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Eastern Exit: The Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) From Mogadishu, Somalia, in January 1991

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1. Enclosure (1) is forwarded as a matter of possible interest.

2. This research memorandum documents the events and discusses lessons learned from the noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO) from the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia, in January 1991. During this operation, named "Eastern Exit," U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps forces evacuated 281 people from 30 countries (including 8 Ambassadors and 39 Soviet citizens).

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ABSTRACT

This research memorandum documents the events and discusses lessons learned from the non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO) from the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia, in January 1991. During this operation, named "Eastern Exit," U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps forces evacuated 281 people from 30 countries (including 8 Ambassadors and 39 Soviet citizens).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In early January 1991, U.S. military forces executed Operation Eastern Exit, a non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO) of the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia. The primary forces involved in this ten-day operation were U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine forces diverted from Operation Desert Shield.

Eastern Exit received relatively little attention as it was conducted on the eve of the war with Iraq. In other circumstances, the execution of such a short-notice and high-risk operation might have garnered front page headlines around the world. Noteworthy items included the evacuation of 281 people from over 30 nations, including 12 heads of diplomatic missions and 39 Soviet citizens from amidst a bloody civil war.

The military operation itself might seem more like a Hollywood script than reality. Little over two days after leaving the North Arabian Sea, USS *Trenton* launched two CH-53Es with a 60-man combined SEAL and Marine evacuation force. The launch occurred in the middle of the night, over 450 miles from Mogadishu. En route, the two helicopters conducted two nighttime aerial refuelings (though none of the pilots had exercised this for over six months). On arrival off the coast, the two CH-53Es descended to 25 feet and sped over the city, landing in the Embassy compound even as looters were at its walls.

The 60-man evacuation force quickly moved into fighting positions to protect the Embassy and the two CH-53Es soon took off with the first 61 evacuees. Despite intermittent harassing fire, the evacuation force held its fire during the 17 hours it spent on the ground. U.S. forces took advantage of night vision devices and conducted the final evacuation in the middle of the night via ten CH-46s operating from USS *Guam.*

A close examination of this operation leads to a number of valuable lessons—both positive and negative—of value for future NEOs. Eastern Exit was clearly a very successful operation. Following are some of the reasons things went so right.

- The results of MEU(SOC) training can be found throughout Marine Corps and Navy amphibious forces. While the NEO force was not a MEU(SOC), MEU(SOC)-developed SOPs greatly aided planning. The previous MEU(SOC) training of many Eastern Exit participants aided the execution of the operation.

- Desert Shield training had raised the forces to a high level of preparedness.

- U.S. Navy and Marine cooperation was close-knit, to the point of having a common command space and, essentially, a combined command staff.

- Unlike many other NEOs, the U.S. Ambassador had a clear understanding of his role. He had the Embassy organized for an evacuation, maintained a clear picture of the situation on the ground, and clearly expressed his intentions and orders to the inserted evacuation force. It seems plausible that the Ambassador's previous experience with NEO operations (including involvement with the first several months of Operation Sharp Edge, the NEO from Liberia) contributed to his actions during Eastern Exit.

On the other hand, a number of problems call into question the means by which the military and State Department prepare for and execute NEOs.

- The information on the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu possessed by the mission's forces was dated and inaccurate. Among other problems, the two CH-53Es had to fly over embattled Mogadishu for 20 minutes searching for the Embassy compound. A regular review of information provided to amphibious forces should be conducted at U.S. Embassies. On the basis of the Eastern Exit experience, it seems clear that the means by which basic NEO information is prepared and distributed deserves review.

- While the civil war in Somalia intensified rapidly, nonessential personnel were evacuated from the Somalia several weeks before the amphibious forces in the Persian Gulf were appraised that a NEO via military forces might be required. The State Department should request that the military commence NEO planning as soon as the decision is made to evacuation nonessential personnel (if not earlier).

- The ability of the Embassy to facilitate a NEO was deficient in several potentially vital areas. There was no direct secure communications capability between the Embassy and the evacuation forces (the only means to directly communicate was via an unsecured radio). The Embassy had minimal capabilities to mark a landing zone for rescue helicopters (just a strobe light and someone waving a white flag). Secure voice capabilities between military forces and an Embassy during an evacuation are vital. Common cryptologic material for NEOs should be promulgated, and these codes should be distributed to Embassies and deployed military forces. Means to mark helicopter landing zones should be maintained at every Embassy, possibly by the Marine Security Guard detachments.

- Some links of the chain of command did not receive orders and information on the seriousness of the situation on the ground in Mogadishu. This led to orders that delayed the movement of amphibious forces south. The chain of command must be delineated so that involved commands will not be acting on the basis of incomplete information.

These are some of the more vital lessons from Operation Eastern Exit. This research memorandum documents Eastern Exit and highlights issues raised during it.

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INTRODUCTION

In early January 1991, the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia, was evacuated via U.S. military forces. This noncombatant evacuation operation (NEO)[1] was named "Operation Eastern Exit." Although elements of the four services were involved, Navy and Marine Corps units were the primary participants.

Eastern Exit was notable for several features:

- Evacuation of 12 heads of diplomatic missions (eight Ambassadors and four Charge D'Affaires) and citizens from over 30 nations.
- Evacuation of 39 Soviet citizens.
- Insertion of a 60-man evacuation security force via a 466-n.mi. night CH-53E flight with two in-flight refuelings en route (and a 350-n.mi. return flight with 61 evacuees and another in-flight refueling).
- Final evacuation conducted by ten CH-46s in an all night vision goggle (NVG) operation.

The operation was executed without loss of life or injury and all involved forces were back on station in the Central Command (CENTCOM) area of responsibility (AOR) well before the initiation of hostilities against Iraq.

While lauded for its "flawless execution," Operation Eastern Exit provides a number of valuable lessons. This research memorandum documents the operation and discusses various issues that derive from its execution. Recommendations are based on these observations.

The memorandum begins with a brief summary of Eastern Exit. The following sections focus on discrete segments of the operation, first describing the events and then discussing some of the issues that arose during that period/portion of the operation. The final section provides brief discussions of issues (many of which are analyzed in earlier sections) and presents recommendations for future action based on the Eastern Exit experience.

Sources on Eastern Exit included message traffic; articles and unpublished accounts of the events by participants; interviews with participants (see Appendix A for a list of interviews); and various files and logs from NAVCENT, PHIBRON SIX, *Guam*, and *Trenton* .

The author was deployed with the amphibious forces from the Persian Gulf and had more extensive access to information from these forces than from other involved forces and organizations. This memorandum, therefore, primarily focuses on the perspective from afloat.

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[1] A list of acronyms is provided at the end of the document.

EASTERN EXIT: A BRIEF SUMMARY

Eastern Exit was initiated on 2 January 1991 following a request by the U.S. Ambassador to Somalia, James K. Bishop, for military assistance to evacuate U.S. personnel and others from the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu. Somalia's long-brewing civil war had been worsening through the fall of 1990 and, by the new year, violent anarchy reigned in Mogadishu. (Table 1 presents a brief chronology of Eastern Exit.) Threats to foreigners escalated tremendously; for example, on 4 January, U.S. Embassy personnel and guards had a gunfight with looters attempting to enter the Embassy compound.

Table 1. Eastern Exit Chronology

Date	Events
5 December 1990	Amb. Bishop recommends voluntary departure of non-essential U.S. personnel.
19 December	Number of official U.S. personnel reduced from 147 to 37.
30 December	Full-scale fighting between Somali government and rebel forces breaks out in Mogadishu.
2 January 1991	Amb. Bishop requests military assistance for evacuation; *Guam* and *Trenton* get under way at 2330.
4 January	Gun battle between U.S. Embassy personnel and looters; Italian and Soviet attempts to evacuate via aircraft fail.
5 January	CH-53Es launched from *Guam* at 466 n.mi. from Mogadishu, insert a 60-man evacuation force, and return to *Guam* with 61 evacuees aboard.
6 January	Four waves of CH-46s evacuate the remaining 220 evacuees and the 60-man evacuation force in the early a.m. Mission declared complete.
10 January	Early a.m., baby born aboard *Guam*.
11 January	Evacuees offloaded in Muscat, Oman.

In response to tasking from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), the Commander-in-Chief, Central Command (CINCCENT) ordered (1) Air Force aircraft to the area, (2) the movement of amphibious ships to Mogadishu, and (3) the Special Operations Command (SOCCENT) to prepare to move forces to execute a NEO. The Commander of U.S. Naval Forces, Central Command (COMUSNAVCENT) dispatched two ships, USS *Guam* (LPH-9) and USS *Trenton* (LPD-14), from their anchorage off Oman to the Somali coast. Aboard *Guam* and *Trenton* were forces from the Fourth Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), including a CH-53E detachment (det) and two CH-46 squadrons. *Guam* and *Trenton* got under way late on the evening of 2 January.[1]

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[1] The two ships got under way at 2330D (or 1930Z) on 2 January 1991. Unless otherwise noted, the times discussed in this paper are "delta" times, which are four hours earlier than Greenwich Mean Time (GMT, or "zulu") and nine hours earlier than Washington, D.C. time. Both the military and the State Department operate on zulu time. Despite this standard, however, during this operation there was some confusion concerning time because there were at least three separate time zones of concern: the two ships in the Indian Ocean on delta time; CENTCOM, the USMC and USAF fixed-wing aircraft, and Mogadishu on charlie time (three hours ahead of GMT); and zulu time used as a worldwide standard by both the military and State Department.

Because Ambassador Bishop did not feel confident that the evacuees could safely transit from the Embassy compound to the airport and the conditions at the airport were uncertain, it became clear that the amphibious option was the only viable option for to evacuating the embassy. As the unrest in Mogadishu increased, Ambassador Bishop's calls for help became more strident. Aboard ship, the planners examined the insertion of an evacuation force via the two CH-53Es embarked on *Trenton*. A 1,500-n.mi. flight from the North Arabian Sea directly to the Embassy compound was the first option considered; then an 890-n.mi. mission was examined. Because the situation had evidently stabilized somewhat, the mission was delayed until an eventual launch early on the morning of 5 January, with an arrival time at the Embassy of shortly after dawn.

The CH-53E flight, launched from 466 n.mi. off *Guam* at 0347D, required two in-flight refuelings en route to the Embassy. The first refueling guaranteed that the helicopters could reach the Embassy and the second provided enough fuel for flying around the city, if necessary, and for a short-range return to the ships. Several features of the CH-53E flight were notable. During the first refueling, a pressure seal on the second CH-53E failed, resulting in spilled fuel in the cabin (this leak was fixed by the crew chief, thus allowing refueling to recommence). The Omega navigation systems could not support the flight, and the pilots were forced to rely on a combination of positive control from the ships, dead reckoning, and pathfinding by the refueling aircraft for navigation. In addition, the helicopters wandered some 15 to 20 minutes over Mogadishu because the pilots had difficulty finding the Embassy compound. Despite these problems, the two CH-53Es arrived at the Embassy at 0710, within minutes of their planned arrival time.

The 60-man evacuation force quickly deployed in the Embassy compound. The nine-man SEAL team concentrated on protecting the Ambassador in the Chancery building, augmenting the Embassy's five Marine Security Guards (MSGs). The Marines secured the remainder of the compound was secured. In addition to the Chancery, the other important building to protect was the Joint Administrative Office (JAO) building, located next to the helicopter landing zone (HLZ). The JAO building housed almost all the evacuees during the day. The 46-Marine security force provided a thin perimeter around the Embassy compound. Shortly after the CH-53E touchdown, an Air Force AC-130 arrived overhead. The AC-130 operated overhead for three hours, providing the evacuation force with intelligence on the ongoing fighting in Mogadishu. The aircraft was prepared to provide fire support on request.

After an hour on the ground, the CH-53Es took off for the return flight to *Guam*; the rendezvous was scheduled for a point 380 miles from Mogadishu. A total of 61 evacuees, including many Americans and several foreign VIPs, were on the two helicopters. One in-flight refueling was required during the return flight to the ships.

Aboard *Guam*, the evacuees were quickly accommodated. The CH-53E crews were debriefed for information for follow-on flights and evacuated U.S. Embassy staff members were also debriefed and requested to help process evacuees.

On the ground, the 60-man evacuation force remained within the compound except for a brief foray in mid-morning when a small convoy of hardened commercial vehicles was put together to escort four American officials and several foreign nationals from the Office of Military Cooperation (OMC) compound to the Embassy compound. Throughout the day, as fighting continued in Mogadishu, foreigners seeking evacuation made their way to the U.S. Embassy. Although the Embassy compound was not attacked directly, there was intermittent harassing fire including fire at two Marine snipers on the Embassy water tower and an RPG round that hit the Embassy wall in the afternoon. More typical, according to descriptions of the day's events, were trucks filled with armed men who

would occasionally fire their weapons into the air as they drove by the Embassy (with the occasional round heading into the Embassy compound).

During the late afternoon, the security force began to prepare the HLZ for a nighttime evacuation. All lights in the compound were extinguished, a number of vehicles were moved out of the HLZ, and chemical lights were laid out in a NATO Y in the HLZ to mark the landing area for the helicopters. The evacuees were organized into groups ("sticks") of 15 each. Between evacuees and the security force, there were 280 people to be extracted from the Embassy.

Guam and *Trenton* continued to steam at full speed toward Mogadishu. On arrival off the coast, following a one-hour delay awaiting AC-130 support, the final evacuation commenced at 0043D January 6. The final evacuation consisted of four waves of five CH-46s off *Guam*, with each of the two CH-46 squadrons on *Guam* contributing five aircraft to the mission (each helicopter made two round-trips). The first three waves were scheduled to be filled with civilians; the last wave was to take out the security force.

The first two waves were almost picture perfect, with evacuees moved smoothly to the helicopters. While the second wave was inbound, an SA-2 radar showed up on the helicopters' radar warning receiver. Because the CH-46s were flying low, the SA-2 (a high-altitude surface-to-air missile) was not viewed as a serious threat. Flying darkened, without exterior lights, the helicopters were essentially unthreatened during flight. According to evacuees, the helicopters were almost invisible until they were on the ground.

As the second wave arrived, however, a more serious threat emerged as a Somali Major approached the gate with two truckloads of troops and threatened to shoot down the helicopters if the "illegal operation" did not cease immediately. With the concurrence of the U.S. Ambassador, the operation continued unimpeded as the Ambassador began to negotiate with the Major. Because the Ambassador, his immediate staff, and the MSGs had been scheduled to go on the third wave, it took off for *Guam* with only a portion of the planned evacuees (and only four helicopters instead of five). Before the arrival of the final wave, Ambassador Bishop finished negotiating with the Somali Major. (He withdrew his opposition to the evacuation operation in return for several thousand dollars in cash and some car keys.) The last wave, therefore, had six helicopters. The disruption to the planned third wave added some confusion to the withdrawal and extraction of the evacuation force. Most seriously, the helicopters in the final wave waited in the HLZ for 5 to 10 minutes after the security perimeter forces had withdrawn and boarded the helicopters as a final head count was done. Two Marines (the communications team) were nearly left behind because they had not realized that this was the final wave.

Following the return of the last CH-46 wave to *Guam*, and following a quick check for all official Americans, Ambassador Bishop declared the evacuation complete at 0343D on 6 January and the ships turned north for Muscat, Oman. Aboard ship, the evacuees were processed aboard *Guam*. Eventually 222 (including almost all the VIPs) were housed aboard *Guam* and 59 were transferred to *Trenton*. The berthing was determined by the number of berths available for women and small children aboard *Guam* (69). After that number was reached, all remaining evacuees were sent to *Trenton* (they were transferred the next morning rather than risking additional nighttime flight operations). A number of medical problems were encountered, including surgery on a gunshot victim, care of a knife wound, and delivery of a baby via caesarean section on 10 January. The next day, *Guam* and *Trenton* arrived in Muscat, Oman, and offloaded all of the evacuees, thus bringing Eastern Exit to a successful close. (Figure 1 displays important Eastern Exit locations and figure 2 is a map of the Embassy compound.)

