

USCENTCOM Mission and History

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USCENTCOM Mission

- Promote and protect US interests
- Ensure uninterrupted access to regional resources
- Assist friendly states in providing for their own security and contributing to the collective defense
- Deter attempts by hostile regional states to achieve geo-political gains by threat or use of force

- "To accomplish our mission we pursue a theater strategy that concentrates on vital US interests. It relies on consensus at home that is best achieved by concentrating on vital US interests, in this case access to Arabian Gulf oil, and ensuring that we maintain the capability to defeat an adversary rapidly and decisively with a minimum of friendly casualties. We must ensure that plans and forces do not fall short of being able to protect US interests. Our strategy must be achievable and affordable. We make it so by being threat-focused, flexible and versatile in the combination and application of force. USCENTCOM strategy requires coalition building that begins with sound long-term security arrangements and security assistance with regional partners essential to collective security and defense. It demands global responsibility sharing for the defense of common interests in the region.
- "The basis for our security relationships with regional coalition partners is a three-tier concept of defense against aggression. Tier I, national self-defense, involves actions by individual nations to contribute to deterrence and defense of their nation. Tier II, regional collective defense, involves actions by friendly regional nations to support a threatened state in an attempt to preclude hostilities or restore stability should deterrence fail. Tier III, extra- regional coalition defense, involves direct action by the United States and other friendly states to deter aggression or defend their common interests. The primary focus of the three-tier defense concept is collective responsibility sharing for regional security and stability.
- "This three-tier defense concept is a building-block approach to the formation of coalitions. It is a confidence-building measure that improves military-to-military relationships and interoperability and recognizes the connectivity between military capability and cooperation and political and economic interdependence. The tier concept has potential to minimize unnecessary deployments of US forces and buy time. Theoretically, over

time, the tiers will enhance GCC stand-alone deterrence and defense capabilities and reduce US overseas forward presence requirements."

Source: USCENTCOM, 3/98.

USCENTCOM - Official History

Events of the late 1970's threatened the stability of the Central Region and placed vital U.S. interests at risk. Following the revolution and subsequent fall of the Shah of Iran, and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) was formed at MacDill AFB, Florida on March 1, 1980. During 1981 and 1982 it evolved from a worldwide deployable force to a de facto regional unified command representing U.S. interests in the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. As a result of this evolution, the RDJTF was deactivated on December 31, 1982 to be replaced with the U.S. Central Command on January 1, 1983. The following list highlights key events in the Command's history.

- U.S. Central Command established, MacDill AFB, Florida.....Jan 1983
- Operation EARNEST WILL - Escort of reflagged tankers in Gulf.....Jul 1987
- Operation PRAYING MANTIS - Response against Iranian Navy.....Apr 1988
- Operation DESERT SHIELD - Defense of Saudi Arabia.....Aug 1990
- Maritime Intercept Operations - Embargo enforcement on Iraq.....Aug 1990
- Operation DESERT STORM - Liberation of Kuwait from Iraq.....Jan 1991
- Operation SOUTHERN WATCH - Sanction enforcement in Iraq.....Aug 1992
- Operation PROVIDE RELIEF - Famine relief in Somalia & Kenya.....Aug 1992
- Operation RESTORE HOPE - Security for Somali relief efforts.....Dec 1992
- Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR - Response to Iraqi deployment....Oct 1994
- Operation UNITED SHIELD - Support of UNOSOM II withdrawal...Feb 1995
- Operation VIGILANT SENTINEL - Response to Iraqi deployment....Aug 1996

The United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) is responsible for planning and conducting United States (US) military activity in a region consisting of 20 countries in Northeast Africa and Southwest Asia. The command has become known in recent years for its success in the war against Iraq and for humanitarian intervention in Somalia.

Although USCENTCOM was activated on 1 January 1983, it grew out of an earlier unit known as the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF). The RDJTF was established on 1 March 1980 and was originally subordinate to the much larger United States Readiness Command (USREDCOM), which had been at MacDill Air Force Base (AFB) since 1972. USREDCOM was the successor to United States Strike Command, which had been activated at MacDill during the Kennedy administration in January 1962, with responsibility for joint planning of operations in the Middle East, South Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa. Since the name "Commander in Chief, Strike Command" (CINCSTRIKE) may have sounded too aggressive to nations in this area of the world, CINCSTRIKE was also given the title of Commander in Chief, Middle East, Africa, and South Asia (CINCMEAFSA).

There were difficulties caused by CINCMEAFSA's area of responsibility (AOR) being halfway around the world. Although MEAFSA's boundaries included the Red Sea and Arabian (or Persian) Gulf, the western Indian Ocean was assigned to Commander in Chief Atlantic (CINCLANT), headquartered in Norfolk, Virginia, and the eastern portion was responsibility of the Commander in Chief Pacific (CINCPAC), with headquarters in Honolulu, Hawaii. Command lines were consolidated in 1966 with the assignment of CINCLANT as CINCMEAFSA's sole naval component.

Another problem was that CINCMEAFSA's forces were too far from the AOR. Whenever actual military operations were required in MEAFSA'S area, United

States European Command (USEUCOM) and its components usually had to provide the operational forces and necessary support since they could arrive more quickly than more distant US-based forces assigned to CINCPACAF. This was the case during the Congo rescue mission of 1964, evacuation of American citizens during the six-day Arab-Israeli war in 1967, and US participation in exercises sponsored by the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO).

When USREDCOM replaced Strike Command in 1972, it gave up the MEAFSA mission, partly in consonance with the Nixon doctrine of gradual US disengagement from Third-World conflicts, such as Vietnam. The MEAFSA AOR was divided between the European and Pacific Commands, while Atlantic Command retained responsibility for portions of the Indian Ocean bordering on Africa. USEUCOM, which had previously been responsible for North Africa, now had an area which extended through Southwest Asia as far as Iran. PACOM's AOR then extended to Pakistan and included the northern Indian Ocean, but not the Red Sea and Arabian Gulf. In 1976, the PACOM area of responsibility was expanded to encompass the entire Indian Ocean.

As a result of the October War of 1973, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) proposed the formation of a new mobile joint task force to deal with distant crises, but the idea was slow to catch on. Following its initial review of national defense policy, the Carter Administration issued Presidential Directive 18 in August 1977, advocating establishment of a new quick reaction force. No funding for such an organization was contained in the Administration's military budgets, however.

Two events occurred in 1979 which fundamentally changed American feelings about the emerging "crescent of crisis" extending from Somalia to Pakistan. In Iran, the Shah was replaced by the fanatical theocrat Ayatollah Khomeini, and

Afghanistan was invaded and conquered by Soviet forces. These events deeply affected the thinking of President Jimmy Carter, and the RDJTF was established on 1 March 1980. The hostage crisis in Tehran led to the United States' severing diplomatic relations with Iran on 7 April and the aborted covert mission to rescue the American hostages on 24 April 1980. Although it took place in the RDJTF's AOR, the failed hostage rescue mission was not conducted by the new command.

