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THE RAPID DEPLOYMENT MISSION

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The rapid deployment of US forces in response to crisis situations was an individual Service responsibility in 1950 and continued so throughout the decade of the 1950s. This responsibility was set out in the "Functions Paper" or Key West Agreement reached by Secretary of Defense James Forrestal and the Joint Chiefs of Staff in March 1948 and approved by President Harry Truman a month later. Stated in that document, under "common functions of the Armed Forces," as distinct from the functions of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were the following missions:

> To maintain in readiness mobile reserve forces, properly organized, trained, and equipped for employment in emergency.
>
> To organize, train, and equip forces for joint operations.[1]

In September 1951, the Departments of the Army, Navy, and Air Force issued the Joint Action Armed Forces (JAAF). This document was designed to serve as a statement of "principles, doctrines, and procedures governing the activities and performance of the Armed Forces when two or more Services or elements thereof are acting together to achieve a common task or mission." It repeated verbatim the common Service missions enumerated in the Functions Paper, including the one regarding maintenance of ready mobile reserve forces for emergency employment.[2]

The first Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF), which the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved and issued in November 1959 as JCS Pub 2, and which superseded the JAAF, retained individual Service responsibility for

maintaining in readiness "mobile reserve forces, properly organized, trained and equipped for employment in emergency." The UNAAF also set out as a Service function the responsibility for organizing, training, and equipping forces for assignment to unified or specified commands,[3] and the current UNAAF contains those same responsibilities today.[4]

In accordance with the Functions Paper, the JAAF, and the UNAAF, the Services carried out the preparation and movement of US forces to meet crises throughout the 1950s. In the Korean War, the US Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps all supplied forces, but each Service readied and deployed its own units to meet the initial emergency, and only upon arrival in Korea or Korean waters did these forces come under the command of General Douglas MacArthur, the unified commander for the conflict. So, too, in the US intervention in Lebanon in July 1958, US Marines from battalion landing teams from the SIXTH FLEET in the Mediterranean, Marine forces from the United States, and US Army troops from Europe were landed in Lebanon. Upon arrival there, they passed to the command of CINCNELM, the JCS specified commander responsible for the Middle East.

Throughout the 1950s, each of the military Services maintained an individual capacity to meet its responsibility for trained and organized forces ready for emergency employment. In 1960, these Service capabilities were as follows:

(1) The Strategic Army Corps (STRAC), organized in 1958, consisting of approximately 116,000 men organized into a corps headquarters, three combat-ready divisions, a logistical command headquarters, and non-divisional combat and combat-support units.

(2) The Tactical Air Command (TAC), established in March 1946, comprising 51,000 personnel and all resources necessary to equip, train, operate, and administer combatant air forces of approximately 850 combat (fighter and reconnaissance) and combat-support (air refueling and transport) aircraft.

(3) The USMC Fleet Marine Force (FMF), consisting of 114,400 troops organized in three combat divisions and three aircraft wings and divided into two commands, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic (FMFLANT), and Fleet Marine Force, Pacific (FMFPAC).

The US Navy had no separate emergency force, but had mobile, self-sustaining forces organized, equipped, and deployed to act with "speed, precision, graduated pressure, and staying power" in operations ranging from show-of-force to general war.[5]

The concept of joint task forces composed of elements of two or more Services was part of US military doctrine and procedures throughout the 1950s. In fact, the first joint task force under the Joint Chiefs of Staff, JTF 1, was established in February 1946 for the conduct of certain atomic tests. The JAAF of 1951 defined joint task force as follows:

> a joint force composed of assigned or attached elements of the Army, the Navy (Marine Corps), and the Air Force, or any two of these Services, which is constituted and so designated by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, by the commander of a Unified Command, or by the commander of an existing joint task force.

The JAAF stipulated that a joint task force should be established when "the mission to be accomplished has

a specific limited objective."[6] JCS Pub 2, UNAF, issued in November 1959, contained essentially the same definition for a joint task force but with the further qualification that:

> A joint task force, unlike a subordinate unified command, is not a permanent command arrangement. It is established when the mission to be accomplished has a specific limited objective . . . .[7]

The current Pub 2 contains this same definition and limitation.[8]

The joint task forces under the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the 1950s were for limited purposes. JTF 3, established in 1951, was responsible for the GREENHOUSE nuclear tests. Similarly, JTF 7 was charged with armed forces participation of testing of atomic weapons.