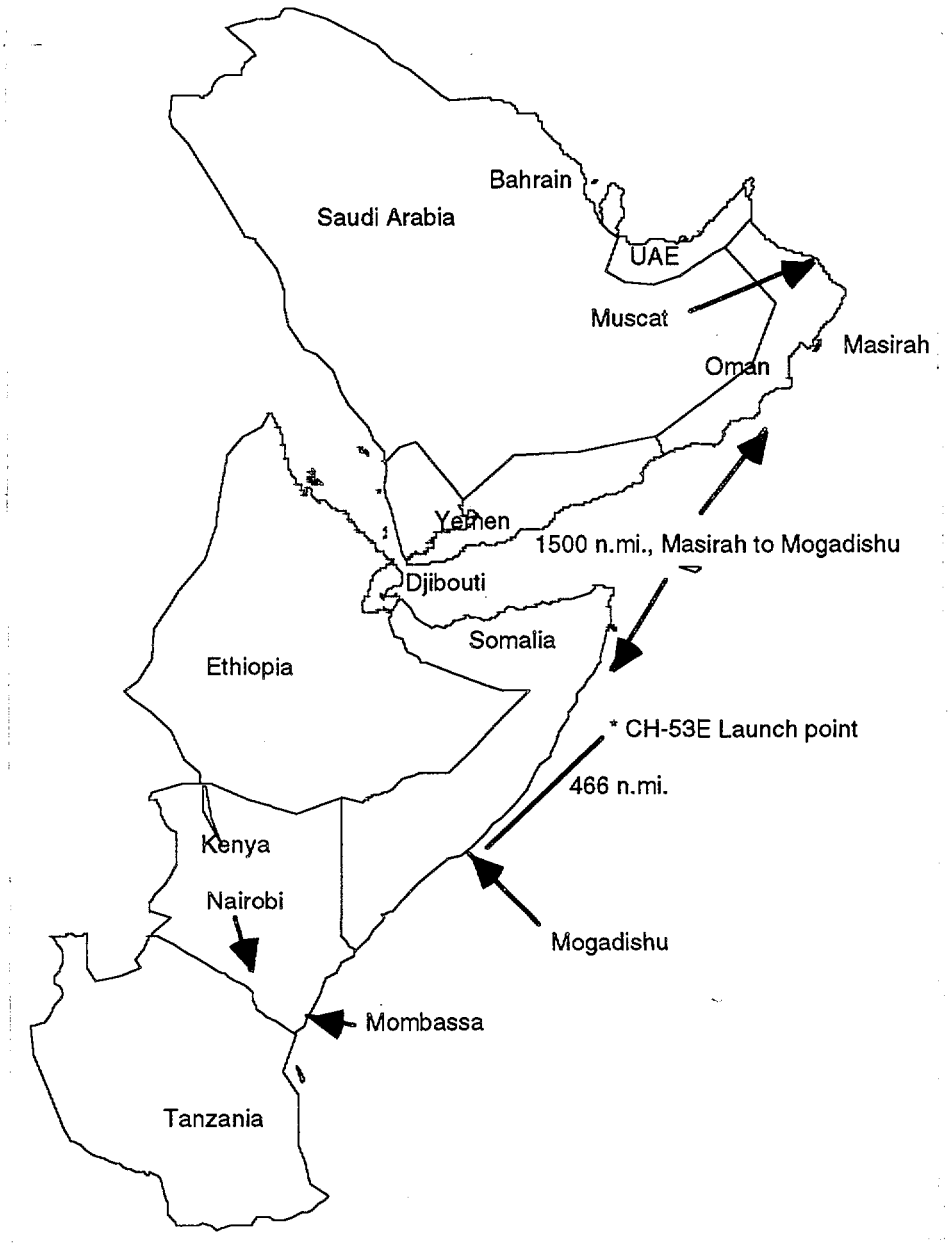

Figure 1. Eastern Exit Map

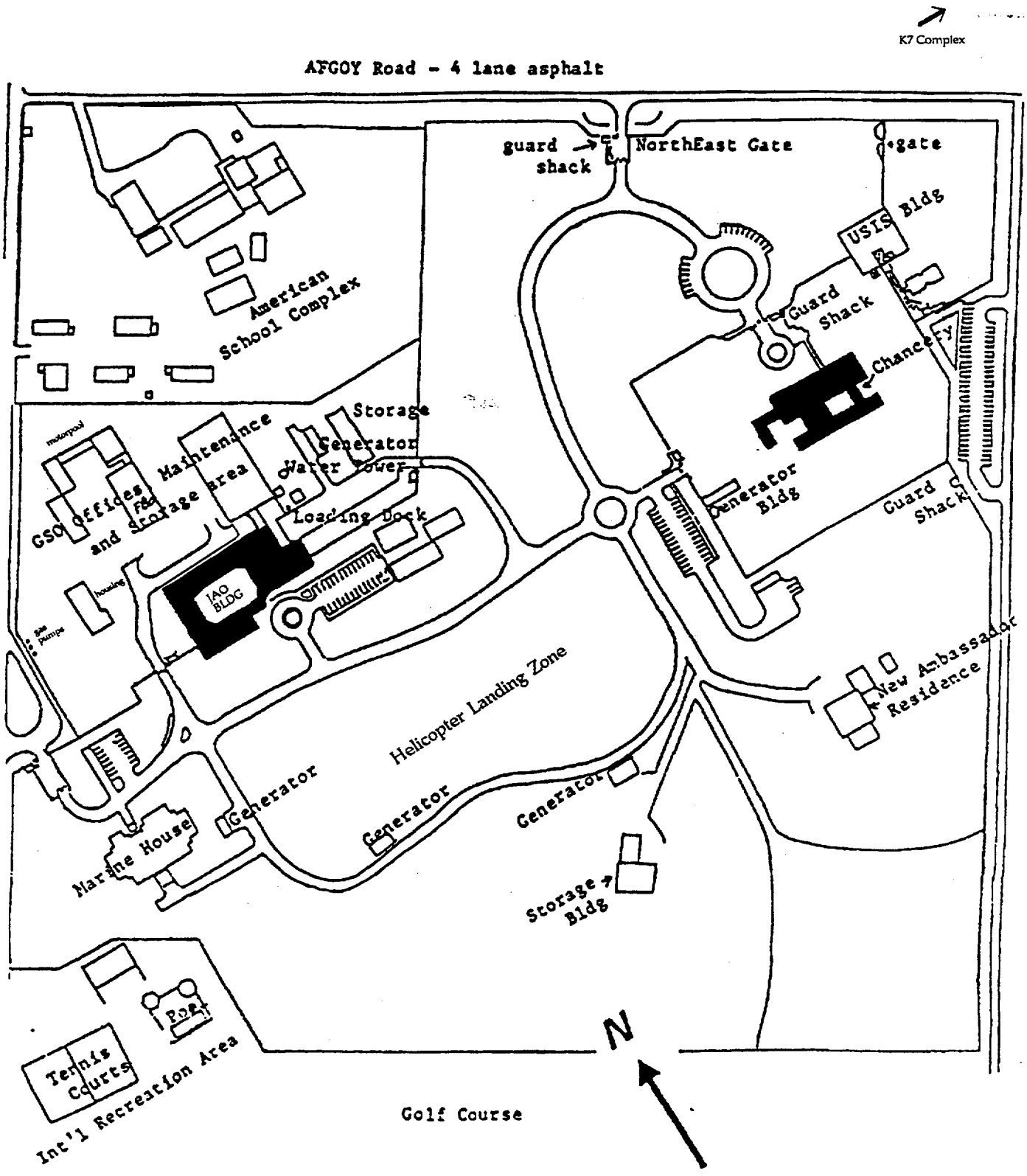

Figure 2. U.S. Embassy Compound in Mogadishu, Somalia

DISINTEGRATION IN SOMALIA[1]

DISCUSSION

Like most noncombatant evacuation operations that the military is called on to perform, a long perod of disintegration within Somalia preceded Eastern Exit. Since 1989, two major resistance organizations had taken up arms in Somalia against the regime of Siad Barre. Siad Barre, who was nicknamed the "earth scorcher" by rebels, had taken power in 1969 and ruled the country with a stern hand since that time.

Armed resistance had been picking up against the Siad Barre regime in the late 1980s. In late 1990, there were three main rebel organizations active in Somalia: the Somali National Movement (SNM); the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM); and the United Somali Congress (USC) (see table 2). The SPM had taken up arms against the government in 1989 and the USC in July 1990. The increasing rebel activity led the regime to adopt reforms. The rebels dismissed these reforms as meaningless and called for an end to Siad Barre's control of the country.

Table 2. Major Somali Rebel Movements, December 1990

Somali National Movement (SNM)	Active in northern Somalia Oldest movement (formed in London in early 1980s)
Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM)	Operational in southern Somalia Largely from Ogaden Started fighting in mid-1989
United Somali Congress (USC)	Active in central Somalia Primarily from Hawiye tribe Formed in 1989, commenced fighting in mid-1990

In October 1990, the SNM stepped up its attacks on government forces and the USC began an offensive, from its bases in central Somalia, which quickly gained success against the government forces. By late November, signs of disintegration in the government were readily apparent, from the disappearance of government daily newspapers from the newsstands due to a paper shortage to increased banditry inside Mogadishu. By the beginning of December, USC forces were reported to be within 30 miles of Mogadishu. USC armaments included twin-barrel antiaircraft guns mounted on trucks, light and heavy mortars, Browning machineguns, and a wide variety of assault rifles. The government reacted with offers of mediation, and peace negotiations between the government and the rebel movements were scheduled for 11 through 13 December in Cairo. These fell through, however, because none of the three major movements were willing to participate. A SNM radio commentator phrased it this way:

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[1] Two main sources were used for this section: various articles in the Federal Broadcast Information Service African (hereafter, FBIS-AFR) reports from November and December 1990; and, Ambassador Bishop's account of the evacuation (James K. Bishop, "Escape from Mogadishu," *Foreign Service Journal*, March 1991, pages 26-31).

> This last distress call by Siad Barre can fool no one. The dictatorial regime's tenure has reached its end, and no amount of dishonest diplomacy can save it. Let us hasten to overthrow the dictatorial regime and throw it into the trash.

The growing unrest in Somalia increasingly threatened the foreign community. During the fall, a Marine security guard was injured in a robbery and other Westerners were killed. Soon after arriving in Somalia, Ambassador Bishop's wife was shot at during a robbery at a "supposedly safe beach" outside Mogadishu. The violence was as much, or more, crime-related as part of the civil war. By 4 December, "a de facto curfew" kept "foreigners and diplomats holed up at home once night fell." The four-wheel drive vehicles used by international organizations were favorite gang targets; drivers were apt to be killed for their vehicles.

On 5 December, Ambassador Bishop announced to the American community in Mogadishu that he had recommended the voluntary departure of dependents and non-essential personnel (with his wife and daughter among the early evacuees). By mid-December, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and the United States had called on their citizens to leave the country and the UN was evacuating almost all of its 300 employees. Even as this voluntary evacuation was under way, the U.S. Embassy was further threatened—a driver was wounded (and his vehicle stolen) and there was light arms fire near the Embassy compound (and even into some of the compound housing). By 19 December, the official American community had been reduced from 147 to 37 people and the majority of the private Americans in Somalia were thought to have left as well. Through the end of the month, the situation in the capital continued to deteriorate.

On 30 December, Mogadishu erupted in fighting, with government forces using all weaponry on hand in an attempt to crush the growing USC presence in the capital. Fighting was intertribal as much as it was political. Government forces, primarily from the Marehan tribe, reportedly separated out members of the USC-supporting Hawiye tribe and indiscriminately fired artillery into predominantly Hawiye areas of Mogadishu. On December 31, the defense attache arrived at the U.S. Embassy with several bullet holes in his car, at least one of which had penetrated the vehicle's armor. Later in the day, a vehicle parked outside the Chancery building was hit by stray rounds and that evening the deputy OMC chief was attacked at a roadblock. He drove the vehicle back to the compound on the rims of the tires. On December 30 and 31, all official Americans were moved into the Embassy compound except for two volunteers who remained in the nearby K-7 apartment complex to act as look-outs. Ambassador Bishop expected that the Embassy staff could sit out the fighting behind the compound walls.

Late on the 31st (with arrival in CENTCOM AOR on the morning of 1 January), the first warning to military forces of the threats to the Embassy compound was issued. To his N3, COMUSNAVCENT directed in a note on the top of the message: "Better have Amphib crowd take a look at a helo NEO of Mogadishu! time/distance to get there from Masirah OP area." Thus, NAVCENT consideration of a possible NEO commenced late on New Year's day and initial plans were in place when the CENTCOM orders came in.

Ambassador Bishop's New Year's Day jog in the Embassy compound was repeatedly interrupted and then ended by small arms fire around the Embassy as the fighting in the city escalated. That day, the Ambassador requested permission from the State Department to evacuate the entire American community from Somalia. By January 2, the State Department had approved this request. Ambassador Bishop stated his intention to evacuate with the Italian effort (either C-130s operating from Kenya or a ship being sent from the Persian Gulf—see table 3), if possible, but stated a preference to be evacuated by

U.S. military forces. Many other nations were starting to attempt to evacuate their citizens from Somalia in addition to the United States and Italy. Options explored for evacuating the trapped Americans at various points in the coming days included evacuating with the Italians, Germans, and French. While exploring these options, Ambassador Bishop directly requested U.S. military assistance in evacuating the embassy compound on 2 January, thus setting into motion Operation Eastern Exit. For a variety of reasons, including Ambassador Bishop's perception that the Americans could not safely transit from the Embassy compound to the various other possible evacuation sites, the Americans were not evacuated via these other nations' efforts. Most importantly, by the time any of these other operations were successfully evacuating people from Mogadishu, the 60-man Marine and SEAL evacuation force had arrived at the Embassy compound.

Table 3. Foreign Evacuation Efforts from Somalia in January 1991

China	The Chinese used merchant ships for evacuating their citizens. On 11 January, MV *Yongmen* arrived in Mombassa with 144 evacuees (143 Chinese and 1 Portuguese).
Egypt	On 4 January 1991, the Egyptian foreign ministry announced plans to evacuate its 672 nationals from Somalia by 6 January. On 13 January, an Egyptian flight evacuated 77 Egyptians and 19 Iraqis. (This author is unaware of any other Egyptian activity.)
France	The French conducted evacuations via two Navy vessels, which brought the evacuees to Djibouti following evacuation. On 5 January, 16 people (including 10 French citizens and the charge d'affaires) moved by small boat out to the frigate *La Motte Picquet.* On 7 January, 21 Red Cross Workers were brought out to the repair ship *Jules Verne* via rubber boats through Mogadishu harbor, followed by 47 more evacuees the next day. On 9 January, 12 evacuees were heloed out to *La Motte Picquet,* which was then 65 miles south of Mogadishu.
Germany	German Air Force aircraft were flown to Nairobi to attempt evacuation via Mogadishu airport. They were unable to make it into the airport and the German Ambassador was evacuated via Eastern Exit. (As an interesting aside, the Germans had stated that they would be willing to evacuate Americans but only after all citizens of EC members countries were taken care of.)
Kenya	The cruise ship *Ambassador I* was diverted from a scheduled trip to Zanzibar to support evacuation efforts from Mogadishu. It arrived in Mombassa on 17 January with 1,100 people aboard, primarily Pakistani nationals.

Table 3. (Continued)

Italy	The Italians evacuated people from Somalia via military aircraft, merchant vessels, and Navy ships. Aircraft from the 46th Air Brigade flew into Nairobi, Kenya, on 3 January. While the Italians were able to get aircraft successfully to the Mogadishu airport on a number of occasions (evacuating 205 people on 5 January, 250 on the 7th, 139 on the 9th, and 200 on the 12th), they were frequently stymied in attempts to send aircraft into the airport due to fighting on the ground (flights on 4, 6, 8, and 11 January were cancelled). Also on 2 January, an Italian merchant ship, *Venetian Universal*, moved toward Mogadishu and eventually evacuated 15 people. In addition, the Italian Navy frigate *Orsa*, due for rotation back to Italy after duty in the maritime interception force (MIF), arrived off Mogadishu on 7 January. She evacuated 25 people on the 8th. On 10 January, a North Korean diplomat was killed and several Italians wounded by rockets fired during fighting around the Italian Embassy.
Soviet Union	On 4 January, a Soviet aircraft attempted to fly into Mogadishu airport from Aden, Yemen, but was unable to land. Eventually, 39 Soviets were evacuated via Operation Eastern Exit.

ISSUES

Before the initiation of Operation Eastern Exit on 2 January 1991, there were a number of critical issues that affected later operations. Most critical was the late notification of a possible NEO requirement. The first direct notification of a possible NEO requirement that arrived on USS *Blue Ridge* (LCC-19), the NAVCENT command ship, came on 1 January—almost a month after non-essential personnel began to leave Somalia. Although there were intelligence updates of the situation in Somalia before this, they were contained in general message traffic and may not have the prominence they might have had in other circumstances (with the nation not on the eve of war). Many problems encountered during the operation (and which are discussed later in the paper) would have been avoided if the amphibious forces had begun contingency planning in early or mid-December. Whether the disconnect occurred in Washington or in theater, the failure to involve NAVCENT and the amphibious forces prior to 1 January added risk to the execution of the NEO.

THE MILITARY OPTION

DISCUSSION

The Pentagon moved quickly in response to Ambassador Bishop's 2 January request for military assistance; the execute order was issued before the end of the day. The CJCS execute order directed USCINCCENT to: "(A) deploy 2 C-130s and 1 AC-130 plus security team; (B) deploy LPH, LPD and appropriate escort at best speed consistent with preparations for extraction and weather to MODLOC vicinity Mogadishu. Conduct helicopter extraction of AMCITS at AMEMBASSY Mogadishu as soon as possible while optimizing survivability of extraction forces; (C) provide OPORD as soon as possible: advise earliest possible time for commencement of extraction operations." The first and second went into motion almost immediately, while the third never went past the alert stage (as far as this author is aware; see table 4). The Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) execution order noted that "armed helicopter escort and armed security contingent on extraction helicopters (or on C-130's if used) is authorized." It also made USCINCPAC and USCINCSOC supporting commanders.