The first Commander of the RDJTF was LtGen Paul X. Kelley, United States Marine Corps (USMC), who later became Commandant of the USMC. Under General Kelley's direction, the RDJTF stepped out smartly, conducting its first command post exercise, POSITIVE LEAP, at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, from 10 to 15 April 1980. This was followed by BRAVE SHIELD, a rapid deployment readiness exercise conducted at Fort Bragg and Fort Polk, Louisiana, from 13 to 21 August 1980. Another command post exercise, GALLANT KNIGHT 81, was held at Fort Bragg from 23 to 30 October 1980. The RDJTF conducted its first exercise outside of the United States when it held BRIGHT STAR 81 in Egypt from 7 to 27 November 1980. Another first was ACCURATE TEST 81-2. Conducted in Oman from 13 to 23 February 1981, this was the first RDJTF deployment to Southwest Asia. BRIGHT STAR and GALLANT KNIGHT both became regularly occurring exercises, joined by the GALLANT EAGLE series of field training exercises held at various locations in California and Nevada. The second commander of the RDJTF was LTG Robert C. Kingston, United States Army, who assumed command of the RDJTF on 17 July 1981. Under General Kingston, the RDJTF evolved from a potentially worldwide deployable troubleshooter into a unified command representing American interests in the Middle East and Northeast Africa. As the first step in this evolution, on 1 October 1981 the RDJTF became a separate joint task force and ceased to be subordinate to USREDCOM. Its AOR was expanded to include Egypt and Sudan in Northeast Africa, in addition to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia. The

AOR also included Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, People's Republic of Yemen, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen Arab Republic.

Despite the evolutionary nature of the development from the RDJTF to USCENTCOM, the two commands were fundamentally different units. By definition, a joint task force is a temporary organization created by the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) for a specific purpose. When the RDJTF was created during the Carter Administration in 1980, it was meant to be only a temporary solution to the problem of projecting American power in the Middle East and East Africa. By the time the Reagan Administration decided in 1981 to establish a new unified command for this region, it was envisioned to take several years to complete the transition.

The RDJTF was inactivated on 31 December 1982, and USCENTCOM was activated the following day. Added to the command's AOR was Jordan, the Red Sea, and the Arabian Gulf.

Internal political realignments within USCENTCOM's area of responsibility have occurred since its activation. The two Yemens merged in May 1990, and Eritrea unilaterally declared its independence from Ethiopia in May 1991. Notwithstanding changes in geopolitical boundaries, USCENTCOM's geographical area of responsibility has remained unchanged since its activation. General Kingston's task as first Commander in Chief, United States Central Command (USCINCCENT), was to establish the command's bona fides as a unified command and as a credible force. He insisted on being assigned actual component forces from the Services, not notional forces which had characterized the RDJTF. Overcoming the initial skepticism of USEUCOM, which had a headquarters and available forces located much closer to its AOR, General Kingston championed the idea that USCENTCOM was a full-fledged unified

command in exactly the same sense as others, notwithstanding that the headquarters was geographically displaced from its area of responsibility. USCENTCOM's assumption of security assistance operations, its most important financial tool for influencing international economic relations within its area of responsibility, had to be delayed at USEUCOM's insistence until 1 October 1983, when the new fiscal year began. Similar difficulties delayed Central Command Air Force's (CENTAF's) takeover of the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) in its area of responsibility from the United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE).

The new command did not have to wait long to face its first test. On 13 and 14 February 1983, four E-3A AWACS deployed non-stop from Tinker AFB, Oklahoma, to Cairo West Air Base, Egypt. Their deployment was part of the US response to a Libyan-sponsored coup attempt against Sudan. As a result of US support during Operation EARLY CALL, Egyptian aircraft were able to forestall a Libyan attack against the government of President Nimeiri of Sudan. According to President Reagan's Secretary of State George Schulz, Libya's Qaddafi had been put "back in his box, where he belongs."

Another significant early USCENTCOM operation was ARID FARMER, conducted from 2 to 23 August 1983. This action involved the deployment of an RC-135 reconnaissance platform, two KC-10 aerial refuelers, two E-3A AWACS aircraft, and seven F-15 fighters to Sudan in support of the government of Chad against Libyan-supported insurgents. Libya and Sudan were also involved in Operation EAGLE LOOK, which provided surveillance of eastern Libya after an apparent Libyan bombing attack on Omdurman, Sudan. This involved the first deployment of USCENTCOM's EC-135Y aircraft, which carried the operations commander and his battle staff. EAGLE LOOK was conducted from 15 March until 15 April 1984.

General Kingston was promoted to full general on 6 November 1984, establishing parity with other unified commanders. He served as USCINCCENT until his retirement on 27 November 1985. He often said that when he took over the RDJTF, no one could tell him where his forces would come from, what they would consist of, how long it would take them to get there, and who would be in command. As the result of several years of detailed deliberate planning during his tenure as the only person to command both the RDJTF and USCENTCOM, he was finally able to answer all of these questions.

The second USCINCCENT was General George B. Crist, USMC. When he assumed command on 27 November 1985, General Crist observed that USCENTCOM was a unified command in name only. In most quarters, he felt, it was still perceived as "an RDJTF whose sole purpose was to go to Iran and wage World War III against the Russians in a conflict restricted solely to our theater of operations." General Crist believed that this mode of thinking permeated official perceptions at all levels but failed to take into account the necessity for bilateral consultation with individual states in USCENTCOM's area of responsibility. Moreover, USCENTCOM was perceived by many countries in its area as "little more than a major intervention force designed to operate solely for US purposes without their consultation or participation." Worse, the new USCINCCENT believed his command was seen as a pariah by most US government agencies with a vested interest in the region, including the State Department and the International Security Affairs Directorate of the Defense Department.

To counter the belief on the part of many countries in its area that USCENTCOM's mission was inimical to their own interests, General Crist set out to impress the leaders of those countries that the purpose of his command was to support key nations in the region without "gang-pressing them into actions contrary to their perceived self-interest." Harkening back to the Nixon Doctrine,

he wanted them to know that USCENTCOM was "there to provide them with capabilities that would allow them to stand on their own two feet and, if necessary, to defend their territorial integrity against local or regional threats to their security." He also wanted to assure them "of our ability to deal with threats beyond their ability to respond."

General Crist's concern for diplomacy extended to USCENTCOM's exercise program. Previously, the command's planners would arrive in a country and dictate, "Here's the exercise, here's the way we want to do it, and this is the way you will do it." To General Crist, "we were acting too much like the proverbial ugly American, twisting our friends into submission without properly consulting them." His planners began consulting host nations and other foreign participants at least a year in advance of an exercise, ensuring that US interests were in harmony with their goals and aspirations. Consequently, USCENTCOM became far more successful in planning and conducting its exercises overseas.

