

*The Secretariat of the Fifteenth Annual  
Virginia International Crisis  
Simulation Presents:*



**United States Central  
Command**

*Chaired by John Hoehn*

VICS XV

To the Officers of Central Command:

My name is John Hoehn, and I am a fourth year here at the University of Virginia. I am majoring in Foreign Affairs with concentrations in Russian, Central Asian, and South Asian politics. I am an active member of the Virginia International relations Organization, our Model United Nations club. I have been to several conferences, and this will be my third time being a chairman, having been a chair for the Executive Yuan at VICS XIV and the German side of the Allied Invasion of Western Europe for our High School Conference, VAMUN XXIX. I have several interests: the first is military history, the second is counter-terrorism, and the third is military logistics, strategy, and technology. In my free time I enjoy outdoor activities such as hiking, backpacking, and canoeing.

I have several goals for this committee. The first is to provide an insight into the US military in its operations. This has been a fascination of mine and I would like to pass on this enthusiasm to others. The second is to provide a unique understanding of such diverse and difficult regions of the world. The final goal is to provide a fast paced, intense experience that I hope each of you will remember for many years to come. This committee will take a unique focus on events, focusing primarily on military planning and strategy, which is different from most of your experiences in Model UN because of primary focus on diplomatic aspects. Though diplomacy plays a major role in military operations, this will not be the main focus of this committee.

I have included several sections in this background guide. The first is an introduction and the history of Central Command from its inception as the RDJTF in 1980 to the present. The second is a state of the region, briefly describing regional break downs as well as different aspects of each country. The third is the chain of command and operating procedures. Finally I have included three topics: Iraq, Afghanistan, and regional treats. In preparing for this council it will be vital for each commander to have a good understanding of the US military, especially in current military doctrine and basic strategy, as well as having a detailed understanding of the region, in terms of geography and politics, and current events. Assumptions for this background guide will change with current events; this will drive my overarching goal is to be as realistic as possible in the simulation ahead.

If you have any questions about this committee, the background guide, your positions, or just want to get to know me better, my email is [jrh2bk@virginia.edu](mailto:jrh2bk@virginia.edu); please do not hesitate to email me any questions. I hope to get to know each and every one of you during this fun filled and intense weekend.

Until March,

John Hoehn

## *Introduction*

This committee will be the United States Central Command, a Unified Combatant Command focused on one of six regions of the world. Central Command Area of Responsibility (AOR) is huge, covering such a diverse area from Egypt, the farthest west, to Pakistan in the east, and includes all of the Middle East, Central Asia, and some of South Asia. The other regional Unified Combat Commands are USAFRICOM or Africa Command responsible for Africa minus Egypt, USEUCOM or European Command responsible for all of Europe, Russia, Israel and Turkey, USPACCOM or Pacific Command responsible for all of the Pacific, parts of South Asia, South East Asia, and East Asia, USNORCOM or North American Command responsible for North America, and finally USSOUTHCOM or Southern Command responsible for South and Central America and the Caribbean. Functional commands include USJFCOM or Joint Forces Command responsible for the transformation of the US military, USSOCOM or Special Operations Command responsible for all special operations forces (SOF), USSTRATCOM or Strategic Command responsible for nuclear and space capabilities and systems, and USTRANSCOM or Transportation Command responsible for transportation including airlift and sealift capabilities. Each command has a commander who is a four star general officer or flag officer as well as a deputy commander, a three-star general officer or flag officer.

CENTCOM has a large area of AOR with 27 countries including: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia,

Seychelles, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Uzbekistan, and Yemen. This AOR also incorporates two major conflict regions, Afghanistan and Iraq, where the US military has deployed almost 100,000 troops in each theatre. There are also several conflict prone regions in this AOR, including Lebanon, Pakistan, Syria, and Yemen. The reason these countries are grouped together is that they have similar religious beliefs and cultures. Almost every country believes in some sort of Islam, though they divided into the Sunni or Shiite sects. The majority, especially those in the Middle East, have a distinctly Arab culture, loosely based off of early Saudi Arabian civilization.<sup>1</sup> Most importantly many of these countries have their laws based off of the Quran, the holy book of Islam.

In total Central Command has over 200,000 military and civilian personnel operating under its responsibility. Its headquarters is in MacDill Air Force base in Tampa, Florida with a forward headquarters in Camp As Sayliyah Doha, Qatar.

