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"Future Shield/Future Storm"

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MY PURPOSE IS TO address operational issues related to Desert Shield and Desert Storm and implications for employment of U.S. armed forces in the emergent international order. I will structure my comments by asking three questions and, in the answers, will highlight issues and implications by relating Desert Shield to Future Shield and Desert Storm to Future Storm. The questions are:

- How do we go about creating Future Shield?
- How do we create the correlation of forces necessary to prevail in Future Storm with minimum casualties and damage?
- How do we organize to make best use of the forces committed?

How do we go about creating Future Shield?

In Operation Desert Shield, the term "Shield" referred to protection of political systems and to military protection of the economic resource of the oil fields. As it happened, the infrastructure to receive U.S. and allied forces was in place: ports, docks, airfields, roads, pipelines, storage facilities, even barracks for troops in many cases. No fighting was required to maintain the "shield," nor was there any significant guerilla or terrorist action to hinder the build-up. This should not deflect our attention from the urgent requirement to occupy, seize, or create a port and airfield in close proximity and to make that area militarily secure as the first step in Future Shield.

A future adversary, recognizing the vulnerability of a force during insertion and build-up, may well attack ports, piers, gasoline storage tanks, and pipelines with aircraft, missiles, and even land forces. He may have political influence over local cadres that could use guerilla tactics to destroy railroads, pipelines, and bridges in the lodgment area. So while the lodgment may be benign, as in Desert Shield, we should not bet on it.

General Shutler served as an active duty Marine both in the infantry (he is a veteran of the Chosin Reservoir) and in marine aviation (where he was involved in the inception of the EA-6A/B program). This essay is excerpted from remarks delivered at the Naval War College Current Strategy Forum held in June 1991.
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The creation of the lodgment is a joint commander's responsibility. It is tempting now to say, "Ah, an amphibious landing!"—but that is not necessarily the case. In most cases it will be necessary to create a littoral lodgment with a Littoral Shield—on land, in the air, at sea, under the sea, and in space—to protect the arrival and offloading of ships and aircraft. The function of all services during the lodgment is to protect one another and the arriving ships and aircraft, not immediately to carry the fight to the enemy. In other words, if there is any immediate threat from missiles, aircraft, mines, or submarines, we must give Patriot, Hawk, anti-mine warfare, and anti-submarine warfare systems priority for movement over tanks, attack helicopters, and routine resupply.

It is worth noting that the tactical action during the build-up, if we must fight to maintain this Shield, demands a local commander and staff that can fight the total force (land, air, sea, undersea, and space) all of a piece, often hour-by-hour and occasionally minute-by-minute. I would call him a "three-star commander in chief (CinC)," and he will need a "three-star CinC" staff.

*How do we create the correlation of forces necessary to prevail
in Future Storm with minimum casualties and damage?*

Here Desert Shield is a model. We wait!! It is almost certain that patience will be stretched to the utmost by Murphy effects, by the confusion of moving to a new location, and by political demands. Having built the strength of the Shield as a first priority, we must take the time to assemble a force with a highly favorable correlation to the enemy arrayed against us. It may look like nothing much is happening, and the evening news will be boring; nonetheless, the issue will be: how much is enough to ensure quick, decisive, offensive results? In the "enough" we must include sufficient ground and air transport, whether requisitioned locally or brought in, to sustain the tactical plan.

It is useful to think of the process like a river: steady flow is usually contained within the banks, but flow stored by a dam, if released suddenly, creates a flood that sweeps all in its path. Military action is often most decisive in the flow-store-flood pattern.

*How do we organize to make best use of the
forces committed?*

Here Desert Storm is instructive only up to a point. The success of air power, first to establish air superiority, then to damage the military infrastructure, then to shape the battlefield, has led many advocates to say air power won the war. There are also those who point out that centralized tasking of air—the air tasking order—was the instrument by which the U.S. Air Force won the war. But those who know the details report that the air tasking order, while it did deconflict

and coordinate the air effort, did not necessarily coordinate and synchronize the air action with land, sea, or undersea action. Also, the order's complexity, lateness of arrival, and sheer size often left remote air units little time for planning.

The land action as it unfolded was really two separate campaigns, east and west. The nature of the enemy and the effectiveness of the overall air effort created a situation where neither the land forces nor the air forces took heavy casualties. In the eastern area, the process whereby the marine expeditionary force commander released "excess" air sorties to tasks other than support of the marines, and in turn negotiated a coordinated air tasking schedule, seemed to work reasonably well. In the west, where Iraqi movement in the desert was tantamount to detection and hence to destruction, battle area interdiction allowed the land campaign to proceed with overwhelming correlation of forces at the points of contact. As a result, the issue of control of tactical aviation was largely masked by the unique and very successful features of Desert Storm.

The larger issue, as I see it, is *how do we fight the joint force of Future Shield and Future Storm most effectively?* Given that aviation is a flexible asset that can be massed anywhere within the range of the aircraft and should be commanded to do so, when does the tasking process become so bureaucratic, cumbersome, and time consuming that the joint effort suffers?

To put it more simply: if bigger is better, when is more too much?

When and where should the fighting forces (whether air, land, sea, undersea, or space) be grouped into joint fighting units where the synergistic, cooperative, total results are better than those achieved by functional application of forces?

This is not a simple extension of the Air Force-Marine Corps argument on control of tactical aviation. The question is: when and how does a numbered fleet commander, mostly concerned with operations at sea, transition to a "three-star CinC" with one foot at sea and one foot ashore? When and how does a marine expeditionary force commander, mostly concerned with operations of an air-ground team ashore, transition to a "three-star CinC" with one foot ashore and one foot at sea? When and how does an army corps commander or a numbered air force commander transition from being a specialist in functional land or air combat into a "three-star CinC" capable of commanding air-land battle forces in a continental theater? Or, for that matter, how does any senior officer learn how to command air-land-sea-undersea-space forces in a littoral theater?

To me, the major implication for future fighting is the need to create joint fighting organizations and to educate senior commanders and joint fighting staffs to operate and fight with synchronized and coordinated tactical effort.

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