General Crist sought to learn about the State Department's operations and work more harmoniously with it. The same approach worked with the Directorate for International Security of the Defense Department and with the various agencies of the intelligence community. He also began working individually with each of the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), encouraging each to work together collectively on defense issues. The members of the GCC—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—eventually began to talk with each other. General Crist was very encouraged, and felt that he "could detect the emergence of a collective defense strategy." In view of the twin threats presented to the region by Iran and Iraq, which were largely kept busy fighting each other from 1980 to 1988, collective defense was in the interest of both the GCC and the United States.

The Iran-Iraq war came violently to USCENTCOM on 17 May 1987, when the USS Stark (FFG-31) was struck by Iraqi missiles, resulting in the deaths of 37 sailors. Shortly thereafter, in response to a request from the government of Kuwait, the United States reflagged and renamed 11 Kuwaiti oil tankers. Beginning on 22 July, USCENTCOM's Middle East Force began to escort these reflagged tankers through the Arabian Gulf to Kuwait and back out through the Strait of Hormuz. Operation EARNEST WILL continued through 16 August 1990, by which time it had conducted 480 missions involving a total of 649 merchant ships.

Several incidents occurred during these escort operations. The reflagged supertanker Bridgeton struck a mine off Farsi Island on 24 July 1987, and had to be repaired in Dubai. It was ready to be returned to service on 15 October. Meanwhile, on 21 September 1987, the Iranian ship Iran Ajr was caught red-handed laying mines in the Arabian Gulf. USCENTCOM forces, including US Army OH-6A Cayuse helicopters launched from the USS Jarret (FFG- 33), attacked and captured the Iran Ajr, killing five Iranian sailors and capturing 26 others.

Apparently undeterred by this retaliation, Iran continued to lay mines in the Gulf. On 14 April 1988, the USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG-58) detected three Iranian mines lying approximately 55 miles off the Qatar peninsula, reversed engines to back away, and struck a fourth mine. The 253-pound mine blew a 21-foot hole in the ship, injuring ten sailors. Despite extensive fire and flooding, the crew was able to control the damage and keep the ship afloat. The Roberts was towed to Dubai and later taken to Bath, Maine, for repairs. Within the next ten days, US and allied forces discovered eight more Iranian mines.

Directed by the National Command Authority to plan and carry out a measured retaliatory response, General Crist and RADM Anthony Less, Commander of the

Joint Task Force Middle East, carried out Operation PRAYING MANTIS. On 18 April 1988, three US surface action groups destroyed two Iranian oil platforms and severely damaged two Iranian frigates and a missile patrol boat. Two A-6 aircraft from the USS Enterprise (CVN-65) sank a Swedish-built Boghammer speedboat and neutralized four more of the Iranian craft in the Mubarak oil field. US losses consisted of one AH-1T Sea Cobra from Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 167. As the Tanker War continued, on 3 July 1988 the USS Vincennes (CG-49) mistakenly shot down an Iranian airliner, killing all 290 people aboard. Finally, under intense international political and economic pressure, Iran and Iraq agreed to a United Nations (UN)-sponsored cease fire on 20 August 1988.

On 23 November 1988, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, U.S. Army, assumed command from General Crist. Returning to the Middle East for the first time since 1947, when, as a teenager, he had accompanied his father, BG H. Norman Schwarzkopf, Senior, on his mission to Iran. General Schwarzkopf was able to use that earlier connection to expand General Crist's diplomatic and military relations with his Arab counterparts.

When he was interviewed for the position of USCINCCENT by President Reagan's last SECDEF, Mr Frank Carlucci, both were concerned about Iraq's military might at the end of the Iran-Iraq war. In his travels around the Arabian Gulf during his first year as USCINCCENT, however, General Schwarzkopf found that most of the friendly countries in his AOR were more concerned with Iran than with Iraq. King Hussein of Jordan, for example, told General Schwarzkopf in January 1989, "Don't worry about the Iraqis. They are war weary and have no aggressive intentions toward their Arab brothers."

Spurred by the rapid diminution of Soviet aggressiveness under Gorbachev, General Schwarzkopf worked to supplant USCENTCOM's primary war plan,

which involved a war against the Soviets in Iran, with a more realistic one. The strategic scenario of this plan, which General Crist had already characterized as "bankrupt" in 1986, called for five and two-thirds divisions to march from the Arabian Gulf to the Zagros Mountains and prevent the Red Army from seizing the oil fields of Iran. Instead, General Schwarzkopf decided to plan for what he thought was a much more likely worst-case scenario: Iraq, emerging from eight years of war against Iran with the world's fourth-largest and most battle-tested army, moving south to capture the rich oil fields whose output was essential to the industrialized world.

This new strategy was first tested in INTERNAL LOOK, a command post exercise conducted from 9 July through 4 August 1990 at Fort Bragg and at Hurlburt and Duke Fields in Florida. As the exercise developed, General Schwarzkopf noticed that the real-world movements of Iraq's air and ground forces eerily paralleled the scripted scenario of the war game. So closely did actual message traffic resemble fictional reports, the latter had to be prominently stamped "Exercise Only." During the last few days of INTERNAL LOOK, Saddam Hussein's forces invaded and captured Kuwait. Now in possession of Kuwait's oil fields, Iraq was poised to acquire the even more valuable prize of the Arabian peninsula.

Four days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990, General Schwarzkopf and SECDEF Cheney traveled to Saudi Arabia to confer with King Fahd regarding the threat of an Iraqi attack on his kingdom. After USCINCENT outlined his plan for the defense of Saudi Arabia, SECDEF Cheney conveyed a message from President Bush that the United States was prepared to deploy the forces outlined in General Schwarzkopf's plan but sought no permanent bases in his country. Based on his experience in the Middle East, General Schwarzkopf had expected a dilatory and noncommittal response, but, to his surprise, King

Fahd accepted Cheney's offer almost immediately, after a minimum of consultation with his royal advisors.

Operation DESERT SHIELD began the next day, on 7 August 1990. Within two days of the invasion, the first US naval combatants began deployments toward the waters adjacent to the Arabian Gulf. On the same day that the president signed the initial combat forces deployment order, the first Military Airlift Command aircraft arrived in Saudi Arabia. The first combat aircraft and ground forces landed on 8 August 1990. On 10 August, the ships of the Maritime Prepositioning Force were ordered to sail, 17 ships of the Ready Reserve Fleet were activated, the first agreement to charter a US ship was signed, and more than a hundred additional aircraft were deployed to the theater. Elements of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force began deploying by air on 12 August. Concurrently, the President ordered economic sanctions against Iraq and the deployment of additional naval vessels to enforce them. The first squadron of C-130 transport planes arrived in Saudi Arabia on 17 August 1990.