Table 4. CINCCENT Eastern Exit Force Options

Organization	Task
1. CENTAF	Stage three C-130s and one AC-130 in preparation for evacuation in a permissive environment. (ARCENT deployed one MP security platoon to provide security of the NEO force at Mogadishu airport.)
2. NAVCENT	Deploy designated naval forces at best speed of advance (SOA) to station off Mogadishu to conduct NEO while optimizing survivability of extraction forces. Low intensity resistance should be expected.
3. SOCCENT	Be prepared to deploy six MH-53s and appropriate tanker support tanker to conduct NEO of American Embassy, Mogadishu.

Even before the written execute order, forces were moving toward evacuation. Generally, the preferred NEO means is via aircraft (preferably civilian, then military aircraft); thus, U.S. Air Force C-130s deployed to Nairobi, Kenya, to execute the NEO if permissive conditions would allow use of the Mogadishu airport. A platoon of U.S. Army Reserve military police (MPs) deployed to provide security on the ground at the airport in Mogadishu. An AC-130 was staged to provide gunfire support for an evacuation. While the C-130s remained on alert in Nairobi throughout the operation, Ambassador Bishop stated that he felt that the people in the Embassy compound could not safely transit the 1.5 miles to the airport and that the conditions at the airport were such that air operations would be at risk.

The CINCCENT warning order also directed "COMSOCCENT to be prepared to deploy six MH-53 and appropriate tanker support aircraft to conduct NEO. ... Aircraft will, on order, stage for further deployment to Mogadishu, when directed." As far as can be determined at this point, this option was not pursued further and thus the only U.S. military option remaining, with the airport unusable, was use of the amphibious forces deployed from the North Arabian Sea.

FORMING THE AMPHIBIOUS OPTION

On the afternoon of 2 January, NAVCENT contacted PHIBGRU TWO (PG-2) and gave a one-hour deadline for a proposal for an amphibious force to execute Eastern Exit. PG-2 was embarked on LHA-4 *Nassau*, which was then on the last day of a port call in Dubai, UAE. CPG-2 looked at the closest amphibious ships to Mogadishu, those off the coast of Oman, to be the components of the contingency amphibious task force (ATF). Two LPHs, an LPD and LSD, and three LSTs were in the anchorage at that time.[1] Also present were two MPS ships and five replenishment ships.[2] BB-63 *Missouri* was nearby with three escorts.

The orders stated that the amphibious forces should plan on the assumption that they would operate in a semi-permissive environment in the event of a NEO from Mogadishu from the sea. In other words, that there was the possibility of low-intensity opposition to their operations. In his response to NAVCENT, CPG-2 suggested a total contingency ATF of seven ships: four amphibious ships (to include an LPD, LPH, LSD, and an LST), two escorts, and an oiler. CPG-2 wanted four amphibious ships to be sent so that the full range of amphibious capabilities would be present for the NEO (see table 5). For command and control (C2), CPG-2 wanted to deploy the Commander of Amphibious Squadron SIX (CPR-6) with the task force. CPR-6 was embarked on LPD-12 *Shreveport*, which was also in Dubai on 2 January; thus, the Commodore and his staff were able to be briefed aboard *Nassau* before departure on the operation. The PHIBRON operations officer was given the material the PHIBGRU staff had concerning Mogadishu (which turned out to be the same, incorrect information already aboard *Guam*) and the Commodore was able to discuss the operation with COMPHIBGRU TWO. CPR-6, his staff, and air control augmentees from Tactical Air Control Squadron TWELVE (TACRON-12—part of the air control unit aboard *Nassau*) would have to be flown to Masirah and from there they would fly aboard the contingency ATF ships.

VAdm. Stanley Arthur, COMUSNAVCENT, decided on a two-ship force. Uppermost in his mind were the ongoing operations off Liberia, which had involved amphibious forces for over six months by then.[3] COMUSNAVCENT knew that war with Iraq was inevitable absent a diplomatic solution and did not want to divert more forces from the theater than was absolutely necessary. He feared that any forces sent to Somalia would be lost to him for an extended period of time. Also involved in this consideration was the belief that additional forces could be sent later if necessary. Finally, with Allied naval forces (French and Italian frigates) en route, it was felt that Allied navies would be able to provide protection in the event of a threat to the ships at sea from Somali government or rebel forces—a possibility that was viewed as unlikely, at best, due to their limited

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[1] LPH-9 *Guam* (with two CH-46 squadrons embarked) and LPH-2 *Iwo Jima* (with CH-53Es); LPD-14 *Trenton* (with a CH-53E det aboard); LSD-38 *Pensacola*; LST-1194 *La Moure County*, LST-1192 *Spartanburg County*, and LST-1188 *Saginaw*.

[2] Including three oilers (AOE-1 *Sacramento* and two commercial ships—*AJ Higgins* and *WS Diehl*) though, importantly, one of the three, *AJ Higgins*, had run aground that morning and was unavailable for operations due to damage sustained in the grounding.

[3] Operation Sharp Edge commenced on 25 May 1990 with the deployment of the MARG and a destroyer from the Mediterranean. Sharp Edge concluded on 9 January 1991. Of note, Ambassador Bishop's previous assignment had been in Liberia, which he left in March 1990. He continued involvement with Liberia from Washington through July 1990—over a month after the amphibious forces deployed off the coast of Monrovia, Liberia.

capabilities. While discomfited by the delay that moving personnel from Dubai to the ships in the North Arabian Sea would mean, VAdm. Arthur approved the transfer of the PHIBRON SIX staff and the TACRON personnel.

Table 5. PHIBGRU TWO Proposed Amphibious Task Force Capabilities

LPD	*Trenton* had a CH-53E detachment aboard, thus providing a heavy lift and long-range helicopter option. Embarked troops included SEALs and BSSG-4 personnel (including MPs).
LPH	*Guam* had two squadrons of CH-46s embarked as well as BLT 1/2, thus providing a mass troop lift capability. Also embarked were a large medical contingent from BSSG-4 and the alternative command group of FOURTH MEB (FOURTH MEB DET ONE).
LSD	*Pensacola* had three LCACs aboard with LAVs, which would provide an over-the-horizon across-the-beach capability and an amphibious evacuation capability.
LST	All three LSTs available had AAVs embarked. AAVs would provide a capability to move forces and evacuees across a beach in a semipermissive environment.

On the Marine side, Maj. Gen. H.W. Jenkins, Jr., (CG FOURTH MEB) also began preparations for the NEO. He designated the commander of BSSG-4, Col. J.J. Doyle, to be CLF. Col. Doyle was embarked aboard *Trenton*; he transferred to *Guam* later that same day. With only two ships going to Mogadishu, Col. Doyle requested augmentation of his force with weapons-carrying HMMWVs (to provide mobile fire support that could be airlifted by the CH-53Es into Mogadishu, if necessary). FOURTH MEB denied this request.

In the early evening on 2 January, CPR-6, Capt. Al Moser, four members of his staff, and TACRON personnel boarded a P-3 patrol aircraft for transport to an airport near *Guam* and *Trenton*. The two ships got under way about 2330D. Commo. Moser heloed aboard *Guam* at 0030D January 3, and the two-ship task force headed south at 14 knots for Mogadishu. When the CINCCENT warning order arrived early in the morning, CATF (Commo. Moser) ordered the ships to increase speed to 19 knots.

On the morning of 3 January, PHIBGRU TWO questioned why the two ships were steaming at 19 knots and ordered them to steam at 14 knots. CPG-2 was concerned over fuel usage and thus ordered transit at a more economical speed. The ships continued steaming at 14 knots for only a few hours as the PG-2, NAVCENT, and CINCCENT staffs discussed the issue. CENTCOM ordered an increase of speed to 16 knots followed by orders within a few more hours to increase speed to 18 knots.

ISSUES

Perhaps the most important issue in this period of the operation was the delay in getting *Guam* and *Trenton* under way once they were selected as the NEO force and then the order to slow down once under way. In response to the urgency communicated by Ambassador Bishop and the State Department, the CINCCENT orders explicitly stated that the ships were to steam at the "best speed of advance (SOA)." Implicit in this order, it

would seem, would be the requirement to get the ships under way at the earliest possible time as well. The decision of which ships to send was made by mid-afternoon; however, the force's departure was delayed by about eight to ten hours awaiting the augmentees from PHIBRON SIX and TACRON 22.

As the orders explicitly stated "best SOA" (which was approximately 19 knots for *Trenton* and 24 knots for *Guam*, or approximately 19 knots sustainable for the two-ships together), CPG-2's orders for the ships to transit at 14 knots would seem to counter the CINC requirement. The problem, it seems, was that PHIBGRU TWO, while in the chain of command, was not receiving the relevant message traffic and was not an addressee on the CJCS nor the CINCCENT orders.

The calculation by which the decision was made to order a 14-knot transit deserves to be examined. Both ships left the NAS with approximately 80 percent of fuel capacity on board. Steaming at high speed would lead to consumption of about 3 percent a day as opposed to a 2 percent per day consumption at 14 knots. A "best SOA" transit would have meant that the ships would have approximately 65 to 70 percent fuel capacity on board on arrival off Mogadishu, with slower steaming leaving at most 70 to 75 percent fuel. At best SOA, the two ships would have had enough fuel for about two weeks of on-station time off Mogadishu. Steaming the NEO force at a slower speed would have led to a delay of over 24 hours in arrival off Mogadishu, with perhaps a two-day extension in loitering time. The urgent consideration for Ambassador Bishop was arrival time, not duration of stay.

Also related to the orders to slow in order to save fuel is the question of why the two ships were not refueled before leaving the NAS. The eight- to ten-hour delay awaiting arrival of CPR-6 should have allowed refueling of *Guam* and *Trenton* from one of the two available oilers (or even from one of the other amphibious ships or the battleship, if necessary). With full fuel tanks, the fuel situation would have been less likely to be of high concern to CPG-2 and the two ships' loiter time off Mogadishu, if that situation occurred, would have been increased by about ten days.

Both issues (which slowed the amphibious response) should be balanced by the influence that the lengthy Liberia operation and other similar experiences had on decision-making. When beginning Eastern Exit, the amphibious planners did not really expect ships to sprint down to Somalia, quickly evacuate the Embassy, and then return within a week to the North Arabian Sea (as actually occurred). First, they thought the Embassy would evacuate via aircraft, as frequently happens. If that didn't occur, they expected a lingering requirement for forces projected indefinitely (days, weeks, months...) into the future. Thus, the sense of urgency was somewhat dulled by previous experience and this experience greatly affected decisions concerning which ships to send and at what speed to have the force steam.

The military's previous experience with State Department NEO requirements therefore led to a less than optimal response to the crisis in Mogadishu. The urgency of the situation as felt on the ground in Mogadishu was not adequately communicated to PHIBGRU TWO, which consequently focused on providing C2 augmentation and on the ships' fuel usage rather than on an expedited arrival of the force off Mogadishu.

In light of the expectation of an extended requirement, the decision to limit the number of ships involved made eminent sense. However, the NAVCENT decision to send only an LPH and LPD (and not the LSD and LST) eliminated potentially important capabilities from the task force: to be able to conduct the evacuation across-the-beach via LCAC or AAV. While the Embassy is located well inland, the planners aboard *Guam* did not know this. The decision to overrule the concerns of the assigned CLF and not

authorize the transfer of HMMWV augmentation to *Guam* is less clear. Whatever the reason for this decision, Col. Doyle clearly felt that he lacked forces, which could have been made available, that were potentially vital to his operational abilities.

Aboard *Guam* was located what was termed "FOURTH MEB DET ONE." Maj. Gen. Jenkins had required that an alternative command group be created, referred to as the Bravo Command Element, so that in the event of damage to *Nassau* there would be continuity of command for the FOURTH MEB. Thus, when Col. Doyle transferred to *Guam*, he found an entire planning staff awaiting him ready to act. This greatly facilitated planning and operations.

PREPARING FOR INSERTION

DISCUSSION

As the ships moved southward, Col. Doyle and Commo. Moser worked to organize their efforts. They quickly decided to create a combined command center in *Guam*'s supporting arms coordination center (SACC). While there was no certainty that they would execute the NEO, the combined staffs began planning at once. A contingency MAGTF was formed (see figure 6) and CLF chopped to CATF for the operation.

Table 6. Contingency MAGTF Organization and Forces Available

CE	Command element (CE) comprised of 4TH MEB DET ONE staff, and detachments from: 2D SRIG, 8th Comm BN, 2D Intel CO, and 2D Recon CO. Commander was Col. J.J. Doyle (CO, BSSG-4).
GCE	Consisted of a HQS Company, a rifle company, and 81mm mortar platoon from BLT 1/2. Potential augmentation of seven to nine provisional rifle platoons from the CE, CSSE, and ACE. Commander was Lt. Col. R.P. McAleer (CO, BLT 1/2).
ACE	Consisted of HMM-263 (12 CH-46s), HMM-365 (12 CH-46s, MWSS-274, det HMLA-269 (2 UH-1s armed with 2.75 in rocket pods) and det HMH-461 (2 CH-53Es). The commander was Lt. Col. R.J. Wallace (CO, HMM-263).
CSSE	Consisted of a headquarters (HQ) detachment, MP platoon, a landing support det, and a medical/dental section that would be responsible for ECC. Commander was Maj. W.N. Saunders (XO, BSSG-4).

Almost immediately, CATF, CLF, and their staffs began to work out options. On the morning of January 3, the problems with the information about Mogadishu aboard ship became clear as the PHIBRON staff compared their Mogadishu map with the the force's capabilities. They questioned why they had not be given an across-the-beach option and requested that an LST be added to the force. NAVCENT denied this request. Col. Doyle brought with him from *Trenton* a warrant officer who had served with the MSG det at Mogadishu in the mid-1980s. He proved his value when he looked at the NEO material and questioned its accuracy. He informed the planning staffs that he believed the Embassy had been moved from the location shown because a new compound had been planned and had been under construction several years earlier. That morning, in discussions with CINCCENT, the PHIBRON operations officer (N3) confirmed this error and got the new Embassy compound's grid coordinates. After confirming that the new compound was far inland (not in central Mogadishu), the planners felt their options were greatly reduced. An over-the-beach evacuation was not sensible because the forces might have to fight their way across town. Thus, the only option was the use of helicopters; the question was whether to use CH-53Es or CH-46s. As the CH-46 has a very limited range and cannot be refueled in flight, the CH-53E would be the only option until the ships arrived off the coast of Mogadishu. Under the initial planning, the two ships wouldn't reach the CH-46 launch point until 062200Z, or early in the morning on 7 January local time.

There was initially, therefore, a four-day period in which the CH-53E option was the only means with which to conduct the NEO from the sea. Almost immediately, the HMH-461 detachment aboard *Trenton* started planning for a 1,500-n.mi. flight for an immediate execution of a NEO from the North Arabian Sea if necessary. This was not considered a particularly viable option because five refuelings would be needed and there would have been two occasions in which the helicopters would have had to refuel successfully or make a forced landing. Despite this, the CH-53Es were reported ready on three-hours notice for insertion of forces (as long as refueling could be coordinated). For the CH-53Es, the next option considered was an 890-n.mi. flight, with one "must-have" refueling. This plan was put on hold when the situation in the Embassy compound appeared to stabilize while the ships steamed southward.

As the planners began working on preparing a security force to insert into the Embassy compound, the uppermost question was the threat they might face. The intelligence was unclear concerning both the threat and the situation in Mogadishu.

Late on 3 January, the NEO force began direct contact with the Embassy, sending an elements of essential information (EEI) list of questions. The preparation of this EEI list was greatly simplified as it was essentially taken directly from standard operating procedure (SOP) manuals for NEOs prepared by previous MEUs and in the MEU(SOC) program. Contacts with the Embassy were limited by several problems. First, the Embassy reportedly had few uplinks working and was required to maintain voice contact with the State Department in Washington until the morning of 4 January. Second, there was no common crypto material for the Embassy and the ships, so that when direct voice communication became possible, it was in the clear. The fact that all voice communications were transmitted in the clear greatly limited the amount and type of information that could be passed over the radio between the Embassy and the forces aboard *Guam*; secure communication occurred via State Department cable and Navy message traffic. Some means were used to get around this restriction when possible. For example, the Embassy requested that the top ten questions be listed from the 42-item EEI list so that they could be answered immediately. The numbers were provided over the radio and these questions were answered by message traffic almost within the hour. By late afternoon on 4 January, the full set of questions had been answered.

After receiving authority to exceed the CH-53E peacetime passenger restriction of 18, an 80-man force was outlined to be inserted on the first wave of CH-53Es (40 on each CH-53E). The basic requirements for an evacuation force call for three different organizations on the ground: the forward command element (FCE), which will include the ground commander who will liaison with the Ambassador and a communications team; a ground combat element (GCE), which is to provide security during the evacuation; and an evacuation control center (ECC), which is responsible for processing evacuees.