## *History*

Through several events in the 1970s, specifically the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Iranian revolution the Pentagon realized that it required a military presence in the region. With congressional approval the DoD initially formed the Rapid Deployment Joint Taskforce (RDJTF). This command was solely responsible for operations in the Middle East, Africa, and parts of South Asia. The main rationale for the formation of this new unit was because of the Carter Doctrine's emphasis on Middle Eastern

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<sup>1</sup> See the CENTCOM website.

oil and the importance of the Persian Gulf overall. The RDJTF originally was based in MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. Unfortunately there was no clear chain of command for the RDJTF commander to report to, and Washington began to realize that a new Unified Combatant Command needed to be formed.<sup>2</sup>

CENTCOM was founded in 1983 after strong congressional support. The first major challenge in the region was the Marine Barracks bombing in Beirut in 1983. This incident killed 303 people, including 241 service members, as well as injured 75 others. Shortly afterwards American military forces began to withdraw from Lebanon. During the 1980s the main focus for Central Command was the Iran-Iraq War. CENTCOM's main responsibility was to observe, and quietly supply the Iraq army with arms and limited intelligence. This war ended in 1988 with a ceasefire agreement signed between the two countries.

Both Iran and Iraq were left bankrupt at the end of the war. In mid-1989 the Iraqi army began to mass forces on the border with its neighbor, Kuwait. The President of Iraq, Saddam Hussein, claimed that Kuwait had historical ties under Iraqi control, using the Ottoman Empire as the main reason. In 1990 the Iraqi Army invaded Kuwait and within two days had defeated the unprepared Kuwaiti Army, and seizing control of Kuwait City. Shortly afterwards Saddam Hussein installed his cousin as governor of Kuwait. Global opinion immediately back lashed against Iraqi actions. Within hours of the invasion the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution, Resolution 660, condemning the invasion. Following Resolution 660 the Security Council passed

Resolutions 661 and 665 which placed economic sanctions on Iraq and began a naval blockade.

Worried that Iraq was poised to attack the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia the US began Operation Desert Shield. With this build-up the US Navy deployed two carrier battle groups which included the USS Eisenhower and Independence and their accompaniment ships, 48 F-15 fighters from the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing, and the two battleships USS Missouri and Wisconsin. Ground forces would eventually build up to a force of over 900,000 soldiers and marines from around the world, including over 500,000 from the United States. In total 33 nations other than the US contributed troops to the coalition, including: Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Greece, Italy, Kuwait, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, south Korea, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Spain, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.

The Security Council on November 29, 1990 passed Resolution 978 which ordered the Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait by January 15, 1991. This resolution authorized all necessary means to bring Iraq in compliance with Resolution 660. On January 17 coalition forces began the air war against Iraq. Towards the end of February coalition forces led by the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Divisions advanced on Kuwait to liberate it. Within three days the Iraqi army was in retreat, with coalition forces entering Iraq. Coalition forces also launched offensive action into Iraq led by the XVIII Airborne Corps. On

<sup>2</sup> See the Global Securities website on CENTCOM.

February 28, 1991 President George H. W. Bush announced a cease fire and end of operations.<sup>3</sup>

Overall this was a proud moment for CENTCOM. General Norman Schwarzkopf, Commander-in-Chief of Central Command (CINCCENT), led all operations, and developed the strategy for coalition forces. This was also the first major operation for the US military since the defeat in Vietnam in the mid-1970s. All of a sudden CENTCOM was the center of government leaders' attention due to its regional importance.

With the Soviet Union dissolved on December 25, 1991, 15 new nations were born, including those in Central Asia – Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Realizing that these new countries had more in common culturally and linguistically with the Middle East and South Asia than with Europe, their responsibility was transferred from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to CENTCOM in an attempt to group them with other similar nations.

CENTCOM continued to have major events under its AOR. There was continued fighting in Israel over Palestine. The UN established a no fly zone in Iraq shortly after hostilities ended in 1991. The US Air Force led these efforts in patrolling Northern Iraq and the no fly zone. Iraq continued to not cooperate with the US and the rest of the world. The UN attempted to send weapons inspectors into Iraq to verify that Iraq was not building Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), to which Saddam Hussein would limit them in what they could view, or not allow them inside the country at all. Finally, in December 1998 President Clinton

ordered the bombing of Iraq under Operation Desert Fox. This operation bombed chemical plants and other buildings suspected of producing WMDs. The end result was that large amounts of the Iraqi infrastructure were destroyed. At the same time as Desert Fox the US launched Tomahawk cruise missiles against Sudan and Afghanistan in an attempt to destroy terrorist infrastructure, specifically al Qaeda infrastructure. In response to the terror attacks against the US Embassy bombings in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania and Nairobi, Kenya.