By the time the first prepositioned ships arrived at ports of debarkation on 16 August 1990, they were quickly linked with Marine Corps units, forming a Marine Air-Ground Task Force. With its 30 days of supplies, this task force gave USCENTCOM a mechanized force and supporting air power within two weeks of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. To increase the deployment pace, on 17 August 1990 the Civil Reserve Air Fleet was activated for the first time in its history. During the next seven months, the United States Transportation Command moved nearly 504,000 passengers, 3.7 million tons of dry cargo, and 6.1 million tons of petroleum products to USCENTCOM's AOR. On 26 August 1990, General Schwarzkopf officially established a forward headquarters in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, while President Bush worked through the United Nations to put together a coalition that ultimately numbered 29 countries fielding a total force of nearly

700,000 men and women. In addition to his being USCINCCENT, he acquired a new title: Supreme Allied Commander, Kuwaiti Theater of Operations.

As forces continued to arrive in the theater, a significant milestone was reached on 2 October 1990, when the aircraft carrier USS Independence (CV-62) moved into the Arabian Gulf. This was the first time since 1974 that an American carrier had sailed into the relatively confined waters of the Gulf. By November 1990, General Schwarzkopf was able to shift his focus from defense to offense. Having successfully deterred Iraq from attacking Saudi Arabia, USCENTCOM now began to plan for the liberation of Kuwait. President Bush authorized the deployment of follow-on forces, including a heavy division from the United States and the VII Corps from Europe, their associated combat and support elements, three additional carrier battle groups, one battleship, Amphibious Group 3 with the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, the II Marine Expeditionary Force, and 410 additional Air Force aircraft.

Backed by the UN Security Council, which had passed Resolution 678 on 29 November 1990 authorizing forces of the Coalition to use all means necessary to enforce its previous resolutions calling for Iraqi forces to leave Kuwait, USCENTCOM continued to develop a force adequate to the task. The UN resolution had given Iraq until 15 January 1991 to remove its forces from Kuwait or face military action from USCENTCOM and its Coalition partners. Shortly before that deadline, the US Congress passed a joint resolution on 12 January 1991 authorizing President Bush to use US armed forces pursuant to the UN resolution.

As the UN deadline approached, General Schwarzkopf set out the objectives of the offensive campaign. USCENTCOM and the Coalition were to attack the Iraqi military and political leadership and their command and control systems. They would gain and maintain air superiority, sever Iraqi supply lines, and destroy Iraq's production, storage, and delivery capabilities for chemical, biological, and

nuclear weapons. They would also destroy Saddam Hussein's vaunted Republican Guard forces in the Kuwait Theater of Operations. Finally, they would liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation.

To accomplish these objectives, the original Operation DESERT STORM theater campaign plan was to be carried out in four phases. Phase I was to be a strategic air campaign. Phase II would be a short but intense effort to establish air superiority in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations. Phase III would consist of air attacks on the Republican Guard and other Iraqi army forces in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations. Finally, Phase IV would be a ground offensive supported by air and naval forces.

By January 1991, there were enough air forces available that the Coalition decided to conduct the first three phases comprising the air operation simultaneously, applying the greatest amount of pressure from the opening minutes of the war. On 17 January at 0300 hours Riyadh time, Operation DESERT STORM began with a massive air interdiction strike. Within seven hours, more than 750 sorties had been flown by aircraft from France, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Targets throughout Iraq and Kuwait included military emplacements, air defense assets, and command and control targets. The air campaign deprived Saddam Hussein of the initiative and prepared the theater for a Coalition ground assault which could complete the destruction of Iraqi forces in Kuwait with minimal losses.

Following more than five weeks of air strikes, ground operations began on 24 February 1991 at 0400 hours Riyadh time. Aided by a USMC amphibious feint along the coast of Kuwait which focused the attention of Iraqi forces to the east and south and assisted by secondary attacks along the border between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the main Coalition attacked on a sweep from the west

northward deep into Iraqi territory. It then approached Kuwait eastward from an unexpected direction—from inside Iraq.

Attacking from the west cut off the enemy's supply lines and his avenues of retreat. This became known as the "left hook" or, as General Schwarzkopf called it, the "Hail Mary" play. The main attack force consisted of US, French, and British forces, while secondary operations were conducted primarily by Egyptian, Kuwaiti, Saudi, Bahraini, Qatari, Omani, Syrian, and United Arab Emirates forces, as well as those of the USMC.

Kuwait was liberated on 27 February 1991. With all the Coalition's objectives met, a cease-fire was declared for 28 February 1991 at 0800 hours, exactly one hundred hours after commencement of ground hostilities. On 3 March 1991, a cease-fire conference was held at Safwan. All Allied demands were agreed to, allowing Iraqi forces to disengage near Basra. By the time General Schwarzkopf returned to his headquarters at MacDill AFB in April 1991, he had completed his mission and become an international figure. As one indication of General Schwarzkopf's standing in the world community, Queen Elizabeth II sailed her royal yacht Britannia to Tampa and, on 20 May 1991, made him an Honorary Knight Commander in the Military Division of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath. General Schwarzkopf continued to serve as USCINCCENT until his retirement in August 1991.

The fourth USCINCCENT was Gen Joseph P. Hoar, USMC. Taking over from General Schwarzkopf on 9 August 1991, he inherited a command that no longer had to justify its existence. Moreover, having been USCENTCOM Chief of Staff from the fall of 1988 through June 1990, he was intimately familiar with its activities. Many of USCENTCOM's operations in the years after the Gulf War involved issues left over from the Gulf War. Maritime interception operations, begun in the early phases of DESERT SHIELD, continued throughout General

Hoar's tenure. These operations enforced UN sanctions against Iraq and were performed by multinational naval forces patrolling assigned areas and performing vessel boardings and inspections. When the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr opened in July 1993, maritime interception operations were reinstated in the northern Arabian Gulf. By that time, more than 19,150 ships had been challenged and over 8,250 merchant ships had been boarded and inspected by warships from Australia, France, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Operation SOUTHERN WATCH, which began in August 1992, was part of the international response to continued Iraqi non-compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 688. This resolution condemned Saddam Hussein's repression of the Iraqi civilian population, including air and ground attacks against insurgents in southeastern Iraq. USCENTCOM established a no-fly zone south of the 32nd parallel to monitor Iraqi compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 688 and established Joint Task Force (JTF) Southwest Asia to command and control the entire operation. This approach had already been successfully used in Operation PROVIDE COMFORT in northern Iraq to protect the Kurdish population from Iraqi reprisals.

Iraq complied with the no-fly zone for several months, but began to challenge it late in 1992 and early in 1993. In one incident, a US F-16 shot down an Iraqi MiG-23 after it violated the no-fly zone. When Iraq persisted in flying in the zone and threatened coalition aircraft with anti-aircraft artillery and surface-to-air missiles, USCENTCOM forces took decisive action. On 13 and 18 January 1993, SOUTHERN WATCH aircraft conducted strikes against selected Iraqi air defense targets threatening coalition forces. Meanwhile, on 17 January 1993, the US Navy conducted a Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM) strike against the Zaafaraniyah nuclear fabrication facility because of Iraq's refusal to comply with nuclear inspection requirements. Four surface vessels fired a total of 44 TLAM cruise missiles against the facility, rendering it unusable. Another TLAM strike

was launched by the US Navy against the Baghdad headquarters of the Iraqi intelligence service in response to the Iraqi-sponsored planned assassination of former President Bush during his visit to Kuwait. Overall, Operation SOUTHERN WATCH prevented Iraqi aircraft from participating in large-scale offensive actions against the people in southwestern Iraq, although Iraqi ground operations continued there at a somewhat reduced level.