The 80-man force included both Marines and SEALs. That this was a mixed force was one of the few areas of disagreement between CATF and CLF ("we agreed to disagree"). CLF questioned the requirement for including the SEAL team, because the Marines and SEALs that would make up the force had not worked together before and did not know each other. CATF felt that the close quarter warfare (CQW) training of the SEALs would be useful on the ground and that the two groups (SEALs and Marines) would thus compliment each other's capabilities. As CATF commands in an amphibious operation, both SEALs and Marines were included in the evacuation force. CG FOURTH MEB then required the force to be reduced to no more than 30 passengers on each helicopter. Reductions included a ten-person cut in the GCE, removing two of three members of the ECC, and eliminating the two-member combat camera team from the operation. (See table 7 for the composition of the inserted security/liaison group.) As the

planners expected follow-on forces, the reduction in the size of the ECC was not viewed as a serious matter because much of the processing could be held until after a second wave was sent in. The reduction in the size of the GCE was made reluctantly, however, because there was a feeling that the force was at a minimum size to execute the mission. Included in the organization were two Lieutenant Colonels, a Commander, two Majors, two Marine Captains, and two Marine Lieutenants for a force of 60-people. CLF and CAF included this large contingent of officers because they wanted senior officers on the ground in Mogadishu.

Table 7. Composition of Inserted Security/Liaison Group

4TH MEB Forward Command Element	3 Marines, Lt. Col. Oates
SEAL Team	9 SEALs (part of FCE) Cdr. Louma
Evacuation Coordination Center (ECC)	2 Marines Maj. Saunders and 1 counter-intelligence Warrant Officer
Security Force	C Company, BLT 1/2 46 Marines and sailors (corpsmen) Lt. Col. McAleer

By the morning of 4 January, Ambassador Bishop decided that it was not safe to transit Mogadishu from the Embassy compound to the airport; in addition, the conditions at the airport were uncertain. While there remained some hope for an Italian-mediated ceasefire that would allow foreigners to evacuate, it became less likely as the days progressed. On 4 January Italian and Soviet attempts to evacuate via the Mogadishu airport failed (see table 2). Late in the evening on 3 January, Embassy buildings were hit by 10 to 15 rounds of machinegun fire. The next morning, rebels threatened the two Americans in the K-7 compound and the two were withdrawn to the Embassy compound. A warehouse next to the JAO building was struck by an RPG and a shoot-out occurred between looters and Embassy guards. Around midday on 4 January, Ambassador Bishop communicated a rather desperate requirement for immediate assistance. He noted that the Embassy was

> falling behind the curve in our ability to protect ourselves from the lawlessness which now prevails in Mogadishu. Recommend immediate airlift from Saudi Arabia of a parachute force sufficient to provide augmented security to the Chancery and JAO building where everyone ... currently is safehavened. Two platoons should be sufficient.

At that time, with the airport inaccessible to both aircraft and evacuees, the preferred option for the evacuation had become the CH-53Es off the amphibious ships. The potential launch point had varied as the ships steamed south, and dawn on 5 January was seen as the earliest potential arrival time in Mogadishu. (This was driven by several factors that the CH-53E pilots felt would improve the chance of mission success: a mission under 500 n.mi. was preferable due to lowered in-flight refueling requirements; and, a dawn/daylight arrival in Mogadishu would facilitate insertion of the security force/liaison group.) When informed of this, Ambassador Bishop responded with some distress that he

> hoped this is not the definitive response for a 27 hour delay [sic] may have tragic consequences. Hard to believe that among the 240,000 American military deployed to the Gulf there are not two platoons who could be put in position to provide assistance in timeframe shorter than 27 hours.

Clearly, the Ambassador felt the situation on the ground in Mogadishu was getting desperate for the Americans in the Embassy compound.

By late afternoon on 4 January, therefore, a long-range CH-53E insertion of a security force looked probable as the question became "when" rather than "if." One of the more difficult problems then faced was coordinating flight times between the USMC KC-130s and the CH-53Es they would refuel in-flight on the way to Mogadishu. Three KC-130s from VMGR-252 and VMGR-352 departed Bahrain shortly before 1300Z for an airfield closer to Mogadishu (with an ETA of 1430Z), where they would assume a two-hour alert posture. At that point, planning called for the first refueling to occur at 050530Z.[1]

By mid-afternoon, *Guam* and *Trenton* were both steaming at full speed, with *Guam* pulling ahead about 4 n.mi. an hour. The CH-53Es flew ahead to *Guam* in the early evening, carrying the SEALs and Maj. Saunders, the ECC officer, and awaited the order to head to Mogadishu. Several times during the evening there were false starts as the forces aboard ship thought they had a go. CINCCENT issued the final execute order late in the evening with a launch time of 0345D. With this launch time, the CH-53Es would arrive at 0620C, shortly after dawn, in Mogadishu.

In the evening, weapons and ammunition were issued to the 60 men going in. The forces were heavily armed, with almost every man carrying some form of automatic weapon and antitank weapon (which included Dragons, light anti-armor weapons (LAAWs), and AT-4s). Some of the weaponry was carried in its wrapping out of concern for the ability to return the ammunition to the landing forces operational reserve material (LFORM) stocks in the magazines aboard ship following the operation. Certain classes of ammunition (for example, hand grenades) cannot be returned to magazines according to regulation following removal of the protective wrapping. Because the forces involved were looking ahead at a possible amphibious assault against Iraqi forces in Kuwait, they did not want to lose ammunition that otherwise would be available. In BLT 1/2, there was a perception that they were very low on certain types of ammunition (again, for example, grenades) and that if this ammunition could be retained, it would be.

Follow-on forces were readied and were planned to be inserted into the Embassy during the afternoon of 5 January on a second CH-53E flight. These forces were organized into numbered 15-man sticks that could be called in by the FCE commander by number so that the forces in Mogadishu could tailor the augmentation to his requirements. For example, the 81-man ECC included a CE, medical personnel, MPs (for screening evacuees), an administration and processing section, and a transportation section (for coordinating helicopters), which could be called in mixed groups to properly augment the forces already in the Embassy compound.

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[1] For the KC-130s, planning occurred back in Bahrain as the three planes headed to Oman. The KC-130s planners were told first that CH-53Es would be refueled, then that it would be F-14s, then AV-8Bs, and, finally, CH-53Es. If it had been a fixed-wing refueling operation there would have been problems because the three KC-130s that deployed to Oman from Bahrain were all equipped with helicopter refueling drogues, which cannot be used to refuel jets.

Early in the morning of 5 January, the 60-man evacuation force made its way from *Guam*'s hangar deck to the CH-53Es for the flight into Mogadishu.

ISSUES

Issues in this period of the evacuation include the inaccuracy of the information aboard ship about Mogadishu, complications in command and control, communication with the U.S. Embassy and national intelligence organizations, use of human intelligence (HUMINT) available aboard ship, the benefits provided by developed NEO SOPs, and the combined command and control center in SACC aboard *Guam*.

Command and Control

The command and control set-up for Operation Eastern Exit generated some confusion. While the on-scene commanders believed that they had been chopped to NAVCENT, in actuality the command chain ran through COMPHIBGRU TWO. (See figure 2.) NAVCENT's tendency to bypass the PHIBGRU and directly contact the rescue force contributed to this impression. That CPG-2 was not on distribution for much of the message traffic related to Eastern Exit meant that he and his staff were working without crucial information at times, such as when the two ships were ordered to slow to 14 knots. Additionally, if CLF chopped to CATF (CPR-6), as he thought he had, the CLF in the North Arabian Sea (NAS) was no longer in the command and control chain. Therefore, in the circumstances, there may have been no authority for the CLF in the NAS to order that the CH-53Es could carry no more than 30 passengers.

Combined C2 in SACC

All involved elements in the operation have agreed that combining the two staffs, PHIBRON SIX and FOURTH MEB DET ONE, in one working space facilitated the operation by easing coordination and communication. This was done mostly from necessity. COMPHIBRON SIX only brought five members of his staff with him from *Shreveport*; serendipitously, this led to a more efficiently run operation.

HUMINT

One of the first things done by a Marine Corps unit involved in a NEO is to poll the force to see if there are any Marines with unique experience that will aid the mission. The fact is that in any Marine unit one will typically find Marines with experience as MSGs around much of the world. Having a former Mogadishu MSG on hand proved invaluable to Col. Doyle from the very beginning.

SOPs

The existence of SOPs greatly eased planning and execution of the NEO from Mogadishu. From expediting the transmittal of the EEI list to the Embassy to outlining forces and organization of an evacuation force to outlining the authority and obligations of major players, the SOPs answered most of the questions and solved issues for the Eastern Exit forces before problems occurred. The existence of the SOPs allowed the planners to focus on problems specific to this operation, such as the coordination of the in-flight refuelings of the CH-53Es, rather than on the basic concepts and organization of a NEO.

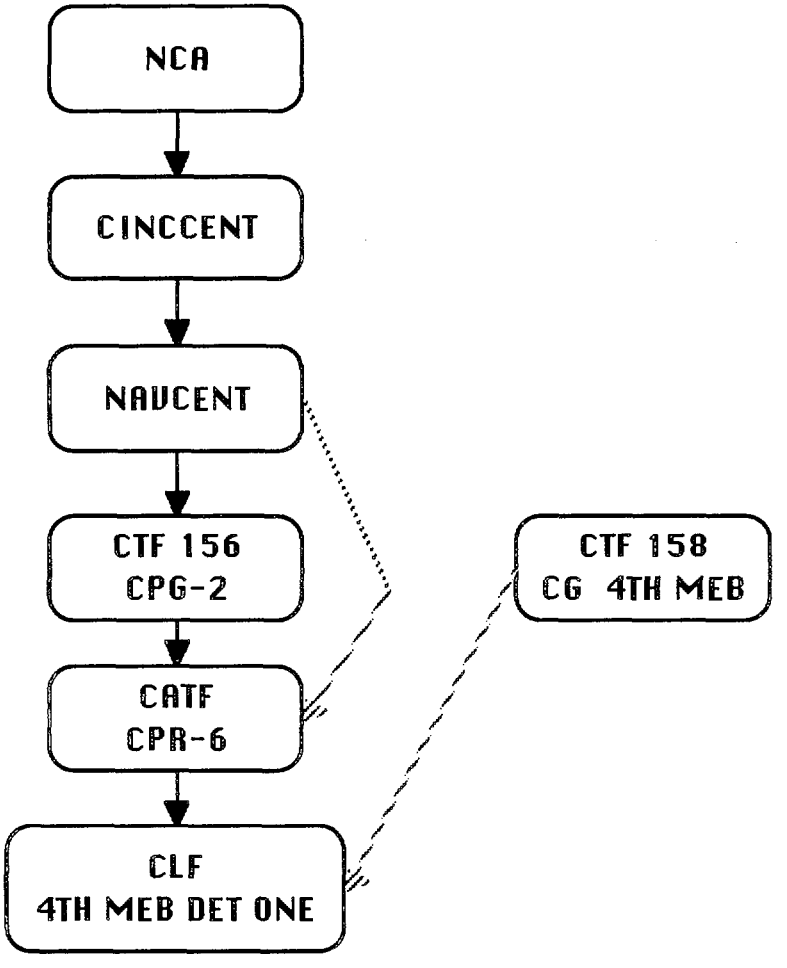

Figure 3. Operation Eastern Exit Command Relationships

FLIGHT OF THE CH-53Es[1]

DISCUSSION

In the early morning hours, the crews of the two CH-53E Sea Stallions from DET DELTA HMH-461 prepared for their mission into Somalia, coordinating in-flight refueling and gathering information until the last minute.

On the afternoon of 3 January, the two Sea Stallions were fitted with refueling probes, which had been removed due to shipboard space limitations, and two .50 caliber machineguns were mounted.[2] Available for the operation were three crews for the two aircraft. When planning the 1,500- and 890-n.mi. missions, the det planned to take three pilots per helicopter and, therefore, to have a relief available for the pilot or co-pilot. For the 466-n.mi. mission that occurred, however, two pilots, two door gunners, and a crew chief (who manned an M-60 machinegun on the ramp at the rear of the CH-53E) manned each helicopter. The spare crew would be available as reliefs for the follow-on mission planned for the afternoon of 5 January.

The two CH-53Es departed *Trenton* at 1815D for *Guam*, where the crews conducted final flight planning and received intelligence briefings. Threats to the aircraft included SA-2 and SA-3 missiles (both high-altitude surface-to-air missiles (SAMs)), and many antiaircraft artillery (AAA) guns throughout the city. The SAM threat led to a decision to make a low-altitude ingress to the Embassy compound on arrival in Mogadishu. With the distances involved in the operation, three aerial refueling control points (ARCP) were required—two inbound and one on the return from Mogadishu. While the flight crews, who had been awake since 0500, retired at 2000 for crew rest, the TACRON personnel scheduled the ARCPs and coordinated the KC-130s.

At 0145, the crews awoke for weather, intelligence, and mission briefings. While the pilots handled the startup of the aircraft and safety checks, the co-pilots remained below to get the latest navigational information (they were the last people to board the CH-53Es). By 0330, the 60-man evacuation force was spread-loaded on the two CH-53Es. For example, both helicopters carried one Marine platoon, some SEALs, and at least one of the senior officers. Thus, if either helicopter crashed or otherwise couldn't reach Mogadishu, which was viewed as a very real possibility, the mission could still go ahead. In this event, the decision to go ahead would rest with Maj. Dan Schultz (the OIC of the HMH-461 det) and Lt. Col. W. D. Oates, the FCE commander. Col. Doyle and Commo. Moser specifically avoided trying to create specific "no-go" criteria and instead left such a decision with the on-scene commanders.

In boarding the helicopters, the force quickly realized that the 80-man option may not have been realistic. The 30 heavily armed men aboard each helicopter essentially filled

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[1] This section relies heavily on two unpublished unclassified papers by Capt. Kevin D. Moon, USMC, who was the co-pilot of the second CH-53E ("Operation Eastern Exit NEO HMH-461 DET Delta," 8 January 1991; and, "Weapons and Threat Scenario Encountered by DET Delta CH-53E's from the USS *Trenton* During Operation Eastern Exit," 25 January 1991).

[2] As the refueling probes had not been connected to the CH-53Es during the deployment for Desert Shield, none of the pilots had exercised in-flight refueling operations in the previous six months, one not for almost a year and one was not aerial refueling (AR) qualified. The KC-130s, in theater since 17 August 1990, had aerial refueled just two CH-53Es in exercises during their deployment.

them to capacity, with 2 to 3 men on each helicopter not having seats available to sit on. (The general consensus seems to be that perhaps five more men could have fit on each of the Sea Stallions.) A complication was created by the boarding method. The SEALs boarded first and sat in the rear of the helicopter, so that the Marines had to climb over them to reach seats further forward.

At 0345D, the two CH-53Es took off. Almost immediately the long-range OMEGA navigation systems on both helicopters stopped providing navigation information. The OMEGA system requires fixes from three land-based signals, and neither aircraft was able to get more than two fixes. With some guidance from *Guam*, the two CH-53Es headed south to the first ARCP using dead-reckoning for navigation. The helicopters flew at 6,000 feet, which is the altitude used for in-flight refueling. With machineguns mounted on the doors, the cabin was exposed to the air at this altitude and, despite being near the equator, the helicopters were quite cold.

At 185 n.mi. from *Guam*, the CH-53Es rendezvoused with the KC-130s. The crews of the KC-130s, which are not NVG-capable, were unable to see the CH-53Es as they approached, because the helicopters' formation lights were not visible from more than a mile away. As the pilots talked, the CH-53Es briefly turned on spotlights so that the refueling planes could see the helicopters. At this point, one of the OMEGA navigation aids became operational and its accuracy was verified with one of the KC-130 navigators. (Due to its earlier failure, the CH-53E pilots did not feel comfortable relying on the OMEGA system. It was used as a backup system through the remainder of the mission.) This in-flight refueling was vital to the mission, for if it failed, the helicopters would be forced to return to the ships.

The two helicopters plugged successfully, each from a separate KC-130, and began receiving fuel. The lead helicopter developed a fuel leak inside the cabin and initiated an emergency break-away. The crew chief climbed up (on top of several of the Marines) to inspect the leak; when he removed a ceiling panel, a large amount of fuel (estimates ranged from 25 to 200 gallons) was dumped over the Marines and SEALs in the cabin. (More than one Marine described having his helmet filled with gasoline.) There had been no means to test the reconnected refueling probes aboard *Trenton* or *Guam*, and a pressure seal in the refueling system had failed, causing the leak. The crew chief was able to fix the seal and the aircraft replugged without further incident. The two CH-53Es now had enough fuel to reach Mogadishu and the operation was a go.