On September 11, 2001, al Qaeda launched the largest attack on American soil in history, flying commercial airliners into the World Trade towers in New York City, the Pentagon in Arlington, Virginia, and crashing in a field in Pennsylvania which was suspected of planning to attack the Capital Building in Washington DC. Within days the CIA launched operations in Afghanistan in an attempt to build contacts and eliminate the al Qaeda stronghold. By October 2001 SOF, specifically Army Special Forces and Air Force Combat Controllers, were in Afghanistan leading Northern Alliance forces and eliminating the Taliban and al Qaeda. Though led by CIA Special Activities Division operators, specifically Gary Berntsen, General Tommy Franks led the military aspect of the operation. Hundreds of special operators were deployed to Afghanistan, along with thousands of Marines and other conventional forces. By December 2001 the Taliban had been deposed as rulers of Afghanistan, and al Qaeda had fled to Tora Bora. Special operators from both the CIA and SOF continually called in air strikes, bombing the fleeing Osama bin Laden (UBL) and al Qaeda. Unfortunately there were not enough personnel in the Tora Bora region leaving al Qaeda and UBL too escape into the FATA region of northern Pakistan. Operation Enduring

<sup>3</sup> See President Bush's speech on the Miller Center website.

Freedom (OEF), continued to be the major focus for the US military and its allies for the next year and a half. This was a stunning success because no army since Alexander the Great had conquered Afghanistan, including the arch-rival Soviet Union in the 1970s and 80s. At the time it seemed like Afghanistan would only require a minimal commitment from the US to help rebuild its infrastructure.<sup>4</sup>

In late 2002 the global community confronted Iraq about its WMD program. Under orders from the President of the United States, the military began to build up forces again in the Persian Gulf region. Saddam Hussein would not allow UN weapons inspectors into the country again. The United States, using the UN Security Council, continued to issue ultimatums to Iraq to end its weapons programs; Saddam announced in December of 2002 that he had. At the time no one believed that Saddam had ended his weapons program, and in March 2003 the US military, again led by CENTCOM Commander General Tommy Franks, invaded Iraq. Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) at first was a stunning success; the US military used fast moving assault forces to attack the Iraqis and quickly come upon the outskirts of Baghdad. Once coalition forces entered Baghdad, however, they stood down and allowed chaos and anarchy to rule throughout the country for several weeks.<sup>5</sup>

By April 2003 the new CENTCOM Commander, General John Abizaid, announced that an insurgency had begun in Iraq. By the time the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) came to power to attempt to rebuild Iraq the insurgency was in full swing. Among the most

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<sup>4</sup> See Berntsen's *Jawbreaker*.

<sup>5</sup> See Chandrasekaran's *Imperial Life in the Emerald City* and Packer's *Assassins' Gate* in *America in Iraq*.

unpopular decrees that the CPA made was deBaathification, an attempt to eliminate the old regime from power along with disbanding the Iraqi Army. Because of these policies and more that alienated the population from the government, accompanied by the lack of manpower, the CPA was marginally successful at best in its attempts to rebuild Iraq, and in some places leaving it in more of a mess than it was when it began. The insurgency continued with leaders like Muqtada al-Sadar in Baghdad, and the Kurdish forces in the north, coupled with the Iranian supported Shiite in the south created an enormous challenge. Marine forces launched an offensive against insurgents in Fallujah in 2004 as a response to the killings of four American contractors. Other offensives were launched throughout the country as well.<sup>6</sup>

Eventually the Iraqi insurgency began to become more subdued, less suicide bombings, and less attacks on American service members. Since President Barack Obama assumed office in 2009 he has pledged to withdraw American forces. President Obama has pledged to withdraw US forces from Iraq by the end of 2011.

Afghanistan on the other hand has heated up significantly. The US military has suffered more and more casualties in the region. Because the US was not committed to eliminating the Taliban and al Qaeda in late 2001 they have been able to resurge. After the battle of Tora Bora both the Taliban and al Qaeda retreated into Pakistan; from there they have since regrouped and been able to attack into Afghanistan, creating mass chaos, and putting a major challenge on the coalition forces and the Afghan government. On top of this unconventional aspect created from these two

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<sup>6</sup> See Chandrasekaran's *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*.

groups the current government led by Hamed Karzai has been accused of corruption, most notably in the elections of 2009.<sup>7</sup>

In 2007 the Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced the creation of AFRICOM, a new unified command with a regional focus on Africa. Because of this new command CENTCOM transferred several countries from their AOR over to AFRICOM. These countries included Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan. CENTCOM continues to work closely with AFRICOM as it develops its command in its AOR. CENTCOM also works closely with EUCOM in Middle East matters because both Turkey and Israel are under its AOR. Other Unified Commands that CENTCOM has a close working relationships are with SOCOM, STRATCOM, and TRANSCOM.