A more defensive deployment following the aftermath of the Gulf War was the movement of Patriot air defense batteries to the region. In response to requests from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain, USCENTCOM rapidly deployed Patriot missile systems to those countries in 1992 within a few days of alert notification. This strategic deployment underscored the American commitment to the region and US willingness to ensure the security of its friends. The batteries in Kuwait and Bahrain were withdrawn in December 1992 only to be redeployed in January 1993 as a result of Iraqi noncompliance with the no-fly zone restrictions. The Patriot batteries remained in Saudi Arabia to provide continuous aircraft and missile defense coverage to key ports and population centers. Continued deployment of the Patriot air defense system to the Arabian Gulf provided opportunities for interoperability training and promoted initiatives in collective air defense among USCENTCOM's partners in regional security.

The most significant challenge facing USCENTCOM after winning the war with Iraq concerned the east African nation of Somalia. No national government had actually existed in Somalia since early 1991, and the country was riven by competing clans fighting what amounted to a multi-sided civil war. To relieve the widespread starvation caused by food shortages and an inadequate food distribution system, USCENTCOM began Operation PROVIDE RELIEF in August 1992 to supply aid to Somalia and northeastern Kenya. On 17 August 1992, USCENTCOM deployed a Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team consisting of 35 people to Mombasa, Kenya. Within three days, USCENTCOM

established JTF PROVIDE RELIEF. Its initial tasks were to conduct airfield and security surveys, establish communications, provide for flight clearances, and coordinate assistance with relief agencies. On 21 August 1992, the first food delivery mission was flown to Wajir, Kenya, beginning a massive effort that continued through the end of the year. US forces involved in Operation PROVIDE RELIEF peaked at 858 personnel and 14 C-130 aircraft. By the end of 1992, they had flown 1,699 missions, delivering nearly 20,000 metric tons of food and supplies.

In support of the United Nations Organization in Somalia (UNOSOM), USCENTCOM helped to move a 500-man Pakistani contingent of UN security forces to Mogadishu, Somalia, from 12 September through 3 October 1992. The USS Tarawa (LHA-1) Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) provided tactical command and control of US air operations in that effort and then turned these duties over to the USS Tripoli (LPH-10) ARG.

By late November 1992, it was clear that airlift alone would not be sufficient to get relief supplies to those who desperately needed them. On Thanksgiving Day, President Bush offered to send US troops to Somalia to provide the security needed to insure the food supplies actually reached starving Somalis, who by then were dying at the rate of a thousand per day. Operation RESTORE HOPE began on 9 December 1992 in support of UN Security Council Resolution 794. USCENTCOM led a multinational coalition known as the Unified Task Force (UNITAF). Its mission during RESTORE HOPE was to provide security for key transportation and distribution centers, ensure security of relief convoys and of relief organization operations, and assist those relief organizations. UNITAF quickly accomplished this mission and transferred operational control of operations in Somalia to the UN.

UNITAF continued to provide security for relief operations from January through May 1993 while the UN undertook the difficult task of creating UNOSOM II. Its task was to meet the unprecedented challenge of performing peacemaking operations under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Meanwhile, humanitarian airlift of food and other supplies under Operation PROVIDE RELIEF continued through 28 February 1993, totaling nearly 2,500 missions flown and 28,000 metric tons of relief supplies delivered.

By March 1993, UNITAF had established nine humanitarian relief sectors in southern Somalia. Centered around major towns and feeding centers, these sectors were key to the transition from UNITAF to UNOSOM II as they were gradually turned over from USCENTCOM forces to those of other nations in the coalition. Under UNOSOM II, France assumed responsibility for Oddur, Canada for Belet Uen, Italy for Gialalassi, Morocco for Baledogle, Australia for Baidoa, Belgium for Kismayo, and Botswana for Bardera. During the transition, UNITAF strength peaked at 38,300 personnel, of whom 25,800 were US forces. In addition to conducting weapons sweeps, security patrols, and convoy escorts, UNITAF forces carried out civic action projects in all of the humanitarian relief sectors. US Army engineers and Navy Seabees drilled dozens of wells and built or repaired hospitals, orphanages, schools, and over 1,200 miles of roads. Medical personnel from the coalition and relief agencies treated thousands of Somalis for a wide range of problems.

On 26 March 1993, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 814 officially authorizing the creation of UNOSOM II. The UNITAF staff developed concise and detailed instructions for the turnover to UNOSOM II, bringing about a seamless transition. On 4 May 1993, the UNITAF commander, LtGen Robert B. Johnston, USMC, turned over his operations to the new UNOSOM II commander, Turkish Lieutenant General Cevik Bir. By then, most US forces had redeployed from Somalia, but a residual presence remained to support the UN command. This

presence consisted of some members of the UNOSOM II staff, a logistics support command of about 2,800 personnel, and a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) of about 1,200 troops.

Shortly after the UN had taken over the relief operations in Somalia, security in the Somali capital of Mogadishu began to deteriorate, although UNOSOM II operations in the countryside continued to be somewhat successful. Forces led by Somali General Mohamed Farah Aideed were largely responsible for the unrest and increased hostility toward UNOSOM II forces. UNOSOM II was given an expanded mission which outstripped its available resources, the kind of "mission creep" that UNITAF had avoided by virtue of its clear and unambiguous mission statement. On 5 June 1993, Pakistani forces engaged in confiscating weapons in accordance with their expanded mission were ambushed by Somali militiamen loyal to General Aideed and 24 Pakistani soldiers were killed. The QRF responded to UNOSOM's request for assistance and rescued a beleaguered Pakistani unit.

As a result of this attack, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 837 authorizing UNOSOM II to "take all necessary measures against all those responsible for the armed attacks of 5 June 1993." Some of these measures included QRF and AC-130 operations against weapons storage facilities and command and control facilities, as well as efforts to capture General Aideed and other leaders of his Somali National Alliance. During the UNOSOM II operations, remaining US forces suffered several casualties, including four military police killed by a command- detonated mine on 8 August. By late August 1993, US Special Operations forces under Task Force Ranger had deployed to Mogadishu to enforce the UN resolution.

