border, caused Iraq to position major forces away from where the ground offensive would start. Success in the early aircraft deployment was assured, because of the combined operations routinely conducted with Turkey and the excellent facilities at Incirlik. The political and military relationship developed between both countries aided the immediate response and subsequent larger deployment. In planning for future crises, Proven Force showed how important it is for commanders and diplomats to: develop a working relationship with other countries; pursue base agreements and develop logistics facilities; and properly exploit the characteristics of air power to create a threat.

Execution: The rapid deployment and immediate engagement in combat demonstrates how quickly the Air Force can deliver power. The ability to conduct composite wing operations and effectively attack targets shows the benefits of realistic training. JTF's attacks in northern Iraq eliminated a potential safe haven, and allowed for better concentration of air power in other parts of the theater. The frictions of war, which lengthened the first three phases of the campaign, shows how a modern war does not go as planned. When planning future operations, Proven Force shows commanders the capabilities of air power in



conducting second front operations at low cost and low tactical risk. Such a second front can help overcome the frictions of war by limiting an enemy's options and expanding yours.

Political: Even with good political relations and a common enemy, it can be difficult to get a foreign country to allow offensive action against a neighbor. Turkey's government, while allowing the immediate deployment as normal training, took several months to approve JTF Proven Force's offensive attacks. Its people and military were initially not supportive of attacks against Iraq. Approving the JTF's presence was a bold initiative for Turkey's leadership, but had the potential to fracture its active support against Saddam and affect overall coalition solidarity. The Gulf War also had unintended consequences, as evidenced by the Kurdish revolt in northern Iraq. The precedence and experience gained during JTF Proven Force's operations contributed to the successful response to the Kurdish revolt. After the Gulf War, Turkey received significant military and economic assistance from the United States and NATO, and its regional political views were more respected. When planning future operations, Proven Force shows how commanders must understand and consider all the political consequences of military operations, and its effect on war termination.

Summary: Overall, JTF Proven Force was an excellent example of the application of operational art, for it significantly contributed to the Gulf War's operational and strategic objectives at low cost and moderate risk. Both its threat and execution clearly aided the war's quick end and contributed to lower casualties. JTF Proven Force had an impact far beyond its military value, because of its influence on the successful response to the post-war Kurd revolt and positive impact on improving Turkey -- United States relations. All of this has enhanced post-war regional security and stability in the Persian Gulf.

## End Notes

1. The Athenian expedition to Phyllos in the Peloponnesian War, that caused Sparta to redeploy forces opposing Athens, and Wellington's campaign in Spain in the Napoleonic Wars are two excellent examples. Both operations did not have the military power to directly threaten their enemy, but the reaction that the enemy took was way out of proportion to the forces against it and greatly influenced the campaign.

2. United States Naval War College, Fundamentals of Operational Art, (Newport R.I.: Operations Department, February 1994), p. 42.

3. "UN Resolutions," Military Review, September 1991, p. 79.

4. "President Speaks to Nation," Military Review, September 1991, p. 82.

5. UN Resolutions p. 79. Between 2 August and 9 April the UN Security Council adopted 16 resolutions related to the Gulf crises and a review of a summary of these on page 9 indicated consistency with President Bush's objectives.

6. Department of Defense (DOD), Conduct of the Persian Gulf War. Final Report to Congress. Chapters I through VII and Appendices A-S, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, April, 1992), pp. 40-43.

7. Ibid., p. 96.

8. Ibid., pp. 96-97.

9. Thomas Keaney and Eliot Cohen, Gulf War Air Power Survey Summary Report, (Washington: U.S. Govt Printing Office, 1193), p. 6.

10. Ibid., pp. 42, 64.

11. Ibid., p. 15.

12. The author was at the initial briefing in August 1990 where this concept was first discussed with the 52th planning group and the 17th Air Force Commander.

13. Lee Downer, B.G. "Composite Wing in Combat," Airpower Journal, Winter 1991, p. 5.

14. Headquarters United States in Europe/DOXC, Desert Shield/Desert Storm Hot Wash Briefing, 10 July, 1991, p. 7.

15. Downer, p. 5.

16. Thomas Thompson, Cold War Warriors and Desert Storm: USAFE in the Persian Gulf War, (History Office: USAFE, January, 1994), pp. 38-39.