### ***State of the Region***

The state of the AOR is extremely diverse and in cases in chaos. Several regions in the AOR need to be highlighted: the Middle East, the Arabian Peninsula, Persian Gulf, Central Asia, and South Asia. Each region is vital to this command, and each poses their own unique threats.

#### **The Middle East**

The Middle East which includes Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt has since calmed down. Though tensions are high with Israel between these countries, especially between Israel and Lebanon who fought a war with each other in 2006, there has been an unstable peace. Both Egypt and Syria fought wars with Israel in the 1960s and 1970s, but have not fought since. Though there are still large amounts of

animosity towards Israel, no country at this time is willing to cause a war. Some things to watch for in the Middle East would be terrorism and conflicts between Hezbollah and Israel.

#### **Arabian Peninsula**

The Arabian Peninsula remains a vital interest to the United States, mainly due to petroleum exports. For the most part the countries on the peninsula, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and United Arab Emirates are relatively stable. Yemen on the other hand has been fighting rebels in the north who are supported by al Qaeda. Recent events have shown however some extremist attitudes in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, with al Qaeda operations beginning to surface in Yemen. On the whole these are structured societies with the ruling class propped up because of oil revenue. Concerns for this region are radical Islamists, revolutionary movements against governments, and terrorism.

#### **Persian Gulf**

The main countries that make up the Persian Gulf are Iraq and Iran. Iraq has stabilized since 2003. There is now a permanent government and a constitution established; a stark difference from the chaos that ensued after the invasion. Since President Obama came to office he has announced that the US will be withdrawing from the country. The future however for US forces is uncertain, and a strict timetable might not be feasible with resurgence in violence lately. Iran poses a major security risk for the United States because of its nuclear program. Since its revolution in 1979 its government has been distinctly anti-American in its policies, and has worked on developing nuclear weapons. In the 1980s Iran fought Iraq in a long drawn out war at a large cost to both sides. Since then it has been named as member of the Axis of Evil by President Bush, along

<sup>7</sup> See Jones' *Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan* and Bertsen's *Jawbreaker*.

with North Korea and the former regime of Iraq, Iran has persisted in resisting the United States, especially in its support of Hezbollah. This region poses the greatest threats to US security of any other. The biggest challenges for this region are first the Iranian nuclear program, second stabilizing Iraq, the potential for the Iranian government to be overthrown, and finally the potential of a war with Israel.

### **Central Asia**

Central Asia has formed several interesting relationships with the United States. With the collapse of the Soviet Union the United States pressured these countries, specifically Kazakhstan, to return all nuclear weapons to the Russian Federation. With the raise of al Qaeda in its attacks on the US on September 11<sup>th</sup> Central Asia has become a vital ally in the US's Global War on Terror (GWOT). Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan in particular provided airbases for the US Air Force to US in assistance with OEF in Afghanistan. Shortly afterwards, Uzbekistan revoked rights to its bases forcing the United States to rely on others. Turkmenistan has also supported the US's cause in GWOT specifically with OEF. Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have large oil and gas reserves which US companies have been exploring in an attempt to find other sources other than Middle East reserves. Challenges in this region include terrorism, the change of unstable governments, and the loss of US military bases and assets.

### **South Asia**

The final region to focus on is South Asia, which includes Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan poses a huge challenge to US security; the government in Afghanistan is corrupt led by the Southern leader Hamed Karzai, the Taliban has found resurgence in the country, especially in Helmand and Kandahar provinces in the south. Afghanistan is still

divided by the north-south divide, and seems to still be a breeding ground for terrorism. Pakistan has stability issues of its own, coupled with the fact that they have nuclear weapons and there is a large security issue. Al Qaeda and the Taliban operate in the FATA region of Pakistan, which borders Afghanistan. The United States has launched drone attacks using Global Hawks, Reapers and Predator drones in an attempt to eliminate these threats. The challenges in this region include terrorism, the collapse of either or both government, and the collapse of a nuclear power, Pakistan.

### ***Structure***

This council will operate as a military command. The CENTCOM Commander will be responsible for all operations in the AOR, and answers to only the Secretary of Defense and the President. The deputy and component commanders will answer to the CENTCOM Commander. All field units will answer to their respective service component commanders. Members from the State Department and CIA will not have any direct command responsibility, however they will be responsible for representing their respective agency in the military command structure and to provide more regional based advice in discussions.