Violence erupted again on 5 September 1993, when Somali militia attacked Nigerian forces. Task Force Ranger conducted several operations against the

militia in September 1993 and succeeded in capturing several key leaders. On 25 September 1993, however, three US crew members were killed when their helicopter was shot down by Somalia militia, and additional casualties were suffered during the ensuing rescue. The most significant combat action took place on 3 October 1993, when Task Force Ranger captured six of Aideed's lieutenants and several militiamen in a daylight raid. During withdrawal operations, two UH-60 helicopters were shot down by the Somalis and US forces remaining on the ground came under heavy fire as they attempted to carry out rescue operations and consolidate their positions. During the intense firefight that followed, approximately 300 Somalis were killed and hundreds more were wounded. US losses totalled 18 killed and 81 wounded before a relief column of QRF soldiers, Pakistanis, and Malaysians was able to withdraw the forces to safety early on 4 October.

As a result of the incident on 3 October 1993, President Clinton announced that all US troops would be withdrawn from Somalia by 31 March 1994. Meanwhile, additional US personnel and heavy equipment were deployed to Somalia to provide increased military capability to protect existing forces and to support UNOSOM II. JTF Somalia was activated on 20 October 1993 to provide force protection, support UN operations, secure lines of communication, and redeploy US forces by the 31 March 1994 deadline. Approximately 3,000 troops were deployed ashore in Somalia, along with tanks and other armored vehicles. The aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72) and an escort had arrived on station near Mogadishu. Additional forces included the New Orleans (LPH-11) and Guadalcanal (LPH-7) ARGs with their associated Marine Expeditionary Units.

At the same time he was protecting US and UNOSOM II forces, General Hoar began preparing for the redeployment of US and designated coalition forces. One of the ARGs was ready to withdraw from Somalia by November, and all

carriers were withdrawn by December 1993. US presence on the ground was reduced from 8,107 at the beginning of December to 5,582 by the end of the year. Withdrawal of US forces from Somalia was completed on 25 March 1994. Operation RESTORE HOPE demonstrated the United States' ability to respond to distant humanitarian crises as part of an international coalition. USCENTCOM orchestrated the strategic deployment of both US and foreign forces and coordinated logistics to sustain the force once deployed. RESTORE HOPE also demonstrated the use of the JTF concept for effectively employing deployed forces to create the secure environment needed to conduct humanitarian relief operations. It underscored the commitment and capability of the men and women of the Armed Forces to accomplish demanding missions in remote and hostile environments.

Held in abeyance during DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, USCENTCOM's exercise program was revitalized following the successful conclusion of the Gulf War. Because of the participants' flexibility and aggressive pursuit of exercise opportunities, the program dramatically increased over pre-war levels. In fiscal year 1993, USCENTCOM scheduled a total of 97 combined exercises in ten of the 19 countries in its area of responsibility. An increased naval presence drove up the number of exercises, accounting for 77 of them. There were also six Army, six Air Force, and eight special operations exercises conducted during this time. In addition, six exercise-related construction projects were completed.

The vast distances from the United States to USCENTCOM's AOR make it necessary for the command to exercise its deployment and redeployment capabilities on a frequent basis. The ULTIMATE RESOLVE command post exercise was held in Kuwait late in 1993, bringing back nearly all of the coalition members together for the first time since the Gulf War. Mindful of the need to have forces available on short notice, the INTRINSIC ACTION ground exercise

rotations in Kuwait demonstrate the quick response ability of USCENTCOM ground forces to utilize prepositioned equipment in the AOR. The Gulf War proved the importance of coalition warfare to the accomplishment of USCENTCOM's mission. Given the downsizing of US Armed Forces, such combined operations become more important as USCENTCOM looks forward to its next challenge.

On 5 August 1994, General J.H. Binford Peay III, United States Army, became the fifth USCINCCENT. As commander of the 101st Airborne Air Division (Air Assault) during the Gulf War, he was well acquainted with USCENTCOM's area of responsibility, doctrine, and tactics. He continued USCENTCOM's peacetime strategy designed to deter aggression and protect US national security interests. These interests were oriented to the uninterrupted flow of Arabian Gulf oil, freedom of navigation, access to commercial markets, security of coalition partners and other allies, and regional peace and security.

Shortly after taking over as USCINCCENT, General Peay developed a new, expanded strategy for his area of responsibility. This theater strategy is based on maintaining essential regional access through the three traditional pillars of forward presence, combined exercises, and security assistance programs, augmented by the two additional pillars of power projection and readiness to fight. By emphasizing deterrence through coalition building and military-to-military access, this strategy promotes stability and protects US interests within USCENTCOM's area of responsibility.

It was not long before this new strategy encountered its first test, again in the form of a challenge from Saddam Hussein. In response to the threat of renewed Iraqi aggression and associated troop movements in Southern Iraq, early in October 1994 General Peay deployed forces to his area of responsibility in Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR. By the end of October, USCENTCOM had

deployed more than 28,000 US troops and over 200 additional aircraft to the region. Augmented by French and British aircraft, these forces were based in the GCC states of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates. As many as 300 Coalition aircraft and 20 Coalition naval combatants took part in the operation. VIGILANT WARRIOR marked the first time that USCINCCENT, a USCENTCOM headquarters element, and component commanders and staffs deployed to the area of responsibility since Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM four years earlier.

On 15 October 1994, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 949, which condemned Iraqi aggression and demanded that Iraq withdraw its forces to their earlier positions. Five days later, the United States backed the UN resolution with a demarche of its own concerning its enforcement. In the face of this determined response, the Iraqi regime backed away from the crisis and pulled its forces north of the 32nd parallel, as required. By early November, the Secretary of Defense authorized redeployment of those US forces considered excess to the new combination of an emerging mission and a reduced threat. Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR reaffirmed the value of prepositioning material in USCENTCOM's area of responsibility. US Army forces were able to fall in on prepositioned stocks already in place in Kuwait City and to deploy to defensive positions in Southern Kuwait in time to bolster that nation's defenses. Patriot air defense personnel deployed from Fort Polk, Louisiana, to place off-line missile batteries at Riyadh and Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, into full operation. General Peay also ordered the relocation of another Patriot battery from Dhahran to Kuwait City to provide air defense coverage of key facilities in Kuwait. Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR also provided an excellent opportunity for Army and Marine forces to exercise their land-based and afloat prepositioned stocks. Use of this equipment allowed the United States to maximize its strategic lift assets and to limit deployment response time.

Shortly after the conclusion of VIGILANT WARRIOR, USCENTCOM found itself involved once again in Somalia, this time to cover the withdrawal of UNOSOM II in accordance with a United Nations decision to pull its forces out of that troubled country. After the withdrawal of US forces on 25 March 1994, the United States maintained a liaison office in Mogadishu in an attempt to further the process of political reconciliation in Somalia. Security for this office was provided by a Fleet Antiterrorist Support Team (FAST) platoon from the Marine Corps Security Force Battalion. As conditions in Mogadishu deteriorated, the liaison office relocated to Nairobi and the FAST platoon redeployed to Mombasa, Kenya, on 15 September 1994, with the latter redeploying to home station three days later. President Clinton announced his decision late in 1994 that US forces would assist in the withdrawal of UNOSOM forces from Somalia.