During the 1950s, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, themselves, had no mechanism for the preparation or deployment of forces in response to crises. It was only in March 1961, soon after the Kennedy Administration entered office, that the new Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara raised such a possibility. He asked the Joint Chiefs of Staff to develop a plan for the integration of STRAC and TAC into a unified command.[9]

The CSA, the CSAF, and the Chairman all supported the creation of such a unified command, provided it eventually included Navy and Marine Corps units. The CNO and CMC, however, both objected, fearing a loss of flexibility for their forces. The CNO suggested instead that troop carrier and ground-support aircraft be made organic to the Army or that a joint task force be organized to train air-ground teams for augmentation

of existing commands. The CMC believed the development of a "doctrine" for joint Army-Air Force operations would suffice.[10]

Secretary McNamara decided in favor of a new unified command. The United States Strike Command (USSTRICOM) was activated on 1 January 1962. Its mission included: provision of general reserve for reinforcement of other unified commands, training of assigned forces, development of joint doctrine, and planning for and execution, when directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, of contingency operations.[11]

In the 1960s, joint task forces continued to be used for specific purposes. In January 1961, JTF 4 was established under CINCLANT to carry out planning for possible operations in Africa south of the Sahara, an area unassigned to any command at that time. JTF 4 was disestablished on 30 November 1963 when the Joint Chiefs of Staff assigned USCINCSTRIKE the added responsibility for the area of the Middle East, Africa south of the Sahara, and South Asia under the concurrent title of CINCMEAFSA. This new assignment was in addition to the mission for augmentation of other CINCs and contingency operations planning.[12]

Other joint task forces in the 1960s included: (1) JTF 8 established in October 1961 to deal with military participation in atmospheric nuclear testing; (2) JTF 122 established by CINCLANT in 1961 for planning to meet Caribbean contingencies (it was disestablished on 20 October 1962 and all its functions assumed by CINCLANT incident to the Cuban missile crisis); (3) JTF 728 directed by the Secretary of Defense in 1966 to build and operate an infiltration interdiction (barrier) system between North and South Vietnam.

In April 1971, President Richard Nixon approved various changes in the Unified Command Plan, which became effective on 1 January 1972. At that time, USSTRICOM was divested of all responsibility for the MEAFSA area and redesignated the US Readiness Command (USREDCOM). The new command, "comprising all CONUS-based major combatant general purpose forces not assigned to another unified command," retained the same mission as USSTRICOM, i.e., providing a general reserve of combat-ready forces to reinforce other unified commands, conducting joint training and exercises with assigned forces, and developing recommendations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff regarding doctrine and "techniques for the joint employment of forces assigned." The forces assigned to USREDCOM were unchanged from those of USSTRICOM. (Responsibility for the MEAFSA area was assigned as follows: USCINCEUR became responsible for the Middle East; CINCPAC for South Asia; and Africa south of the Sahara remained unassigned.)[13]

The period 1972 through September 1979 brought no changes in the US mechanism or procedures for planning and employing US forces in contingency situations. Then in October 1979, President Jimmy Carter directed the establishment of the Caribbean Contingency Joint Task Force (CCJTF), under CINCLANT, to plan and train for possible operations in the Caribbean.[14] Subsequently, on 1 March 1980, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, at the direction of the Secretary of Defense, established a CONUS-based Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF), under the operational command of USCINCRED, to plan, train, exercise, and be prepared to deploy and employ a Rapid Deployment Force to respond to contingencies anywhere in the world. As an initial task, the RDJTF was assigned planning for Rapid Deployment Force operations in the Middle East and Africa.[15]

FOOTNOTES

1. "Functions of the Armed Forces and the Joint Chiefs of Staff," 21 Apr 48, reproduced in The Department of Defense: Documents on Establishment and Organization, 1944-1978 (1978), pp. 276-285.

2. Joint Action Armed Forces, Sep 51, p. 5.

3. JCS Pub 2, Unified Action Armed Force (UNAAF), Nov 59, p. 16.

4. JCS Pub 2, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF), Oct 74 (with changes), p. 16

5. (S) JCS 1259/547, 18 Aug 61, JMF 3140 (11 Apr 61) sec 3.

6. Joint Action Armed Forces, Sep 51, p. 33.

7. JCS Pub 2, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF), Nov 59, p. 42.

8. JCS Pub 2, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF), Oct 74 (with changes), p. 51.

9. Memo, SecDef to CJCS et al., 8 Mar 61, Encl to JCS 2101/413, 10 Mar 61, JMF 5000 (8 Mar 61) sec 1.

10. (U) JCSM-292-61 to SecDef, 1 May 61 (JCS 1259/535), JMF 3140 (11 Apr 61) sec 1. (S) JCSM-549-61 to SecDef, 18 Aug 61 (JCS 1259/547), same file, sec 4.

11. Memo, SecDef to CJCS, 19 Sep 61, JMF 3140 (11 Apr 61) sec 4.

12. (C) SM-1400-63 to CINCs et al., 20 Nov 63, JMF 5160 (11 Oct 63).

13. (C) SM-422-71 to CINCs, 30 Jun 71 (JCS 1259/715-45), JMF 046 (12 Sep 69) sec 10.

14. (S) Msg, JCS 3097 to CINCLANT, 021442Z Oct 79.

15. (S) SM-718-79 to CSA et al., 29 Nov 79 (JCS 1887/849-2), JMF 370 (29 Aug 79).