As commander, the CENTCOM Commander will set the agenda on discussions at their discretion, with input from other commanders in the command. For simulation purposes however the commander cannot make unilateral orders, but instead must pass orders through the council. All major decisions and orders must pass with a 2/3rds vote in favor, while all other decisions and orders will be passed with a simple majority. The chairperson will ultimately decide whether a decision is a major command decision or not. All other operations the CENTCOM may set at their

discretion. All field commanders issue orders and press releases to their respective units at their own discretion. Whenever the commander is incapacitated the deputy commander will step up to assume command. Several members on this council are not represented on the actual CENTCOM command structure, however for simulation purposes all members will be assumed to have equal stature to their rank and have voting privileges.

Each commander will be responsible for fulfilling their duties to the full extent. If an officer fails to complete their duties fully, or is judged to not be a proper fit by the President they will be relieved of their respective command. In an instance that a commander is relieved of command the President will select a new officer to the unoccupied position.

As commander, the CENTCOM Commander will have both the most privileges and responsibilities of any officer in the command. The CENTCOM Commander will be a four-star General Officer from the Army. The Deputy CENTCOM Commander, a Lieutenant General from the Marine Corps, will answer directly answer to the CENTCOM Commander, and will help to oversee operations in theater and at times assume the commander's position when the commander is indisposed. The Deputy Commander will be the second highest ranking officer in the command, ranking just underneath the Commander.

Attached to this command are several officers who will report directly to the CENTCOM Commander: United States Forces-Iraq Commander, United States Forces-Afghanistan Commander, Director of Near East Intelligence, Director of Central and South Asian Intelligence, Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, Assistant Secretary of

State for South and Central Asian Affairs, Joint Special Operations Commander (JSOC). United States Forces-Iraq Commander is a four-star general, answering to the CENTCOM Commander, Secretary of Defense, and the President. United States Force-Iraq Commander is the senior military commander in Iraq, responsible for all operations and troops in the theater. The United States Forces - Afghanistan Commander is a four-star general officer in the Army and is responsible for all US forces and operations in Afghanistan. Both the Director of Near East Intelligence and Director of Central and South Asian Intelligence are senior CIA advisors. They will have the equivalent military rank of a Lieutenant General. These two will be experts in intelligence operations in their respective area. The Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs and the Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs are both representatives from the State Department who hold the equivalent in rank of Lieutenant General. These State Departments officials will be responsible for advising the command on regional politics, cultures, and customs. The JSOC Commander is a Vice Admiral and is responsible for all joint special operations missions throughout the world, with a focus on counter-terrorism.

There will be four service commanders represented in CENTCOM – Air Force Central Command (AFCENT), Army Central Command (ARCENT), Marine Central Command (MARCENT), and Navy Central Command (NAVCENT) – along with a Special Operations Central Command (SOCCENT) Commander. Each of these will hold the rank of either Lieutenant General or Vice Admiral – Lieutenant Generals for the Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps while a Vice Admiral for the Navy, while the SOCCENT Commander will hold the rank of Major General in the Army.

Each of these respective officers will be responsible for being experts in their services' operations and implementation.

The Air Force will have three numbered air forces represented; the third, ninth and twenty-second air forces. Each numbered air force will be commanded by a Lieutenant General and will answer to the AFCENT Commander. This is a field command meaning that each officer will actually have command responsibility of airmen. The Third Air Force is mainly a fighter based air force and the commander will have the following units under their command: 31<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing, 48<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, 52<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Wing, 86<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, and 100th Air Refueling Wing, along with support elements. The Ninth Air Force is mainly a fighter oriented air force and the commander will have the following units under their command: 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing, 4<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, 20<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, 23d Wing, 33d Fighter Wing, along with support elements and non-flying elements. The Twenty-second Air Force is mainly an air lift air force and the commander will have the following units under their command: 94<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, 302d Air Lift Wing, 315<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, 403d Wing 440<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, 439<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, 512<sup>th</sup> Airlift Wing, and support elements.

Army Units under ARCENT command will be the Third Army, the I Corps, the III Corps, and the XVIII Airborne Corps. The Third Army is a field command commanded by a Lieutenant General, and will provide all Army Units in the AOR. The Third Army Commander answers directly to ARCENT Command. Each of the corps commanders will report to the Third Army Commander and ARCENT Commander. Each corps commander will hold the rank of Lieutenant General. The I Corps Commander will have the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry

Division and support elements under their command. The III Corps Commander will have the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry regiment along with support elements under their command. Finally, the XVIII Airborne Corps Commander will have the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, 101<sup>st</sup> Air Assault, 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, and support elements under their command.