The leg to the second ARCP was 225 n.mi. If this refueling failed, the CH-53Es would fly to the compound, insert the security teams, and then fly into the desert, where they would then wait for the ships to steam within range. The second refueling was completed on schedule, each helicopter having taken on a total of 24,000 pounds of fuel in the two refuelings. The refueling ended with the helicopters just 53 n.mi. from the Embassy. At this time, the KC-130s gave a last navigation fix to the helicopters, which then began a descent in preparation for a low-level insertion profile. The KC-130s began a high-level orbit and established communications with *Guam*. The CH-53E crews test-fired the .50 caliber machine guns and warned the security/liaison force to prepare for insertion. Just at dawn, the CH-53Es crossed the coast at approximately 25 to 50 feet altitude and 150 knots (175 mph).

The CH-53Es crossed the beach south of the harbor with the sun at their backs. Maj. Schultz planned the ingress route around avoiding the major fighting, which was reported to be in the northern sections of the city and around the presidential palace near the harbor area. Based on the map on hand, the Embassy compound was clearly in an isolated area and they had been told it was distinguishable by its golf course and large white stucco

compound wall. In addition, there was to be a man waving a white flag marking the HLZ. The map, however, was from 1969 and turned out to be highly inaccurate. The area of the Embassy compound was heavily built up, and, according to the pilots, virtually every building seemed to have "a large white stucco fence" around it. The pilots were unable to identify a golf course.

After flying around the city for 10 to 15 minutes, Maj. Schultz pulled the CH-53Es back over the water to try his backup approach, which involved flying over the airport and then a one-minute and ten-second leg to the Embassy compound. On the way in the second time, the two CH-53Es flew over a column of trucks including several mounting 12.7-mm AA guns. The Somalis jumped off their trucks and ran for cover as the helicopters approached. The helicopters established radio contact with the Embassy in an attempt to get guidance to the compound, but the radio operator was unable to provide assistance because he was in a windowless room. This was the first communication the Embassy received from the helicopters indicating that they were actually inbound and at what time they would be arriving. Earlier contact had been avoided because it would have been in the clear and the risk of a security breach precluded such contact.

Within minutes, the lead pilots saw what they thought might be the Embassy compound. A large number (100 to 150) of Somalis were gathered with ladders by one wall and, reportedly, a large volume of gunfire was being directed into the compound. As the CH-53Es flew into the compound, they flew low over this gathering and the Somalis scattered. As the CH-53Es crossed the wall a man came running out waving a white sheet to mark the HLZ. The Deputy Chief of Mission reportedly said that "When I saw the words Marines on the sides of those large helicopters, I knew we were safe."

On landing, the SEALs quickly exited the helicopters and moved to the Chancery. The Marines took a longer time to exit the helicopters, perhaps as long as ten minutes before they were all out. After establishing a perimeter around the HLZ, the Marines gradually moved to establish a perimeter defense of the Embassy compound. (Further discussion of the events on the ground can be found in the next section.) The two Super Stallions remained on the ground for an hour, both with guns manned and one ready to take off immediately (one helicopter's engines were shut off for part of the time on the ground). The USAF AC-130 arrived overhead shortly after the CH-53Es landed.

Shortly before takeoff, 61 evacuees, including all non-official Americans then in the compound, three Ambassadors (Turkish, UAE, and Nigerian), and the Omani Charge D'Affaires, were loaded on the Super Stallions for the 350-mile plus return flight to *Guam.* Because each evacuee was allowed to take only one piece of luggage, almost all of their possessions were left behind in Mogadishu. The two helicopters took off at 0720C and headed straight out to sea, where they contacted the third KC-130 that would refuel them.

The two helicopters handled the evacuees differently. On Maj. Schultz's Sea Stallion, they were allowed to move about the helicopter after the CH-53E was clear of land. There were a number of blankets aboard the helicopter, as well, which the evacuees (most of whom were wearing very light clothing appropriate for Somalia's hot temperatures) could use to keep warm. On the second CH-53E, the evacuees were required to remain seated and were not allowed to touch their luggage. There were far fewer blankets available (thus, crew members volunteered some of their clothing to help evacuees stay warm). The pilots of the second Sea Stallion were concerned over potential security problems. The 61 evacuees had not been searched before boarding the helicopters (for a variety of reasons, primarily the limited size of the ECC) and, on boarding the Sea Stallion, one evacuee had asked a crew member what to do with his automatic pistol (it was promptly confiscated).

The third refueling operation was difficult for several reasons. For this evolution, there was only one KC-130, which was therefore carrying more fuel.[1] This forced the KC-130 to fly faster to avoid a stall. The refueling, therefore, occurred at about 125 knots, rather than the preferred 110 knots. More seriously, the KC-130 drogue maldeployed[2] and the aircraft developed a fuel leak. When the CH-53Es went to refuel, the pilots were confronted with a much narrower drogue, which was difficult to plug into. The first Sea Stallion was forced to fly at an angle to minimize the fuel spraying on the helicopter and only took on one-half the fuel planned. The second CH-53E took six or seven passes before successfully plugging. While this was going on, Maj. Schultz was attempting to decide whether to divert one or both Sea Stallions to the Somali desert if the refueling failed. With the end of the refueling, the KC-130 gave the two Sea Stallions final navigation guidance and headed back to Oman, over 1,100 miles away. The KC-130 continued to act as a communications relay between *Guam* and the two CH-53Es until out of range.

At 1040D, almost eight hours after liftoff, the two CH-53Es arrived on *Guam*, where they were met by teams ready to handle the evacuees. (The handling of evacuees aboard ship is discussed later in this report.) The two CH-53Es then took off for *Trenton*, where they were recovered at 1120D. With this, the Super Stallions' mission was complete. COMUSNAVCENT had cancelled follow-on missions at 1100D (with the caveat "unless the situation changes").

ISSUES

There are a number of issues that arose during this portion of the operation, including the lack of aerial refueling (AR) currency amongst the CH-53E pilots, CH-53E navigation and long-range communications equipment, KC-130 NVG capabilities, KC-130 drogues, Embassy evacuee preparation, Embassy HLZ preparation capabilities, and the lack of a night search and rescue (SAR) capability in the force.

Exercising AR

The HMH-461 Det Delta crews aboard *Trenton* had not exercised this evolution during their deployment in the Persian Gulf. Of the four pilots who flew the mission, none had flown an AR exercise since June and one of the pilots was not AR qualified. Although the Sea Stallion refueling rigs are typically removed at sea due to space constraints, it should have been possible to exercise the CH-53Es in-flight refueling capability at some point during the deployment so that the pilots would have been more current in AR techniques.

CH-53E Navigation and Long-Range Communications

The OMEGA navigation system, which is the CH-53Es primary long-range navigation aid, relies on ground station signals. The Indian Ocean area from which Eastern

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[1] The two KC-130s from the inbound refuelings remained overhead until the outbound refueling was completed. These aircraft could have provided the CH-53Es with enough fuel to reach Kenya. These two aircraft flew to Mombassa, Kenya, after the third refueling operation was completed, refueled, and awaited orders to conduct another mission in support of CH-53E operations.

[2] This maldeployment of the drogue is a somewhat unclear issue. One version is that this drogue came from a new manufacturer and that these drogues where thought to have all been returned for reworking. Others assert that a mechanical problem aboard the aircraft caused a maldeployment.

Exit was launched is one of the areas of the world not fully covered by these stations. Thus, the Sea Stallions executed Eastern Exit without a reliable navigation system; navigation was done using a combination of guidance from the ships (to 75 or so miles from the ships), pathfinding by the KC-130s, and dead-reckoning.

The CH-53Es were unable to directly communicate with the ships beyond about a 75-mile range. Without the KC-130s and AC-130 acting as a relay, the Sea Stallions would have been out of contact with the ships for most of the mission. The KC-130s were not equipped with a secured long-range communications link. Therefore, all long-range communication was in the clear.

KC-130 NVG capabilities

During the first rendezvous between the CH-53Es and the KC-130s, the CH-53Es were able to see the KC-130s well before the reverse was true. Each CH-53E had the co-pilot wearing NVGs, who was able to see the KC-130s' navigation lights from a long distance. While the CH-53Es were flying with their navigation lights on, the KC-130 crews were unable to see the helicopters until their spotlights were turned on.

KC-130 Drogues

During the third refueling, on the return from Mogadishu, the refueling drogue did not open fully. Whether this was due to mechanical malfunctions or a manufacturing problem, the incomplete opening of the drogue made the CH-53Es refueling more difficult (both in the initial plug and in maintaining fuel flow).

Embassy Evacuee Preparation

The evacuees who boarded the Sea Stallions had not gone through many of the steps planned for in evacuation operations. The Embassy had grouped the evacuees in incorrectly sized sticks, but more importantly, no one searched the evacuees or their luggage. While no untoward incidents occurred, the fact that one evacuee was about to board the helicopter armed is an indication of the problems that could have occurred.

Embassy HLZ Preparation Capabilities

The two CH-53Es wandered around Mogadishu for some 15 to 20 minutes before they were able to find the Embassy compound, which greatly increased the risk to the two helicopters because active combat was ongoing in the city. While the difficulty in finding the Embassy was partly the result of the inadequate NEO pack, the inadequacy of HLZ preparation at the Embassy compound was a major contributing factor. The only means to mark the compound and HLZ offered by the Embassy were a strobe light (which was not on as far as the pilots were able to ascertain) and a retired Marine waving a Marine Corps flag (this was changed to waving a white sheet, at the request of the MAGTF CE). In addition, after the helicopters were circling the city, they made contact with the Embassy via radio. The radio operator, however, was unable to help the pilots find the compound since he was in a windowless room.

Blankets on CH-53Es

When conducting aerial refueling operations, CH-53Es typically fly at an altitude of 6,000 feet. With guns mounted, the helicopter cabin is exposed to the cold temperatures of that altitude. During the flight to Mogadishu, the 60 Marines and SEALs found conditions to be quite cold. On the return flight, the evacuees required blankets because they were

dressed for the warm temperatures of Mogadishu (some were wearing shorts and, reportedly, some were even evacuated in their pajamas). While the SOPs call for blankets, the number carried on the two helicopters in Eastern Exit was insufficient for the number of people aboard. Supplying the CH-53E with a larger number of blankets would have alleviated this problem.

Night SAR Capability: In early January 1991, the amphibious forces did not have an integral helicopter night SAR capability.[1] During both the initial flight of the CH-53Es and the CH-46 operations the next night, there was minimal capacity to rescue personnel in the event of a helicopter crash. (Either the ships would have performed the rescue or the rescue operations would have waited for daylight.)

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[1] As far as the author is aware, the PHIBGRU THREE deployment with two SH-3s on 1 December 1991 was the first time that an amphibious force had deployed with an integral night-SAR helicopter.

ON THE GROUND IN MOGADISHU

DISCUSSION

After the Sea Stallions landed in the Embassy compound, the 60-man Marine and SEAL security and liaison team formed a 360° defensive perimeter around the landing zone and then moved out to establish defensive positions in the compound. The SEAL team under Cdr. Steve Louma was primarily responsible for working with the five MSGs in protecting the Chancery building and the Ambassador. The security team under Lt. Col. R.L. McAleer worked with the Embassy security officer and the 30 Somali contract guards to put up a perimeter defense around the compound wall. Lt. Col. W.D. Oates coordinated operations with Ambassador Bishop (who, as Ambassador, was in command of all forces on the ground) through the day and spent virtually the entire day in the Chancery building with the Ambassador. (See figure 2 for a map of the Embassy compound.)

Ambassador Bishop had clear guidance on what he expected from the security force. First, he wanted to evacuate the Embassy compound, not reinforce the Embassy's security in hopes that the situation would improve (like Operation Sharp Edge in Monrovia, Liberia). Second, he gave specific direction on the use of deadly force—that it should be used only if people were coming over the walls with obvious hostile intent or if the situation deteriorated significantly. He also outlined several zones of defense: around the entire Embassy compound; around the JAO and Chancery buildings (the two "safehaven" buildings), the Marine House, and the HLZ; and, finally, to the two safehaven buildings. He stated that if a choice had to be made, he preferred a withdrawal to the third zone before the use of deadly force. His rationale was very clear. He wanted to avoid creating the impression that the 60-man force was intervening in any way in the ongoing conflict in Mogadishu. He feared that any shooting might create the impression in one (or more) of the groups that the United States was intervening against them; such an impression could make the U.S. Embassy the target of organized attacks rather than an incidental victim of the violence in the city or the target of looters.[1] With this guidance, Lt. Col. Oates set up the defense of the compound.

Some of the initial tasks including locating suitable defensive positions and doing a sweep around the compound wall. During the sweep, several ladders were discovered against the wall at the location where the helicopters had flown over the large group of

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[1] Ambassador Bishop had requested that VOA and BBC announce after the CH-53Es' arrival that the Marines were present solely to evacuate the Embassy and would not interfere in any way in the ongoing conflict in Somalia. Interestingly, even as the Soviets were attempting to be evacuated via the Italians and then with the U.S. operation, Soviet radio fanned the flames against evacuation forces:

> The situation in Somalia is uncertain because Italy, Somalia's former colonial power, has decided to send warships and four military aircraft to the country. The reason officially given for sending Italian Army personnel into Somalia is to evacuate foreign citizens from that country. However, no one can confirm that the presence of foreign troops in Somalia would not further jeopardize the situation in the country. (Moscow International Service in Swahili, 3 January 1991, in FBIS-AFR-91-004, 7 January 1991, page 19.)

Whether the rebels or the government would actively oppose an evacuation using military means remained a question mark throughout Eastern Exit because both groups had stated their opposition to such operations and the government had directly threatened to attack the French warships off the coast with Air Force aircraft.

Somalis. In setting up defenses, it quickly became clear that there were not enough Marines to cover the entire perimeter. One platoon covered the northern and western walls, and the other the southern area of the compound. Dragon antitank teams were set-up across from both gates (on the northern and western walls). The SEAL team, who were primarily established on the roof of the Chancery building, covered most of the southeastern portion of the compound.

One difficulty encountered almost immediately, which remained a problem throughout the operation for the evacuation force, was the presence of a large number of Somali nationals in the compound with an intermittent flow in and out of additional individuals. These were primarily foreign service nationals (FSNs) who worked for the Embassy, including the 30 contract guards, at least some of whom hoped to be evacuated with the Embassy staff. Therefore, the Somalis located throughout the compound created a rather confusing security picture.

A significant direct threat to the Embassy compound never developed during the day, but there was sporadic fire in the area throughout that time. Some of the rounds flew over the Embassy compound or hit Embassy buildings, including an RPG round that hit the compound's southern wall in the afternoon. From their positions, however, the evacuation force's Marines and SEALs had clear views of the ongoing fighting, with clouds of smoke from artillery rounds and frequent views of sniper fire. Truckloads of armed individuals frequently drove by the Embassy, especially along Agfoi road to the north of the compound. Looting was a common sight.

After the CH-53Es departed, a major challenge was to rescue a group of Americans and foreign nationals in the office of military cooperation (OMC) compound just a few blocks from the Embassy. Three Marines and six SEALs augmented Embassy security in three hardened vehicles. Although the OMC compound was only one and a half blocks from the Embassy, there was the possibility of running into a roadblock (where there might be demands for vehicles to be surrendered). The convoy was ordered not to stop and to shoot its way through if necessary. At 0847C, the three hardened vehicles left the Embassy compound. Within ten minutes they were back in the compound, having convoyed back four vehicles with 22 individuals (4 Americans, 1 Filipino, and 17 Kenyans).

Throughout the day, foreign diplomats and individuals desiring to be evacuated with the U.S. operation contacted the U.S. Embassy. The consistent response was that the foreign nationals were welcome but that they had to make their own way to the U.S. Embassy compound. An issue arose with the Soviet Embassy personnel. The Soviet Ambassador, Vladimir Korneev, did not feel that the Soviets could safely make their way to the U.S. Embassy compound without assistance. Ambassador Bishop then acceded to Ambassador Korneev's request for assistance. He was directed, however, that none of the Marine or SEALs that had come from the ships could leave the Embassy compound as part of an operation to escort the Soviets in. Therefore, the convoy that departed the Embassy compound at 1130C was protected by Embassy security personnel and Somali police (the police joined the escort for a "fee"). An hour later, the convoy returned with 39 Soviets to be evacuated to the ships. Fifteen British nationals were brought into the compound in a similar "rescue for fee" operation (comprised of Somali police). A later arrangement to pick up South Koreans fell through because the Koreans did not trust the Somalis who had been sent from the Embassy.

Many of the Somali FSNs wished to be evacuated but, as Ambassador Bishop explained, international law forbids evacuation of natives. In addition, the Ambassador explained that he risked creating the impression of interference in the Somali civil war if

Somali nationals were evacuated as well. In the afternoon, the President's brother, who was a Major General and Chief of Police, requested to be evacuated along with 25 members of his family. After a loud confrontation, the Ambassador had Lt. Col. Oates escort the Major General (who was drunk) out of the compound. Dealing with Somalis who wished to be evacuated was a constant issue. At the Embassy gates, Embassy staff decided who would be allowed into the compound. During processing in the JAO building, further winnowing occurred and many Somalis were turned away there. Adding to the complications was an announced Kenyan policy of refusing to accept any Somali evacuees. Because the ships were scheduled to head to Mombassa, Kenya, to offload the evacuees, Somalis without some claim to U.S. or other country refuge could not be allowed on board.