Operation UNITED SHIELD officially began with the issuance of execution and deployment orders on 1 January 1995. Planning had begun earlier at United Nations headquarters in New York, allowing USCENTCOM to orchestrate the withdrawal of a multinational force of Egyptians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and Americans from Somalia with minimum risk. The command formed a combined task force to conduct a five-phased military operation to bring out UNOSOM personnel and US equipment from Somalia. By the time UNITED SHIELD began, Indian, Zimbabwean, and Malaysian UNOSOM units had already redeployed in December 1994 and early January 1995, leaving 6,200 of the approximately 13,000 UNOSOM personnel to be withdrawn. These people were now stationed at Mogadishu, mainly at the international airport and the new seaport.

Safe withdrawal from this dangerous urban environment required phased redeployment of units, with the remaining forces conducting rear-guard operations. Military operations consisted of naval deployments, airlift, passage of lines, and an amphibious landing. This daunting task relied on Coalition control of the Mogadishu beaches and littorals. General Peay deployed more than 4,000

personnel supported by more than 40 combat and combat support aircraft, five naval combatants, and support vessels. Offshore patrolled a Coalition task force of US, Italian, Pakistani, French, British, and Malaysian naval vessels.

On 8 February 1995, the combined task force deployed an aerial quick reaction force to cover the redeployment of a Pakistani brigade and a Bangladeshi battalion from Mogadishu airport. This was followed on 22 February by the withdrawal of an Egyptian brigade from Mogadishu by air and sea. The final withdrawal phase began on 28 February with an amphibious assault by 1,800 US and 350 Italian Marines at the eastern portion of the Mogadishu seaport to secure a lodgement area. These forces provided a rear guard for the departure of the Pakistanis and Bangladeshis and retrograde of all US equipment, then completed their own withdrawal on 3 March. As a result of careful planning and international teamwork, Operation UNITED SHIELD resulted in the safe withdrawal of 6,200 UNOSOM personnel and 100 combat vehicles without a single casualty or significant damage to any equipment. This remarkable success set a high standard for future coalition operations in USCENTCOM's area of responsibility.

Later in 1995, tensions reached a peak in Iraq when several high-level Iraqis defected with their families to Jordan. These defectors brought revelations of growing frustration among members of Saddam Hussein's regime and validation of pending military action against Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Drawing on the lessons from Operation VIGILANT WARRIOR a year earlier, Operation VIGILANT SENTINEL involved increasing alert for designated units in the United States, accelerating scheduled military exercises with Jordan, and moving prepositioned equipment from Diego Garcia to USCENTCOM's area of responsibility. Operation VIGILANT SENTINEL deterred Iraqi adventurism through its combination of prompt detection, GCC unity, and rapid movement of forces to the region. The ironic result of the operation was that each time Iraq rattles its saber, the coalition becomes better prepared for future aggression..

Source: USCENTCOM, 3/98. Excerpted from A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND, by Jay E. Hines, Command Historian

United States Army Forces Central Command (ARCENT) HQ Third U.S. Army

Headquartered at Fort McPherson, Georgia, ARCENT prepares continuously for rapid response to a major regional contingency and the diversity of operations other than war that characterize the Central region. ARCENT provides strategic land combat forces for power projection and sustained land combat. In addition to its combat capabilities, ARCENT provides essential logistics, communications, engineer, and medical support to all deployed Services. Its posture reflects the United States Army's emergence as a power projection force and acceptance of diverse and demanding missions.

Despite having few permanently stationed forces in the Central region, ARCENT's posture improved in 1995. Headquarters programs standardized warfighting procedures, emphasizing unity of effort. Following Command guidance, ARCENT has developed procedures to integrate land forces to execute a theater-level, multi-national coalition campaign. Working directly with MARCENT, a joint team published draft procedures that were evaluated in INTERNAL LOOK 96. These command relationships break new ground in the way we organize to fight and are validated during exercises and operations in the Central region.

The command has developed and exercised standard procedures for joint task forces where ARCENT provides the preponderance of forces. The procedures were most recently validated in BRIGHT STAR 95, a multinational exercise hosted by the Egyptian government. Exercise participants included the U.S. and a multinational coalition of Egyptian, French, British, and UAE forces. In addition, a German team observed the exercise. For the first time ever, the Egyptian

government approved the formation of a BRIGHT STAR Coalition Media Center. The pool of 60 international media representatives allowed us to project a positive image through all forms of media to every major Western and Arabic news service. The press coverage was intense and comprehensive graphically displaying America's power projection capability.

BRIGHT STAR 95 also validated the first integration outside the continental United States of a theater missile defense architecture into the operations center. This significant warfighting enhancement gives ARCENT a capability to target and destroy theater ballistic missiles and anticipate enemy dispersal and employment actions. In another milestone, Apache helicopters from participating U.S., UAE and Egyptian units planned and conducted the first-ever combined deep attack operation. For the first time, ARCENT validated Joint Logistics over the Shore procedures during this exercise. A demonstrated capability of off-loading equipment from ships without access to a port facility provides additional power projection options for the Command.

To improve host-nation support and coalition coordination, ARCENT increased the number of Arabic linguists assigned to BRIGHT STAR 95 to 16. This enhanced personal relationships, by providing the capability to write and brief most major actions in both Arabic and English.

Recognizing the role of information in today's non-linear battlefield, ARCENT included a Land Information Warfare Activity Cell in exercises and contingency planning. The cell provides expertise for targeting the enemy's command and control structure. This innovation augments a new program for automated target review, TARCHEK. The program supports a target review process which considers the potential impact of target destruction on later phases of the campaign including reconstruction. The analysis assists component commanders in assigning the right capability to attack each target.

ARCENT's response to Operation VIGILANT SENTINEL in August 1995 was immediate, measured, and effective. This contingency operation validated critical procedures for deployment, off load of equipment from afloat prepositioning ships and distribution of equipment to arriving soldiers. Arrival of a "flyaway package" of key contingency staff validated a revised deployment procedure. ARCENT exercised off-load preparation party procedures during transit of afloat prepositioning ships to the region. Refinement of these procedures ensured this heavy brigade's equipment was regularly maintained, repaired easily, and able to be off-loaded quickly. The command also validated procedures for separating and issuing unit basic loads from bulk prepositioned stocks of munitions . For the first time, these loads were separated and issued at company and platoon level. The six-hour issue criterion was exceeded, setting an Army standard for world-wide contingency equipment issue. What's more, turn-in of equipment at exercise completion met a 95 percent fully mission-capable rate.

ARCENT is applying these successful procedures to prepositioning in Qatar. The command established a Base Operations headquarters in support of prepositioning a heavy brigade's worth of equipment and a division base (minus) set.

In addition to combat equipment and support, ARCENT deployed a team of four personnel to provide technical assistance and training to host-nation personnel for maintenance of a frozen blood depot. This effort supports a larger program to preposition and maintain medical equipment both afloat and ashore, a key to supporting joint forces during ongoing and contingency operations. In addition, a six-person veterinary detachment will provide support for all U.S. Armed Forces in Southwest Asia.