MARCENT will have two different units reporting to it, the I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Commander and the II Marine Expeditionary Force Commander. Each MEF Commander will be a Lieutenant General in the Marine Corps, and will report directly to the MARCENT Commander. The I Marine Expeditionary Force Commander will be commander of a Corps sized Marine unit consisting of the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Air Wing, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 11<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, 13<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, 15<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit and support elements. The II Marine Expeditionary Force Commander will be commander of a Corps sized Marine unit consisting of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Air Wing, 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Expeditionary Brigade, 22<sup>nd</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, 24<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, 26<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit, along with support elements. The

Finally, the NAVCENT components will be the commanders of both the Fifth and Sixth Fleet. Each fleet commander is a Vice Admiral in the Navy. The fifth Fleet Commander will be commander of all naval forces in the Persian Gulf. This unit will have between 2 and 3 carrier battle groups operating under its command. The Sixth Fleet Commander will be commander of all naval forces in the

Mediterranean. Each fleet commander will report to the NAVCENT Commander.

## *Topics*

### **Topic 1: Iraq**

President Obama has ordered US forces to withdraw from Iraq by the end of next year. This creates several problems for the military. The first of these problems is logistically how to remove 150,000 service members who are currently serving in the theater and their equipment while at the same time provide security to Iraq. Though the Iraqi government and its military and police force appear to be willing to take control of their own security, recent events have begun to question the effectiveness and the stability of these organizations. This would require large amounts of coordination between the commander in Iraq, CENTCOM as a whole, and TRANSCOM to follow the President's orders.

The second problem is the future of the US military in Iraq. Should the United States continue to keep troops in Iraq as it has done in Germany, Japan, and Korea, or should the military completely remove itself from the region? Even more important is what to do with the military bases that the US has established. Also, should the United States continue a military partnership with the Iraqi military, or should they be left on their own to fend for themselves?

The final problem is stability. Through lots of advisement the Iraqi government, its military, and its police force are up and running. These organizations currently conduct their own operations with limited, if any, help from the US military and government. How stable are these groups however? The United States needs to be ready to rescue the Iraqi government if, when we

leave, they delve into utter chaos and are no longer able to support themselves. What happens once the military is gone if the Iranian government decides that they are going to attempt to influence affairs in Iraq?

Several questions and problems need to be solved to allow the United States to withdraw from Iraq in a manner it can be proud of. The problems highlighted are by no means the only problems, and many unforeseen problems might need to be addressed to help promote the safety, security, and wellbeing of Iraq for the future.

### **Topic 2: Afghanistan**

Afghanistan poses the greatest challenge to the US military currently. The Taliban has seen resurgence in its operations, and plies to control the government. The government has been accused of being corrupt, with hard evidence against Hamed Karzai during the elections this past fall. The country has not been united, nor frankly has it ever been in its entire history. Finally, the US suffers casualties daily in its attempts to provide security for the civilian population.

Afghanistan is extremely diverse with many ethnic groups, and is predominately run by War Lords, not the central government. In large measure the country is divided regionally with the northern peoples who formed the Northern Alliance before OEF in 2001, and the Pashtu majority in the south. Neither group especially cares for each other with this more than evident in their brutal history with each other. The central government is nominally in power, led by a Pashtu man from the south, with great resentment in the north.

The borders of Afghanistan are porous, meaning that people come and go as they please. The Hindu Kush Mountains that divide the

country and its border with Pakistan present an easy entry point to anyone who wishes to cross. There is almost no border control, especially to the east, meaning that the Taliban and al Qaeda easily cross to wreck havoc on US forces, only to easily disappear across the border again. The provinces in the south, especially Helmand and Kandahar are some of the most dangerous places in the world because of the Taliban resurgence. Southern Afghanistan has more sympathies with the Taliban than the north does, and as such tacitly allows the Taliban to operate in these areas and to promote chaos.

Furthermore the people of Afghanistan are hard to trust. Because of their long, bloody history, the Afghan people rarely if ever trust outsiders, including neighbors only miles down the road. To bring loyalty the Afghan people require bribes both through monetary means and being supplied with equipment. In many cases the Afghan people have been fighting each other for centuries, meaning that their society is more warrior driven than most. Several foreign soldiers and contractors have died because the falsely trusted their Afghan counterparts.

There are several questions that arise. How does the US military try to bring order to a place that has never really had it? How to unite a country that is not a country? How does the US military help provide a stable government for Afghanistan? Finally, how can the US military eliminate the Taliban and al Qaeda from the region, especially with local support? There are many other questions that arise from this region, but these appear to be the most pressing. One final major question does stand out, however, can the US military *successfully* remove itself from Afghanistan?