As the CH-53Es neared *Guam*, an issue arose over follow-on forces. Lt. Col. Oates, the commander on the ground, requested a 44-man augmentation be flown in. This force would consist primarily of ECC personnel to handle processing of evacuees with seven Marines from the reconnaissance company requested with night vision capability. Additional passengers would include the two-man combat camera team and some counter-intelligence team (CIT) personnel. At 0910C, NAVCENT granted tentative approval for a follow-on mission commencing at 1500C. Soon, NAVCENT then questioned whether the entire 44-man force was required and by 1000C (when the CH-53Es were on *Guam*) COMUSNAVCENT directed that the CH-53Es were not to return to the Embassy unless absolutely necessary. The KC-130s remained on-call to support another CH-53E mission until 1300Z, when they were released from contingency tasking. In the afternoon, Lt. Col. Oates asked again for augmentation because the Embassy increasingly seemed to be a target for harassing fire. Again, the augmentation was denied.

The cancellation of the follow-on mission resulted in a minimum-sized ECC and CIT. The ECC consisted of just Maj. Saunders and the CIT team was made up of one warrant officer who was primarily involved in ECC activities. U.S. Embassy personnel thus performed many ECC functions, such as preparing manifests for 15-person sticks for the helicopter evacuation. In somewhat an incongruous note, secretaries remained at their word processors supporting the evacuation throughout the day, with combat-ready Marines wandering by their desks. The absence, essentially, of an ECC meant that the evacuees were never searched and that, as the final evacuation approached, Marines needed to be pulled from perimeter security to assist in ECC functions such as organizing sticks and assisting evacuees to the helicopters.

U.S. Embassy personnel provided a variety of additional support and augmentation to the 60 men from the ships. As noted above, there were five MSGs, a number of Embassy security personnel, and 30 Somali contract guards who were an important component of the defense of the compound. To guarantee common communication, the Embassy security officer supplied many of the officers and NCOs with Motorola hand-held radios that the Embassy used for security communication. Several of the Marines who had been doused with fuel during the refueling mishap took showers to wash off the fuel and washed their clothing. Many of the 60 Marines and SEALs had fresh-cooked food brought to their fighting positions, a welcome substitute for MREs. The variety of goods available in the commissary was somewhat overwhelming to the inserted security/liaison force after six months in the North Arabian Sea. The Ambassador told the force to take whatever they wished. While the hundreds of cases of alcohol and beer beckoned, this mostly meant some sodas, candy bars, and some t-shirts (or such) as souvenirs. The Ambassador also okayed any other "plundering" of the Embassy for equipment that might be useful rather than leaving it behind to be stolen by looters. The Marines planned to take a xerox machine (almost no copying machines were working aboard ship) and some computers, but

inadvertently left them behind. The medic filled many bags with medical supplies to augment stocks aboard ship.

During the day, there was only one incident that could be clearly identified as a direct attempt to attack the Marines or SEALs. On arrival, the two-man Marine sniper team (a sniper and a spotter who was a former sniper instructor) took up a position on the Embassy water tower, which, at 102 feet, was the tallest structure in the compound and provided good views in all directions. An hour or so after taking up position, a Somali about 400 to 500 meters away began to fire at the two Marines. After 15 to 20 minutes, crosshairs on the Somali the entire time, Lt. Col. McAleer ordered the sniper not to fire and for the sniper team to come down from the water tower.

In the early evening, the security force's forward air controller (FAC) began preparation of the HLZ. Several cars were parked in the HLZ, many of which were without keys. These were broken into and pushed out of the LZ. The final evacuation by CH-46s (discussed in the next section) was to be conducted solely on NVGs; thus, the Embassy had to be totally darkened. An infared strobe was placed on the Embassy tower, and chemicals lights were dug into the HLZ in a NATO Y and used to mark the light poles that surrounded the HLZ. All of the Embassy lights were extinguished. This turned into a difficult process because few of the buildings were on common light controls . Marines had to move from building to building to turn off the lights. This continued until late in the evening; the lights on the Marine House were finally extinguished by cutting the cables. As the compound darkened, the various night-vision devices brought into the compound became more and more important. The 60-man force had gone in heavily equipped with night-vision equipment (more than one piece for every two men). (One squad of eleven men, for example, had seven night-vision devices.)

Preparing the evacuees for evacuation presented several challenges. For example, evacuees were told they could bring one bag of luggage apiece; more than one evacuee attempted to bring more than that. Enforcing this rule became a common problem for the Marines pulled to escort and assist evacuees to the helicopters. Several of the evacuees had pets they wished to bring with them; this, however, was not permitted. Most pets were killed by their owners. One owner failed to give his dog enough poison and a Marine was forced to cut its throat.

By 2300, five sticks of 15 evacuees were being set up outside the JAO building facing the HLZ. The evacuees were organized into three waves; all the individuals in the first two waves were from the JAO building. The third wave included the Embassy personnel (including Ambassador Bishop) still working in the Chancery building. By 2330C, the Embassy compound was ready for the CH-46 evacuation to commence.

ISSUES

There are a number of issues in the operations on the ground in Mogadishu, including the lack, essentially, of an ECC on the ground; HLZ preparation; Marine long-range communications; and fire control discipline.

ECC Operations

As initial planning called for a follow-on Super Stallion flight to bring additional personnel as required, the initial flight carried only two ECC individuals. Many ECC functions were not performed during Eastern Exit,. Handling of evacuees, such as controlling sticks and assuring that unauthorized individuals were not able to board the

helicopters, suffered due to the small ECC. The perimeter defenses had to be thinned to provide personnel to support the CH-46 evacuation operation.

HLZ Preparation

Preparation of the Embassy HLZ for a nighttime evacuation operation was difficult for a variety of reasons, most specifically the difficulty of turning off all the compound lights as there were a number of different power supplies in the compound and no common means to turn off all the lights.

Identification of Ambassador

Before arriving at the Embassy compound, the inserted security force had no means to identify the Ambassador. Protecting the Ambassador is a primary mission of inserted security forces, making this a potentially serious handicap if the situation had been more serious on the ground. A photograph of Ambassador Bishop could have been sent via FIST imagery to *Guam*, thus providing the security forces with a means of identifying him. Providing information on VIPs via such means could be valuable in other circumstances as well.

Marine Long-Range Communications

Only one PSC-3 UHF SATCOM radio was available aboard *Guam* and *Trenton* to be taken ashore with the advance command element. This PSC-3 had a broken connector, which meant that to communicate via this link depended on the radio operator holding the radio "in just the right position." Also, the battery ran out several hours before departure from Mogadishu. Communication support was then provided by the unsecure Embassy HF station and the FAC's UHF link with the aircraft overhead.

Fire Control

Fire control discipline amongst the 60 Marines and SEALs was commendable. In line with Ambassador Bishop's instructions, no shots were fired by the Marines or SEALs throughout the day. Even in a situation that fulfilled all reasonable rules of engagement (ROE) (for example, the Marine snipers on the water tower), no shots were fired.

Breaking Out of LFORM Ammunition

The inserted security force had authorization to draw ammunition from LFORM stocks aboard ship. Due to the uncertain threat, as stated by one Marine, "we went in loaded with everything we could carry." The Marines were looking at possible combat operations in Kuwait, and they wished to minimize the use of ammunition if possible because there was a perception (if not a reality) of an ammunition shortage. (One platoon leader said he had just one grenade per Marine available to him in the event of operations in Kuwait.) Due to this, some of the ammunition (such as many of the grenades) that the security force brought into the Embassy compound was carried in its protective wrapping so that it could be returned to the magazine if unused. In the event of conflict in the Embassy compound, this might have proven a false economy because it would have taken time to unwrap the protected weaponry in a combat environment. In the event of authorization to "lock and load" LFORM ammunition for an operation, involved forces should be assured that resupply of expended ammunition will be a high priority.

WITHDRAWAL BY CH-46

DISCUSSION

At 2100Z, the final evacuation from the Embassy compound commenced. The concept of operations called for each of the two CH-46 squadrons (HMM-263 and HMM-365) aboard *Guam* to have five aircraft flying, each of which would fly two times into the Embassy compound. Each flight had a helicopter assigned to act as a rescue plane in the event of a crash; additional helicopters were on alert aboard ship. Planning called for each flight to remain on deck until the previous flight had taken off from the Embassy. The two UH-1s were on alert to provide gunfire support, but they were not put in the air as the AC-130 was expected to be sufficient for any support required.

The evacuation was to have commenced at 2000Z but was delayed an hour because an AC-130 could not be overhead until that time. This second AC-130 had to fly to Mogadishu from Saudi Arabia because the other aircraft was not allowed to take off in time to make a 2000Z overhead time due to crew rest requirements.

The operation was conducted at night, with the pilots and crew operating with NVGs. Radio communications were minimized with only one shared radio channel used. The first wave of five helicopters from HMM-263 took off from *Guam* at 2043Z and landed one minute early in the compound. Evacuees and Marines without night vision devices reported that the helicopters were essentially unseen until they were already on the ground, and then only dimly. The movement of evacuees to the helicopters moved smoothly, with the exception of delays in putting cranials and life preservers, personal, (LPPs) on evacuees. Twenty minutes after landing, the five helicopters took off with the first 75 evacuees aboard. At 2021Z, the second wave of five helicopters from HMM-365 lifted off from *Guam.*

En route to the Embassy, the CH-46s and the AC-130s radar warning receivers lit up as an SA-2 radar went active. The AC-130 gunship was moved over water as a result. The SA-2 was not viewed as a threat to the CH-46s because it has almost no capabilities against low-altitude targets and the helicopters were flying at an altitude of 150 feet (the highest obstacles the pilots were concerned about were 100 feet high). The second wave arrived in the Embassy compound at 2133Z at the same time the first wave was landing on *Guam.*

As the second flight was landing in the Embassy compound, a Somali Major, who had aided the Embassy through the day in return for cash, came to the front gate and demanded to speak to the Ambassador. The Major, reportedly with hand grenade in hand and two truckloads of soldiers behind him, demanded that the evacuation cease immediately as the government had not granted the United States permission to mount such an operation. He threatened to shoot the helicopters down if they took off. Ambassador Bishop, after conferring with Lt. Col. Oates, ordered the evacuation to continue and began negotiating with the Somali. The second wave took off at 2151Z and the third wave departed *Guam* on the news that the second had lifted off. The Ambassador, his staff, and the MSGs were to leave on the third wave. The negotiations with the Somali Major continued; the head of security, a contract security officer, and the five MSGs remained with the Ambassador. The Ambassador successfully negotiated with the Major. Several thousand dollars and keys to some of the cars in the compound secured an agreement not to attack the compound. The Ambassador walked with the Major toward the HLZ, keeping him engaged in conversation until the very last moment so that he would not have an opportunity to interfere with the evacuation.

Thus, only four of the five CH-46s in the third wave were filled; these four took off at 2210Z. The fifth remained on the ground to join the final evacuation wave, which landed in the compound at 2220Z. With the arrival of the fourth wave, the Marines on the perimeter fell back from their positions and moved to the helicopters (the SEALs were protecting the Ambassador and boarded helicopters when he did). With the confusion created when the Ambassador did not leave on the third wave, the boarding of helicopters in the final wave did not move as smoothly as the previous three waves. Some Marines were sent running from helicopter to helicopter looking for seating, which complicated attempts to account for all personnel. Several times, all personnel were reported accounted for; the helicopters were about to lift-off when one CH-46 crew chief reported two Marines near the HLZ. The two radio operators had not realized that this was the final wave and had remained intent on maintaining communications. The crew chief ran over to them, helped them stow their equipment, and got them aboard. The final helicopter lifted off from the compound at 2249Z.

According to later reports, looting in the compound began almost as soon as the last helicopter had lifted off. The Somali FSNs had been told by Ambassador Bishop to take whatever they wished from the commissary in lieu of back pay. (The general consensus was, anyway, better that our friends get the goods than those who have been shooting at us.) Some of the CH-46 crews of the final wave reported seeing looters head into the Embassy as the helicopters flew away. Reportedly, within two hours RPG rounds were fired through the front door of the Chancery and the building was ransacked.

The final helicopter landed on *Guam* at 2323Z. Twenty minutes later the Ambassador declared the evacuation complete.

ISSUES

There are a number of issues that relate to the CH-46 evacuation of the remaining personnel in the Embassy compound. These include cranials and LPPs for evacuees; AC-130 coordination; night vision devices; and, signaling the final wave of helicopters.

Cranials and LPPs for Evacuees

Each of the first three CH-46 waves spent 15 to 20 minutes on the ground in the Embassy compound. Much of this time was spent placing cranials and LPPs on evacuees. This process was slowed because the evacuees were totally unfamiliar with the gear. Steps were taken to minimize their confusion during this nighttime operation. Chemical lights were attached to children, for example, so that they could be seen if they wandered off and they would be able to see a little when they boarded the helicopters. In an evacuation requiring multiple flights, the first flight should bring in an excess number of cranials and LPPs so that they can be placed on the evacuees before the arrival of follow-on helicopters, thus minimizing helicopter time in the landing zone. In the event of a hot LZ, cranials and LPPs become a lower priority. Also, steps such as the use of chemical lights to provide some illumination should be taken to minimize evacuee confusion during movement to the helicopters.

AC-130 Coordination

The CH-46 evacuation flights from the Embassy were delayed by an hour because the AC-130 needed to be flown down from the Arabian peninsula to Mogadishu. Although there were two UH-1s aboard *Trenton* ready to support the evacuation mission, the AC-130s longer loiter time and significant capabilities made it a preferable platform, if one was available. The AC-130 from Saudi Arabia did not arrive on the scene until the CH-46

flights had commenced. The other AC-130, which could have made this earlier start time, reportedly could not fly the mission at that time due to crew rest requirements. The delayed start and lack of gunfire support at the commencement of CH-46 operations could have been catastrophic in result because looters as well as the Somali Army were threatening the Embassy.

Night Vision Devices

The use of night vision devices during Operation Eastern Exit gave the U.S. forces a major edge over Somali forces (government, rebel, and criminal). With nightfall and the darkening of the Embassy, Marines and SEALs equipped with night vision devices were able to see any potential threat well before that threat could see them. Because NVGs allowed the CH-46s to fly totally darkened into a dark HLZ, potential threat forces essentially were unable to see the CH-46s.

Final Wave Signal

The final wave of CH-46s remained on the ground about ten minutes longer than any of the previous waves due to the confusion that resulted from the partial evacuation of the third wave as well as the difficulty in accounting for all security force personnel. Two Marines were nearly left behind in the Embassy compound because they did not realize it was the final wave of helicopters; consequently, the helicopters were on the ground in the landing zone for 10 to 15 minutes with no perimeter defense (with the primary defense the helicopters' machineguns).

Clearance of HLZ

The area used for the HLZ was a large cleared area (described by the Embassy as part of the golf course) in the middle of the Embassy compound. The area was able to handle six CH-46s at once (this was the largest number of helicopters in the HLZ at one time). The Embassy apparently used the area for parking; a number of vehicles needed to be cleared from it before the night CH-46 evacuation. (During December 1990, the U.S. Embassy became a preferred parking lot for evacuees' cars.) Surrounding the area were a series of low light poles that had not been cleared before the evacuation, which could have caused an accident during the nighttime evacuation. This area was not included as a possible helicopter landing area (HLA) in the most recent NEO planning information package, although the Embassy considered it the best landing area and it was closer to the two safehaven locations (the JAO building and the Chancery) than any of the identified HLAs. Embassy HLAs should be easy to clear of any potential obstacles, such as the light poles, to minimize the risk of accident during flight operations.

Lighting at U.S. Embassies

Because there was no central light switch in the Embassy compound, the Marines were not able to easily darken the compound for the nighttime withdrawal. Each building's lights had to be turned out separately, and some of the outside lights could be extinguished only by cutting the power supply. Consequently, some areas of the compound were darkened before others. The ability to control the electrical lighting from a central location should be taken into account when designing embassy buildings.

PROCESSING AND HANDLING EVACUEES

DISCUSSION

Almost as soon as the last CH-46 landed, the two ships headed north toward Muscat, Oman, where the evacuees would be offloaded. On arrival aboard ship, the evacuees were processed quickly and moved to berthing. Processing included separating VIPs from other evacuees, providing medical treatment, searching evacuees and their luggage, and verifying evacuees' identities and nationalities. Initially, the two ships were to head to Mombassa, Kenya, and the evacuees would only spend 24 to 36 hours aboard ship. On the evening of 5 January, the two ships were ordered to take the evacuees to Muscat, Oman, instead. As a result, the evacuees spent 5 to 6 days aboard ship. The large number of foreign civilians residing aboard the two ships for this length of time created a complicated situation for forces preparing to go to war. This section briefly describes how the ships handled evacuees and solved the problems encountered.