Source: ARCENT Internet web Page

COMUSNAVCENT

Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/Commander, U.S. Fifth Fleet, is the naval component for U.S. Central Command. Its area of responsibility encompasses 10.5 million square miles of land and sea; and area larger than the continental United States.

The U.S. Navy established its first command in the Middle East on January 1, 1949. Known as the Persian Gulf Area Command, its forces consisted of two destroyers and a small seaplane tender. Shore support was provided by buildings rented from the British Royal Navy at its installation HMS Juffair in the Gulf state of Bahrain. Bahrain, like many Gulf emirates, was a British protectorate at the time.

The Persian Gulf Area Command was renamed the Middle East Force on August 16, 1949. No permanent flagship was assigned, so duty rotated between three former seaplane tenders: the USS DUXBURY BAY, the USS GREENWICH BAY and the USS VALCOUR.

When Bahrain gained independence from the British in 1971, ownership of HMS Juffair reverted to the Bahraini Government.

Through special agreement with the Bahrainis, the Navy leased part of the old British base and expanded U.S. operations there. It is now known as Administrative Support Unit Southwest Asia.

The USS VALCOUR became the first permanent flagship for the Middle East Force in 1961 after an extensive overhaul and redesignation as a miscellaneous command ship. In July 1972, USS LASALLE replaced the USS VALCOUR as the flagship.

Middle East Force ships were the first U.S. military units to take action following the August 2, 1990, invasion of Kuwait when they began maritime interception operations in support of United Nations sanctions against Iraq.

To date, in both the Arabian Gulf and the Red Sea, U.S. Navy ships in concert with coalition forces from many nations, have boarded more than 11,000 ships. In January 1991, with the beginning of Operation DESERT STORM, the Middle East Force was absorbed into U.S. Naval Forces Central Command, the Naval Component of the U.S. Central Command. In the aftermath of the 1990/91 Gulf War, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command ships and those of the coalition partners undertook the largest mine clearing operation since World War II. Nearly 1,300 sophisticated sea mines of various types were swept from the Arabian Gulf, providing the safest passage for naval and merchant ships in decades.

The staff of NAVCENT moved ashore in Bahrain in 1993, and the USS LASALLE departed for overhaul and reassignment.

Today, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command and the U.S. Fifth Fleet consist of as many as 25 ships and 15,000 Sailors and Marines. These forces typically include an aircraft carrier battle group, an amphibious ready group similar to that used in Operation RESTORE HOPE, surface combatants, submarines, maritime patrol aircraft, logistic ships and modest but highly effective fleet support activity. Source: COMNAVCENT Web Page

USCENTAF

In 1979, following the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Teheran, by Iranian militants and the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan, the United States established the Rapid Deployment Force. Ninth Air Force became the air arm for the RDF and assumed responsibility for all air operations in Southwest Asia, a

role that has continued to expand since the redesignation of the RDF as U.S. Central Command and the designation of 9th Air Force to perform the additional role as U.S. Central Command Air Forces. Thus, since 1979, 9th Air Force/USCENTAF has performed a dual mission in the defense of the United States interests. CENTCOM, based at McDill AFB, Fla., is a unified command responsible for ensuring stability and protecting vital U.S. interests in Southwest Asia. CENTAF, the air component, is responsible for all air power within the region. This is done with the use of tactical, airlift, heavy bombers and reconnaissance aircraft.

To effectively manage combat air power, CENTAF deploys an Air Operations Center. The AOC's prime function is to plan for tomorrow's war and prosecute today's air campaign in a highly dynamic environment. This is accomplished through the Combat Plans and Combat Operations functions within the AOC. Combat Plans is responsible for the planning and dissemination of the Air Tasking Order or ATO. The ATO provides specific and detailed information necessary to conduct air combat operations in support of the CINC's guidance. Combat Operations is responsible for the management and execution of that ATO. Additionally, Combat Operations adapts to the dynamics of battlefield conditions and makes force adjustments as required.

The AOC will also be augmented by the 609th Information Warfare Squadron. The first-of-its-kind squadron, activated on Oct. 1, 1995, will be dedicated to protecting information passed through communication and computer assets through the AOC. The 609th IWS will have initial operational capability in August of 1996.

CENTAF has been at the center of all the major deployments to Southwest Asia this decade.

The first combat test for CENTCOM came Aug. 2, 1990 when Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait. At the direction of the President, U.S. forces began deploying in support of Operation Desert Shield. Desert Shield became one of the largest logistic operations since World War II, with more than 500,000 U.S. personnel and their equipment being deployed to Southwest Asia..

When United Nations sanctions failed, coalition forces began Operation Desert Storm to force the withdrawal of Iraqi forces. CENTAF's primary mission was to destroy the Iraqi Army and inflict damage on Iraq's communications, infrastructure, and chemical production facilities. Air attacks continued for the next 43 days with 55,000 deployed Air Force personnel supporting an air campaign that generated more than 110,000 sorties and delivered more than 100,000 tons of ordnance. The effect on the Iraqi air forces was devastating with more than 181 aircraft destroyed in the air and on the ground. The combination of this highly effective air campaign and the brilliant execution of the ground campaign, resulted in a quick and decisive victory for the coalition forces. As a result, Hussein's military occupation of Kuwait ended Feb. 28, 1991.

Despite UN sanctions, Saddam Hussein continued to repress minority groups within Iraq. USCENTAF began Operation Southern Watch to enforce a southern Iraqi no-fly zone at the 32nd degree parallel. The purpose of the zone is to prevent Iraqi air attacks on civilians in Southern Iraq. This mission is still ongoing. In October 1994, Saddam Hussein moved several Republican Guard divisions toward Kuwait beyond the 32nd degree parallel and stepped up his rhetoric claiming Kuwait as the 19th province of Iraq. Operation Vigilant Warrior began with CENTAF deploying additional aircraft into the area of responsibility. As a result of these deployments Hussein once again removed his forces in compliance with UN resolutions. Because of Iraq's actions, our current mission parameters include a no fly and no drive zone at the 32nd degree parallel.

We support these missions with approximately 5,000 people and 120 aircraft at a number of different bases. Our people support these operations via a rotation system.

To gauge the Southern Watch operations tempo, the coalition flew over 23,000 sorties in 1994 alone. Additionally, since the end of open hostilities after Desert Storm, the coalition forces have flown more than 65,000 sorties.

In October of 1995, CENTAF tested a concept known as the Air Expeditionary Force. Reacting to increases in Iraqi military exercises and capabilities and with the absence of an aircraft carrier in the Persian Gulf, CENTAF successfully deployed 18 F-16s from the 20th Fighter Wing and the 347th Wing to Bahrain. The 45-day deployment proved CENTAF was prepared to quickly deploy a package of lethal aircraft to maintain air superiority in the region.

Source: AFCENT Web Page