### Topic 3: Regional Threats

There exist several threats in the region, some of which have already been highlighted. Several threats, however, are unseen even by the best trained analyst in the government. Many countries in the region are extremely unstable for many reasons, and peace and order exist unstably at best, and in some places such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan this peace does not exist at all.

CENTCOM must be prepared to deal with nuclear weapons. How will the US military proceed with a new nuclear member, Iran? Inevitably if Iran were to attempt to further their nuclear program more Israel would presumably launch preemptive strikes as an attempt to stem the threat. Would the United States approve such an action, and would they even be willing to support it? On the other side of nuclear weapons, how would the US military deal with a fractured state? Pakistan's government is unstable and is unable to control regions of its own country; furthermore its main focus appears to be more about India than the threat to its west in Afghanistan. How would CENTCOM deal with a fractured state that all of a sudden had nuclear weapons loose? This has arguably never happened in world history. Furthermore, Pakistan would presumably not have control of its weapons, how then to secure them? In a region with UBL, al Qaeda, and the Taliban operating it is unacceptable to allow them to have access to the world's most powerful weapon. How would CENTCOM secure these weapons?

Terrorism is probably the second greatest threat to the region. Several countries in the AOR have some sort of terrorist activities, especially Afghanistan, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Yemen. How should the United States proceed with these threats to its own security? The US

currently has only used drone aircraft to attack these targets, not sending in ground forces to completely secure targets. Should this practice continue to be followed, or rather should the US military step up its efforts in GWOT to combating terrorism abroad?

Several countries have unstable governments. The United States and its military need to be prepared to deal with changes in governments throughout the world, and especially this region. Some of these countries have despotic dictators like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and if the people choose to revolt how will CENTCOM react to these issues. Furthermore, how would CENTCOM react if a country changed its allegiance against the United States?

Peace in the Middle East is unstable at best. The US military might need to step in to support some nation in the Middle East, possibly Israel if the threat were great enough. Furthermore, Israel might instigate a conflict and the United States would have to be prepared to condemn and even counter Israeli aggression.

### ***Conclusion***

Several important issues have been raised to you commanders. Both Afghanistan and Iraq represent current US military operations that are going on and its obligations. As commanders on CENTCOM you will be asked to decide the future of these engagements. Also, being a regional command, there needs to

be a readiness to accept changes in regional stability. Several threats pose security risks to the United States, namely a nuclear Iran, the collapse of Pakistan, and widespread terrorism in several of these states. As CENTCOM commanders you need to be ready to accept all challenges that this region of the world throws at you, and you need to be ready to accept both success and failure as they come. Many of these problems are unsolvable currently, but hopefully as commanders you can use your influence to help change the way the world operates and make it a better place in the future.

### **Questions to think about:**

1. How to proceed with Iraq?
2. What signs should the US military look for in withdrawing from Iraq?
3. What should the US military's posture be with the withdrawal from Iraq? Should all troops leave, or should there be some bases left to still exert influence?
4. What should be the new strategy in Afghanistan?
5. Is Afghanistan winnable? Can Afghanistan be rebuilt?
6. How can CENTCOM use its influence to unite Afghanistan?
7. How should we deal with Iran?
8. What should the military plans be for a collapse of Pakistan, especially regarding its nuclear arsenal?
9. How should CENTCOM proceed in the GWOT? Should terrorism be the number one priority?

## Appendix A: Maps

### Map of AOR



Map of Iraq



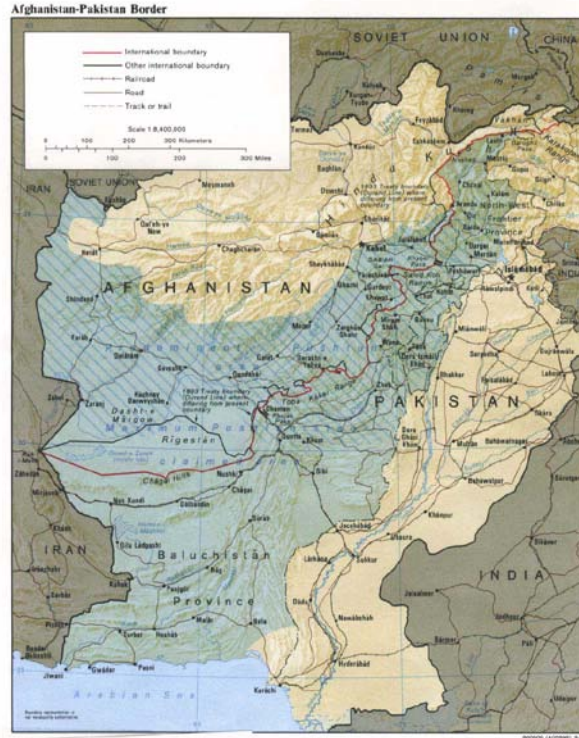
#### Administrative Divisions

Iraq has 18 provinces (*muhâfazat*, singular *muhâfazah*).