With the orders to head south, while the Marines were preparing the security force, both ships began to set up procedures to handle evacuees. The first step was to pull out the NEO instructions. From these instructions, basic information collecting forms (medical and personal) were written up and procedures for dealing with evacuees were devised. Aboard *Guam*, three berthing areas were prepared for evacuees: (1) some staterooms in officers' country (for VIPs); (2) the aircraft intermediate maintenance department (AIMD) berthing area (eventually, assigned to the women and small children); and (3) medical overflow berthing (for the male evacuees).[1]

All evacuees were processed first on *Guam*.[2] The procedures were tested and modified slightly after 50 volunteers went through the process on 4 January. Bi-lingual sailors and Marines were identified to provide translation support.

VIPs were separated out on the flight deck and brought immediately to officers' country; the remaining evacuees rode the elevator down from the flight deck to the hangar deck, where they were processed.[3] A medical screening was conducted first. Although the 60-man security team did not engage in any combat or suffer any casualties, the medical personnel had prepared for a mass casualty situation. *Guam* had an usually large medical condition aboard; in addition to an augmented ship's medical contingent, a large share of BSSG-4's medical personnel were aboard. The operating rooms were prepared and beds readied for casualties. Although the helicopter pilots were to warn the ship if there were any wounded aboard, all helicopters were met by two corpsman who would ask if any persons needed medical assistance. Again, in the hangar deck, medical personnel stood by to render assistance. There were a number of people who needed medical assistance,

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[1] Displaced sailors and Marines either slept in work spaces or hot-racked.

[2] This discussion will focus primarily on *Guam*, which was the primary receiving ship. In addition, the author spent a longer period of time on *Guam* than *Trenton*, and is more familiar with *Guam*'s operations.

[3] This write-up uses the term "evacuee," but the people brought out of Mogadishu essentially did not hear this term used aboard *Guam*. By the CO's direction, they were called "Guests of the United States" to help create a warm atmosphere. Many steps were taken to ease the trauma of the evacuation process. One sailor dressed as a clown to entertain the children during the processing, and food and drink were provided. As a further welcoming note, every rack for an evacuee aboard "Hotel" *Guam* had a fresh change of sheets with a Hershey's chocolate kiss on the pillow.

including two wounded individuals: an American women who had been shot in the abdomen two days earlier, and a man who had been beaten and stabbed.

Over 125 Marines and sailors were present on the hangar deck to help with the processing—from the Chaplain greeting evacuees to "baggage handlers." First, each evacuee and his belongings was searched. The evacuees stepped onto a pallet where ship's security used a metal detector to search for weaponry. No weapons were found. The only contraband detected was some alcohol which was thrown overboard. The evacuees were then asked to fill out forms providing basic medical information and identification information. Clarifying identities became a major problem. Not only had many evacuees lost their identification papers, but many had multiple nationalities. In addition, a number of Somalis had gotten into the evacuation process who were worried about being returned from the ships to Somalia. These evacuees lied about their nationality until they felt secure that they would not be flown back into Mogadishu. (This was not an issue until the second night while processing the final evacuees.) After completing processing, evacuees were escorted to berthing areas. It was initially estimated that processing would take about four hours for each evacuee; in practice, it took about half as long.

The first 61 evacuees were brought aboard ship by the two Sea Stallions at mid-day on 5 January. In addition to the four diplomatic VIPs, the Deputy Chief of Mission and other U.S. Embassy staff had been sent in the helicopter to provide liaison with the forces aboard ship. Processing this group was relatively easy as it was made up of 61 persons, it was the middle of the day, and the evacuees consisted of diplomatic VIPs, Americans, and Westerners (all of whom had some form of identification material and most of whom spoke English). That night, 220 people were brought on board essentially at once, almost all of whom were in the hangar deck being processed at the same time. While the first three waves of helicopters were given manifests listing the 15 evacuees in each stick, this information did not make it to the hangar deck. Thus, the processing was complicated. (A possible result of the minimal ECC in the Embassy compound.) JCS and State Department direction require that the number, sex, and national affiliation of evacuees be reported within two hours of the completion of a NEO. Pressure for this reporting came amidst the confusion of handling the 220 evacuees. Because there were 21 people of unclear nationality, the number of evacuees reported up the chain of command was 260, while the actual number was 281. (Table 8 shows the status of U.S. evacuees and table 9 lists the number of evacuees by country.) The lower figure was used in both the State Department and Department of Defense press briefings and has been frequently reported as the number of evacuees.

Table 8. Eastern Exit U.S. Evacuees

Category	Men	Women	Children	Total
U.S. Govt. Employees	18	8	0	26
Military assigned to Embassy	3	0	0	3
Dependents	0	1	0	1
Private Citizens	10	10	11	31

Table 9. Eastern Exit Evacuees by Country

Country	Men	Women	Children	Total
Belgium	1	0	0	1
Canada	0	1	0	1
Colombia	1	0	0	1
Denmark	5	1	0	6
Ethiopia	1	0	0	1
France	2	0	0	2
Germany	11	7	8	26
Ghana	1	0	0	1
India	4	2	0	6
Italy	15	0	0	15
Kenya	10	3	4	17
Kuwait	1	3	3	7
Liberia	1	0	0	1
Netherlands	1	0	0	1
Nigeria	5	0	0	5
Norway	1	0	0	1
Oman	2	0	0	2
Pakistan	0	1	0	1
Philippines	2	0	0	2
Portugal	2	0	0	2
Qatar	1	0	0	1
Somalia	8	14	3	25
Sri Lanka	0	1	0	1
Sudan	17	6	3	26
Sweden	1	0	0	1
Tanzania	0	1	0	1
Thailand	1	0	0	1
Turkey	5	0	0	5
United Arab Emirates	2	0	0	2
United Kingdom	10	3	4	17
United States	31	19	11	61
USSR	22	16	1	39
Total:	162	82	37	281

Most evacuees were berthed on *Guam*. The number of racks available in AIMD for women (68) was the primary determination as to the number that stayed aboard *Guam*. During processing, evacuees were assigned beds on *Guam* until the 68 berths in AIMD were filled. The remaining 69 evacuees were assigned to *Trenton*. To avoid additional night flights, these last 69 evacuees remained in the hangar deck until daylight, when they were flown to *Trenton* (where they were put them through a similar, though less extensive processing, before being assigned racks).

Steps were taken aboard both ships to allow the evacuees some privacy as well as to create situations where the crews and embarked Marines meet them. On *Guam*, for example, an area of the hangar deck was assigned as the social area. Over 200 sailors and

Marines aboard *Guam* volunteered, on top of normal duty, to be guides for evacuees (no evacuees were allowed to wander outside their berthing areas without a guide).

Amongst the challenges encountered were providing communications support to evacuees. The U.S. Embassy was given a satellite link to Washington and the flag bridge on *Guam* was turned over to the U.S. Ambassador. Other diplomatic organizations were were able to send messages as well, including perhaps the first TASS news article sent via U.S. Navy message traffic. There were many other challenges raised with the presence of so many civilians aboard ship. Dietary restrictions of the Islamic evacuees had to be respected (pork was clearly identified, and all meals had non-pork choices). Space had to be provided for young children (the wardroom lounge became a day-care center), cultural differences confronted (including having to explain how to use western toilets to many African evacuees), large numbers of women accommodated (the NEO supplies aboard ship did not have enough sanitary napkins), and evacuees clothed (the ships' stores were bought out and many aboard ship donated clothing to evacuees). Fortunately, there was a large amount of leftover "any serviceman" mail with Christmas gifts and such; there was enough aboard *Guam* to provide every evacuee with a basic toiletries kit and each child with many pounds of candy.

Early in the morning of 10 January, the 282nd evacuee was born in what might have been the first Caesarean delivery ever aboard a U.S. Navy combatant. The next day, the two ships arrived in Muscat, Oman, to offload the evacuees. Due to Omani restrictions, there was no press to greet the ships and evacuees at the end of this operation. The offload of the evacuees moved quickly and the two ships went back into the North Arabian Sea, prepared to participate in the amphibious assault against Iraqi forces that didn't occur.

Before disembarking, Ambassador Bishop addressed the sailors and Marines aboard *Guam* via the cable television system.

> Subsequent events made it clear that the Marines and SEALs came just in time, as looters came over the wall as the helicopters left. We were very impressed by the professionalism of Eastern Exit. The Marines and SEALs appeared at all times the master of the situation. The best indicator of their competence is the mission's success: the evacuation of 281 people from an embattled city without injury to either evacuees or military personnel. The actions of those protecting the Embassy and evacuating evacuees was indeed heroic. And the actions aboard *Guam* were indeed compassionate.
>
> Few of us would have been alive today if we had been outside your reach. It was only due to your extraordinary efforts that we made it. We will take a part of each of you with us the rest of our lives.

ISSUES

Issues that arose in the processing and handling of evacuees aboard ship included accounting for evacuees and providing escorts for evacuees.

Accounting for Evacuees

The requirements for reporting on evacuations require reporting within two hours of execution of mission on the number of evacuees, number male/female/child, number American (official/non-official), and by nationality. Inflexible application of this requirement can lead to inaccurate reporting. In the case of Eastern Exit, initial reporting on evacuees listed 260 evacuees when the actual number withdrawn was 281. Initial press

releases cited the 260 figure leading to inaccurate press reports that have continued in various forms to this day. Eastern Exit was conducted in the middle of the night, had many evacuees with multiple nationalities, had many evacuees of unclear citizenship, and had many families with family members holding different passports. Attempting to solve this issue immediately would have required keeping the evacuees up even longer after their long ordeal. Reporting requirements should be eased so that the two priorities should be (1) number of evacuees and (2) number of Americans evacuated. Follow-on reporting requirements can provide the additional information as required.

Escorting Evacuees

The 281 evacuees had to be escorted whenever they were moving outside of their berthing areas or the mess halls. That more than enough personnel volunteered for this duty on top of their regular duties to fill this requirement is just one sign of how far the ships' companies and embarked Marines went to support the evacuees aboard ship.

CONCLUSION

Overshadowed by the eve of war in the Persian Gulf, Operation Eastern Exit received far less attention than it would have in calmer times. The claims of "flawless" execution, however, threaten the important opportunity to learn lessons from the operation—from both what went right and what could have easily gone wrong. From decision-making to tactics to equipment, there are a range of valuable insights into the conduct of NEOs that can be drawn from this experience.

The Marines and sailors involved in Eastern Exit deserve tremendous credit for what they accomplished—successfully executing a short notice and high-risk operation without loss of life or equipment. Both of these factors, the short notice and the high risk, were increased beyond what was necessary by several problems that easily could have had more serious consequences, including the following:

- The late notification of a NEO requirement in Somalia compounded by an inadequate indication of the urgency of the situation on the ground left the military forces in theater with a very short time period to prepare the NEO. If a planning or warning order for a potential NEO had been issued at the time when non-essential personnel were removed from Somalia in mid-December 1990, this would have provided in-theater forces an opportunity to examine the information on the U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu. Such an examination would have quickly revealed at least some of the inadequacies of this material—with two weeks notice, for example, more up-to-date maps than the 1969 map available might have been acquired and delivered to the operating forces.

- The lack of clarity in the chain of command and incomplete message routing slowed the movement of the two amphibious ships. The decision to augment *Guam* and *Trenton* with a command staff and additional air controllers delayed the departure of the two ships from the North Arabian Sea for almost ten hours. The decision to slow the two ships to a 14 knot SOA from "best possible" also retarded the movement south of the two ships (though to a lesser extent.) This additional steaming time and faster SOA would have reduced the distance the CH-53Es had to fly or would have allowed an earlier execution of the NEO.

Additionally, elements in the operation call into question some of the very means by which the military and State Department prepare for NEOs. Most serious was the entirely inaccurate information aboard ship for planning and action in the event of an emergency in Mogadishu such as the one that occurred. Resistance to direct contacts between the Embassy and the rescue forces, and the incompatibility of communication links between the Embassy and military forces call into question the seriousness in which preparation for emergencies is taken. In the Embassy itself, the total inadequacy of equipment to prepare and mark a HLZ also raise issues as to the physical preparation in Embassies for security emergencies.

On the other hand, one should not think that Operation Eastern Exit was a success due to blind luck. One should learn from the positive elements of the operation as much as from areas that should have gone better. Following are just a few of the reasons that things went so right in Eastern Exit:

- The influence of the MEU(SOC) program on USN and USMC operations contributed to the mission's success. SOPs developed in MEU(SOC) for NEOs greatly speeded the planning process and reduced the planning burdens. The exposure that many in Eastern Exit, from senior officers to enlisted, had had to NEO exercises in earlier MEU(SOC) training reduced many of the uncertainties in the operation.

- The intensive training during Operation Desert Shield had raised the forces to a high level of preparedness. This was most notably evident in the CH-46 evolution and in the capabilities of the deck crew aboard *Guam* to move helicopters around quickly and efficiently.

- The cooperation between blue and green was laudable. While there were disagreements along the way, these never interfered with planning or execution of the mission. Especially valuable was the combined C2 in SACC aboard *Guam.*

- The Ambassador knew his role, knew what he wanted from the military, and clearly expressed these desires to the inserted security force. The Embassy staff had the situation on the ground well-organized, knew where American citizens were, and were well-prepared to cooperate with the Marines and SEALs immediately on the CH-53Es touchdown in the Embassy compound.

While perhaps one can question whether dramatic rescues such as Eastern Exit are truly necessary, Eastern Exit has shown that short-notice, long-range NEOs are executable using assets that the Navy and Marine Corps have deployed around the world on a nearly continuous basis. Deployments for Desert Shield certainly facilitated execution of a NEO in Somalia (through higher training levels, deployment of ships in the NAS, and the presence of aircraft in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia) but there was nothing that the Navy and Marine Corps contributed to this operation that is not part of regular deployments.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section discusses issues that arose during Eastern Exit (many of which were analyzed in earlier sections) and provides recommendations for future action based on this experience. Some of the recommendations are programmatic and others operational.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

Chain of Command

The chain of command for the operation ran through COMUSNAVCENT to COMPHIBGRU TWO to COMPHIBRON SIX. Several problems were encountered. First, CPG-2 did not receive all of the relevant message traffic and thus acted with incomplete knowledge of the situation on at least one occasion. Second, as all commands were on the same radio frequencies, NAVCENT staff frequently contacted the forces aboard *Guam* directly. This reinforced the PHIBRON's impression that they had been chopped to report directly to NAVCENT as had been indicated would happen as the operation commenced. These problems could have been ameliorated by several measures. First, if the chain of command had been delineated in the warning/execute orders the confusion aboard *Guam* would not have occurred. Second, COMPHIBRON SIX should have acted to confirm the chain-of-command when confusion as to the C2 set-up began to emerge. Third, steps should have been taken to guarantee that CPG-2 received all relevant message traffic. In future operations, clearly delineating chain-of-command and assuring that all elements in the chain-of-command are receiving vital messages will minimize the chance of similar problems occurring.

On the Marine side, CTF 158, CLF in the NAS/Persian Gulf, continued to give orders to FOURTH MEB DET ONE even after the force had chopped to the on-scene commander. After CLF chopped to CATF, he believed that he was no longer under CTF 158 yet he was still receiving orders from him. This created the problem of potentially conflicting orders. CTF 158s authority to issue these orders was not questioned but probably should have been, again to minimize confusion.

Eastern Exit was conducted at the juncture between two CINCs. The Indian Ocean through which *Guam* and *Trenton* transited is in the CINCPAC AOR, and the CINCCENT AOR includes Somalia and the bases from which the fixed-wing assets operated. As far as can be determined, there was no coordination problem during the operation due to this overlap of CINC AORs. Clearly, the forward deployment of CINCCENT for Desert Storm and the fact that COMUSNAVCENT was also COMSEVENTHFLT minimized the possibility of friction arising. As well, the JCS execution order clearly delineated CINCCENT as the supported CINC which also mitigated against the possibility of any such problems

Collocation of Blue and Green C2

Aboard *Guam*, CATF and CLF decided early on to collocate their command and control functions in the SACC spaces aboard *Guam*. While this resulted from a number of reasons, not least of which was the low number of Navy planners available (just four officers from PHIBRON SIX accompanied the Commo. to *Guam*), it clearly eased planning and facilitated coordination between the two services. As message traffic was frequently directed to only one of the players (such as to the ship, to the Marines, or to PHIBRON), collocation in one room allowed information to be quickly shared and disseminated. As well, either CATF or CLF and either the N3 or S3 were always in the

room, thus decisions could be made and options explored by principals without unnecessary delays. Collocation of command elements during similar short-notice operations seems likely to facilitate coordination and inter-service cooperation.

Coordination with U.S. Air Force Assets

A number of problems occurred in coordination of U.S. Air Force assets during Eastern Exit. The initial AC-130 did not rendezvous with the KC-130s and CH-53Es off the Somali coast, and arrived over the Embassy compound after the CH-53Es had already landed. The AC-130 stayed overhead for only three hours and then departed for what the commander on the ground was told would be a short time for refueling, but the AC-130 instead returned to base. (CENTAF was ordered to have a KC-10 available for refueling the AC-130s. It is unclear whether such an aircraft was ever made available.) From about 1000 through 2400, therefore, there was no AC-130 overhead or nearby. The AC-130 was both a valuable observation platform and was the only external gunfire support the evacuation force had available (and was the only capability available to engage artillery if the Embassy compound began to be shelled).