17. Ibid., pp. 38-39.

18. Norman Friedman, Desert Victory: The War for Kuwait, (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1991), pp. 118-119 and endnote 9 p. 392.

19. DoD, Conduct of the Persian Gulf War, p. 111. Information taken from the chart and percentage of military in northern Iraq determined by simple division.

20. Friedman, p. 374; Sherif Mardin, "Turkey and the Gulf Crisis," Ibrahim Ibrahim editor, The Gulf Crisis: Background and Consequences, (Washington DC: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1992), pp. 278-281. Estimates of Turkey's military deployed near the border with Iraq were only approximately 15%.

21. DoD, Conduct of the Gulf War, pp. E 13-19 and E 25-26. My conservative calculation based on maintaining slightly smaller force ratios that CENTCOM planners used when they added 200K more people when the mission changed from defensive to offensive. If Iraq repositioned 175,000 of the 250,000, we would respond by deploying half that many, because of our air power and ground maneuver/firepower capabilities.

22. H Norman Schwarzkopf and Peter Petre, It Doesn't Take a Hero. (New York, New York: Bantam Books, 1992). pp. 374, 441-446. Pages 441-446 covers the pressure that Schwarzkopf was receiving from General Powell and Secretary Cheney about starting the ground offensive as soon as possible, even before he was completely ready; Thompson p. 21-22 and 36-37. These pages include an analysis of how time favored Saddam and includes quotes by former U.S. Secretary of State Kissinger.

23. Alan Capps, "A Turkish Wish List for NATO," Defense and Diplomacy, July-August 1991, p. 39; Joyce Davis, "Turkey's Gulf Gamble," Defense and Diplomacy, March-April 1991, p. 40.

24. Mardin, pp. 279 - 281.

25. Capps p. 39; Davis p. 40.

26. Thompson, p. 41.

27. Ibid., pp. 41-42.

28. Briefing charts supplied by Col Fuhrmann, the former Operations J-3 and Plans J-5 Director for Commander Joint Task Force Proven Force during the Gulf War. Interviewed at Naval War College on 3 May to validate data.

29. Downer, p. 7.

30. Information summarized from General Downers article and interview with Colonel Fuhrmann already referenced.
31. Fuhrmann and analysis of data from JTF briefing charts.
32. Information summarized from General Downers article, and my experiences supporting air operations at Incirlik.
33. Scott Norwood, Proven Force: Proof of Concept for Composite Wing, Naval War College, Newport, R.I. 13 Feb, 1992. Article analyzes the effectiveness of the composite wing at Incirlik and persuasively argues that a composite wing can reduce risk.
34. Ibid., p. 9.
35. Fuhrmann charts. Material summarized from all the charts on targets and results. Information represents immediate assessment of the results.
36. Ibid.
37. Downer, p. 11.
38. Ibid., p. 11.
39. Interview with Major Randy O'Boyle, Naval War College, Newport R.I. on 23 April. Major O'Boyle was a planner at the "Black Hole" during the Persian Gulf War.
40. Michael Howard and Perer Paret, Carl Von Clausewitz ON WAR, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 139-140.
41. Keaney and Cohen, p. 50. Chart on this page shows the low and high that each phase was estimated to take.
42. John Fishel, "Liberation, Occupation, and Rescue: War Termination and Desert Storm," (Carlisle Barracks Pa: Strategic Studies Institute, August 1992), pp. 34-35; DoD, Conduct of the Persian Gulf War, pp. J-20, 21.
43. DoD, Conduct of the Persian Gulf War. pp. J 20-21.
44. Dr Stephen Pelletiere, The Kurds and Their Agas -- The Situation in Northern Iraq. (Defense Intelligence Agency: Washington D.C.), November, 1991, p. 19 note 21.
45. Fishel, p. 51.
46. William Farnen and Erwin Lessel, "Forward Presence in Turkey: Case Study," Parameters, Autumn 1992, p. 22.

47. Mardin p. 275; Davis, p. 40; Capps p. 40. Interwoven in these articles is how the gulf war has effected Turkey.

48. Capps, p. 40.

49. "Interview with Turkey's Defense Minister," NATO's 16 Other Nations, September 1991, p. 77.

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