● Province capital

1. As Sulaymâniyah
2. Bağhdâd
3. Karbalâ'
4. Al Qâdisiyah

### Map of Afghanistan and Pakistan



### Map of Afghanistan and its Provinces



**Appendix B: Military Ranks**

**Officer Ranks**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Air Force</b>	<b>Army</b>	<b>Marine Corps</b>	<b>Navy</b>
<b>O-1</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant	2 <sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant	Ensign
<b>O-2</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieutenant	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieutenant	1 <sup>st</sup> Lieutenant	Lieutenant Junior Grade
<b>O-3</b>	Captain	Captain	Captain	Lieutenant
<b>O-4</b>	Major	Major	Major	Lieutenant Commander
<b>O-5</b>	Lieutenant Colonel	Lieutenant Colonel	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander
<b>O-6</b>	Colonel	Colonel	Colonel	Captain
<b>O-7</b> 1 Star Officer	Brigadier General	Brigadier General	Brigadier General	Rear Admiral Lower Half
<b>O-8</b> 2 Star Officer	Major General	Major General	Major General	Rear Admiral Upper Half
<b>O-9</b> 3 Star Officer	Lieutenant General	Lieutenant General	Lieutenant General	Vice Admiral
<b>O-10</b> 4 Star Officer	General	General	General	Admiral

**Appendix C: Glossary**

AFCENT – Air Force Central Command

COIN - Counterinsurgency

MEF – Marine Expeditionary Force

SOCOM – US Special Operations command

AFRICOM – US Africa Command

CPA – Coalition Provisional Authority

MEU – Marine Expeditionary Unit

SOF – Special Operations Forces

ANA – Afghan National Army

EUCOM – US European Command

NAVCENT – Naval Central Command

STRATCOM – US Strategic Command

ANP – Afghan National Police

DoD – Department of Defense

OEF – Operation Enduring Freedom

TRANSCOM – US Transportation Command

AOR – Area of Responsibility

GWOT – Global War on Terror

OIF – Operation Iraqi Freedom

UAE – United Arab Emirates

ARCENT – Army Central Command

JCS – Joint Chiefs of Staff

POTUS – President of the United States

UBL – Osama bin Laden

CENTCOM – US Central Command

JSOC – Joint Special Operations Command

Sec Def – Secretary of Defense

WMDs – Weapons of Mass Destruction

CINCENT – Commander-in-Chief Central Command

MARCENT – Marine Central Command

SOCCENT – Special Operations Command-Central

### *Appendix D: Unit Sizes*

**Theater Command** – Commanded by a 4-star general or flag officer. Usually has command of multiple armies. United States Force – Iraq and United States Force – Afghanistan are under this category.

**Army** – Usually commanded by a 4-star general, has 2 or more corps under its command. Typically has between 60,000-100,000 soldiers.

**Corps** – Usually commanded by a 3-star general and has operational command of 2 or more divisions. Typically has between 30,000-50,000 soldiers.

**Division** – Usually commanded by a 2-star general and has about 4 combat brigades under its command. Typically a division has about 15,000 soldiers.

**Numbered Air Force** – Typically commanded by a 2 or 3-star general depending on the size of the air force and its role and has 2 or more wings under its command. Typically an air force has over 10,000 airmen and 200 aircraft.

**Wing** – Typically commanded by a Colonel and has several squadrons under its command. A typical wing has about 5,000 airmen and 100 aircraft.

**Fleet** – Typically commanded by a 3-star flag officer and has 2 carrier battle groups under its command.

**Carrier Battle Group** – Typically commanded by a 2-star flag officer and has a carrier, several destroyers, cruisers and submarines under its operational command.

**Marine Expeditionary Force** – Typically commanded by a 3-star general officer and has operational command of 3 divisions and several Marine Expeditionary Units. A typical MEF has about 50,000 marines under its command.

**Marine Expeditionary Unit** – Typically commanded by a Colonel and has an infantry battalion, aviation element, and battalion sized logistics component as well as an amphibious assault ship under its command. A typical MEU has 2,200 marines.

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\* These sources are primary doctrine on how the US military should think about operating and will be extremely useful in discussions.

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