The final evacuation was to commence at 2300. CENTAF was unable to provide an AC-130 at that time and thus the operation was delayed to 2400. The AC-130 could not make the 2300 execution as it had to be flown from Saudi Arabia. The crew of the first Ac-130 informed PHIBRON SIX that they were ready to fly immediately but were not able to take off due to crew rest requirements (having landed at 1200 they could not take off until 2400 and could not arrive overhead Mogadishu until approximately 0110). The AC-130, which flew from Saudi Arabia, did not arrive until after the CH-46 evacuation flights had begun as rescheduled.

Evidently, peace-time flight restrictions caused a rescheduling in the evacuation operation and reduced the AC-130 support provided to the forces on the ground. While the crew felt capable of supporting the operation, they were prevented from flying. Quicker consideration should be given to waiving peace-time flight restrictions during contingency operations.

U.S. MARINE CORPS AVIATION

Aerial Refueling (AR) Exercising for Deployed CH-53E Crews

CH-53E crews during deployments aboard ship evidently do not frequently get AR exercise opportunities. The HMH-461 Det Delta crews aboard *Trenton* had not exercised this evolution at all during their deployment in the Persian Gulf. While the Sea Stallion refueling rigs are typically removed at sea due to space constraints, CH-53Es in-flight refueling exercises should have occurred to keep at least a few pilots current in AR. There were a large number of KC-130s in theater, based relatively near the amphibious ships, and some exercising of CH-53E AR should have been achievable. Exercising CH-53E AR capabilities during amphibious deployments should become regular practice because it will improve readiness in the likely event of a future requirement for a long-range mission operating off an amphibious platform.

CH-53E Navigation Equipment

The CH-53Es OMEGA navigation system, which relies on fixes from three ground sites to operate, failed almost immediately on take-off as the helicopters were in a dead zone for this system. Thus, flying over water at night, the CH-53Es relied on a combination of positive control from *Guam* (to approximately 60 miles from the ship), dead reckoning,

and pathfinding by the KC-130s for their navigation. An upgraded navigation system, whether an inertial navigation system (INS) or one based on the global positioning system (GPS), would be valuable if CH-53Es are to be prepared to conduct other long-range missions.

KC-130 Drogue

During the final refueling, the two CH-53Es had difficulty in plugging the probe into the drogue because it was of a different type than that encountered during the two earlier refuelings. It failed to deploy as fully as the earlier drogues. The fueling process was slowed due to this drogue and, according to the mission commander, one helicopter took on less than half the fuel desired due to the length of time refueling was taking. According to conversations with Marine KC-130 operators, the partial deployment of newer drogues was a problem that had been identified earlier and it was believed that these defective drogues had been removed from all aircraft deployed to the Persian Gulf. The difficulties encountered in refueling almost caused a diversion of a CH-53E into the desert due to insufficient fuel to return to *Guam*. All USMC KC-130 drogues should be inspected to insure that no more of these defective drogues are deployed.

KC-130s currently are equipped with two drogues: one for jets and the other for rotary-wing aircraft (the primary difference is the speed at which the drogue can properly deploy). As the KC-130 planners were asked to be prepared to refuel jets after equipping the planes with drogues for helicopters, they were concerned that they would be unable to support the mission requirements. The lack of flexibility inherent in KC-130 drogues was not an operational issue in Eastern Exit but is an operational limitation of potential importance. (For example, if jets had been used to provide air cover over Mogadishu from an extreme range, the KC-130s on scene would have been unable to refuel them.)

Night Vision Goggles (NVGs) and CH-46 Cockpits

Helicopter flight operations during Eastern Exit, just as during Desert Storm, demonstrated that night vision goggles (NVGs) are an invaluable asset. Evacuees commented that in the darkened landing zone they could hear the helicopters but did not see them until they were already on the ground. In a low-intensity and relatively low-tech threat environment such as Somalia, this indicates that the potential threat forces were unable to see the helicopters either. This provides the U.S. forces with an invaluable edge. Inadequacies in the equipment of the CH-46 cockpit degrade this capability, however, as CH-46 crews need to use taped-on chemical lights to illuminate their instruments for NVG operations as the cockpit is not NVG modified. A relatively low-cost option for providing such illumination exists according to the CH-46 crews spoken with. If the CH-46s are to remain a mainstay of the Marine rotary-wing fleet, then such an upgrade to the cockpit should be pursued.

Additionally, the KC-130/CH-53E rendezvous was complicated by the fact that the CH-53E is NVG capable while the KC-130 is not. If the KC-130 should be expected to conduct similar nighttime refuelings, upgrading KC-130s to make them NVG capable might be a useful program to pursue.

MISCELLANEOUS

Amphibious Force Night SAR capabilities

In the beginning of January 1991, the amphibious forces in the North Arabian Sea did not have an integral helicopter night SAR capability. Thus, during both the initial flight

of the CH-53Es and the CH-46 operations the next night, there was minimal capacity to rescue personnel in the event of a helicopter crash. Deployment of night-SAR capable helicopters with ATFs would vastly improve the amphibious force's capability to conduct rescues at night.

LZ Marking Equipment for Embassies

During Eastern Exit, there were two main proposals for marking a helicopter landing zone for the first wave of helicopters: a strobe light placed on top of the water tower in the compound; and, a retired Marine waving a Marine Corps flag (changed to a white sheet at the request of FOURTH MEB DET ONE). According to the pilots of the CH-53Es, the strobe light was not on (or not obvious) and the "bedsheet waving man" did not appear until the helicopters were already set to land in the LZ. There was, evidently, no equipment for marking a HLZ in the Embassy other than the strobe light. The two CH-53Es spent 15-20 anxious minutes over Mogadishu looking for the Embassy, a properly marked HLZ might have reduced this vulnerable period. It seems sensible to equip the Marine Security Guard (MSG) detachment with materials (reflective panels, strobe lights, smoke canisters, etc...) for marking landing zones. Setting up HLZs is part of Marine Corps basic training, thus such a kit would require no further training and would be relatively inexpensive to supply.

NEO Information Packages

The U.S. Embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia, moved in July 1989 from the center of the city to a more suburban location. In January 1991, 18 months later, the amphibious forces did not have any information about this move aboard ship and only had material about the old Embassy compound (and a 1969 map of the city) on which to plan a NEO. This inadequate information package clearly indicates that the process by which information to support NEOs is prepared, updated, and delivered to the amphibious forces is inadequate and requires review.

Notice of Evacuation Requirement

The State Department had evacuated all nonessential personnel from Somalia by mid-December 1990, thus indicating that the civil strife in Mogadishu and the rest of Somalia put U.S. personnel at risk. Despite this move, military planning for an evacuation was not called for. The lack of a direct State Department request for military preparation was aggravated by the tense situation in the Persian Gulf. What normally might have been a prominent matter for operational staffs, the deteriorating situation in Somalia, was overshadowed by the impending conflict against Iraq. Thus, normal intelligence updates of the situation in Somalia did not have the prominence to prompt contingency planning that would have typically occurred. If planning had begun in mid-December, with this heightened threat level, some of the problems that emerged during the evacuation operation would not have occurred. While the situation in Somalia went from bad to much worse virtually overnight and therefore, the presence of military forces off the coast was not required in mid-December, contingency planning would have been in order. While such planning may have occurred in Washington, as far as the author is aware, such planning did not occur at CINCCENT or amongst the amphibious forces deployed in the Gulf. It would seem sensible for the State Department to alert the relevant theater CINC when such threats emerge so that contingency planning can begin at an earlier stage in time.

Signal for Last Helicopter Wave/Force Recall

The final evacuation, four waves of CH-46s, occurred at midnight. As the pilots were operating on night vision goggles (NVGs), the entire compound had been darkened and it was nearly pitch black. During the third (or second-to-last) wave, there was a complication that disrupted the planned sticks for the final two waves. With all the confusion of the evacuation, the force came close to leaving at least two personnel behind (the two communicators) and the final wave of CH-46s remained in the zone for 5-10 minutes with no perimeter defense as personnel were accounted for. The two communicators had not realized that this was the final wave. Some form of agreed upon signal for a final wave, whether a visual or audible, would likely have alerted the communicators that this was the final wave and would have reduced the time the final wave of helicopters was vulnerable without a defensive perimeter.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AAV	amphibious assault vehicle
ACE	aviation combat element
AIMD	aircraft intermediate maintenance department
ARCENT	Army, Central Command
AR	aerial refueling
ARCP	aerial refueling control point
ATF	amphibious task force
BBBG	battleship battlegroup
BLT	battalion landing team
BN	battalion
BSSG	brigade service support group
C2	comand and control
CATF	commander, amphibious task force
CE	command element
CENTAF	Air Force, Central Command
CINCCENT	Commander-in-Chief, Central Command
CI	counter-intelligence
CIT	counter-intelligence team
CLF	commander, landing force
CO	company; or, commanding officer
CPG-2	Commander, Amphibious Group Two (COMPHIBGRU TWO)
CPR-6	Commander, Amphious Squadron Six (COMPHIBRON SIX)
CQW	close-quarter warfare
CSSE	combat service support element
CTF	Commander, Task Force
ECC	evacuation control center
EEI	essential elements of information
FAC	forward air controller
FCE	forward command element
FICPAC	Fleet Intelligence Center, Pacific
FIST	Fleet intelligence support terminal
FSNs	foreign service nationals
GCE	ground combat element
HLA	helicopter landing area
HLZ	helicopter landing zone
HMH	Marine Corps helicopter squadron, heavy
HMM	Marine Corps helicopter squadron, medium
HMMWV	high mobility, multi-purpose wheeled vehicle
HQ	headquarters
HUMINT	human intelligence
JAO	Joint Administrative Office
LAV	light armored vehicle
LCAC	landing craft, air cushion
LCC	amphibious command ship
LFOC	Landing Force Operations Center
LFORM	landing forces operational reserve material
LHA	amphibious assault ship (general purpose)
LPD	amphibious transport ship
LPH	amphibious assault ship (helicopter)
LPP	life preserver (personal)
LSD	dock landing ship

LST	tank landing ship
LZ	landing zone
MAGTF	Marine Air-Ground Task Force
MAW	Marine Aircraft Wing
MEB	Marine Expeditionary Brigade
MEU	Marine Expeditionary Unit
MEU(SOC)	Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable)
MSG	Marine Security Guard
MWSS	Marine Wing Support Squadron
NAVCENT	Navy, Central Command
NEO	non-combatant evacuation operation
NVG	night vision goggle
OIC	officer-in-charge
OMC	Office of Military Cooperation
PHIBRON	amphibious squadron
PHIBGRU	amphibious group
PLT	platoon
ROE	rules of engagement
RPG	rocket-propelled grenade
SACC	supporting arms coordination center
SAR	search and rescue
SEAL	Sea-Air-Land
SNM	Somali National Movement (rebel movement)
SOP	standard operating procedure
SPM	Somali Patriotic Movement (rebel movement)
SOCCENT	Special Operations Commander, Central Command
SRIG	Surveillance, Intelligence, and Reconnaisance Group
TACLOG	tactical logistics center
TACRON	tactical air control squadron
UAE	United Arab Emirates
USC	United Somali Congress (rebel movement)
USCINCCENT	U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Central Command
USCINCEUR	U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Europe
USCINCPAC	U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Pacific
USCINCSOC	U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Special Operations Command
VMGR	Marine Aerial Refueler/Transport Squdron

APPENDIX A

EASTERN EXIT INTERVIEWS

VAdm. Stanley Arthur, USN, COMUSNAVCENT/COMSEVENTHFLT (several questions asked at CNA, May 1991)
Capt. Robert Bean, USN, BSSG-4 surgeon, interviewed aboard *Tarawa*, 3 Mar 91
Capt. M. H. Belding, HMM-365 pilot *
Cdr. Tom Bernitt, USN, NAVCENT watch officer *
Cpl V.T. Burrus, USMC, 3d PLT, C Co 1/2, interviewed over phone, 7 August 1991
FNCM (SW) Clayburne, USN, Command Master Chief, *Guam* *
Staff Sargeant J. Cox, USMC, 2nd platoon, Charlie Co *
Staff Sargent J. T. Dahling, HMM-365 *
Lt. Col. R.C. Dickerson, USMC •
Col J.J. Doyle, USMC, CO BSSG-4, CLF for Eastern Exit ◊
CWO3 R. Driscoll, 3rd MAW staff, G-3 refueling expert, interviewed by phone, July 91
Capt. D.B. Dysart, USMC, commanded Security Company *
AMNC Tim Duffy, USN, AIMD, *Guam* *
Maj. T. Edmundsen, USMC, HDC aboard *Guam* *
Ens. Chuck Ekstedt, USN, disbursing officer, *Guam* *
LCdr. Frank Guerand, USN, Supply Officer, *Guam* *
LCdr. Ed Heidler, USN, Aviation Intermediate Maintenance Department (AIMD), *Guam* *
Sgt J. W. Hendrix, Sqd leader, C Co 1/2, 2nd PLT, interviewed over phone 17 July 1991
Col. Hobbs, USMC, Commander RLT-5 +
CW02 Bill Holmes, USN, Ships Security Officer, *Guam* *
Capt. Robert Holder, USN, COMUSNAVCENT N35 (Amphibious Operations Officer), interviewed aboard USS *Blue Ridge*, 18 March 1991
OS1 Phil Iovine, USN, CIC Watch, *Guam* *
Sgt J.D. Jennings, USMC, assigned to 2nd platoon, Charlie Co (sniper) *
RM1 David V. Kaiser, USN ◊
Capt. Kleinenburger, USN, Doctor, *Guam* *
LCdr. Dean Kocher, USN, N2, PHIBRON SIX +
RAdm. LaPlante, USN, COMPHIBGRU TWO (interviewed by Bill Morgan of CNA aboard USS *Nassau*, responded to several passed along questions)
LTjg Mark Lokay, USN, OOD, *Guam* *
Lt. Col R.P. McAleer, USMC, commanded security element, Commander BLT 1/2 *
Lt. M.S. McClain, USMC, 3d PLT, C CO, BLT 1/2, interviewed by phone, 5 Aug 91
Lt. John McConnell, USN, OPS/CIC Watch, *Guam* *
Capt. Kevin D. Moon, USMC, HMH-461 ◊
Lt. Dave Morris, USN, N5, PHIBRON SIX +
Capt. Al Moser, USN, COMPHIBRON SIX +
HMC Nash, USN, *Guam* *
Lt. Col. W.D. Oates, USMC, 4th MEB Det Bravo G-3, FCE for Eastern Exit •
WO Pat O'Leary, USN, Admin Officer, *Guam* *
Cdr. Payne, USN, NBG rep to COMPHIBGRU TWO
Capt. Brian Phillips, USMC, HMH-461 ◊
Capt. R. P. Reidy, USN, Chaplain aboard *Guam* *
Lt. Col. Arlen Rens, USMC, CO VMGR 352, interviewed 23 July 1991 at CNA

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* Interview conducted aboard USS *Guam*, 5-10 February 1991.
• Interview conducted aboard USS *Nassau*, 9-10 March 1991.
◊ Interview conducted aboard USS *Trenton*, 10-12 March 1991.
+ Interview conducted aboard USS *Shreveport*, 19-21 January and 20-23 February 1991.

LCdr. Ken Rome, USN, N3, PHIBRON SIX +
Maj. Richard Roten, USMC, in G-3 of FIFTH MEB DET BRAVO •
WO1 David A. Ryan, USMC, counter-intelligence on the ground in Mogadishu *
Capt. Charles Saffell, USN, CO USS *Guam* *
Lt. Col. Robert Saikowski, USMC, CO HMM-365 *
Maj. Noel Saunders, USMC, XO of BSSG-4, ECC for Eastern Exit ◊
Maj. Dan Schultz, USMC, OIC DET DELTA HMH-461 ◊
Cdr. William A. Sigler, USN, Executive Officer, *Guam* *
PFC Curtis Soengster, USMC, 2nd platoon, Charlie Co *
Capt. D. Spasojevich, USMC, FAC *
LCdr. Doug Speirs, USN, Operations Officer, USS *Trenton* ◊
Lt. Harold Van OpDorp, USMC, commanded 2nd platoon, Charlie Co *
Lt. Vuksa, USN, Ship's Doctor, *Guam* *
Lt. Col. R.J. Wallace, USMC, CO HMM-263 *

Additional Interviews Conducted Since Classified Report Issued

Karen Aguilar, United States Information Agency (USIA), Somalia
Ambassador James K. Bishop, U.S. Ambassador to Somalia
Capt. Jeff Bowden, USMC, pilot HMH-461
Col. Kenneth Culwell, USA, Military Attaché, Somalia (letter correspondence)
Capt. Robert Doss, USMC, pilot HMM-263
John Fox, Department of State, U.S. Embassy, Mogadishu, Somalia
Derek Roscoe, Contractor, Mogadishu, Somalia (evacuated December 1990)
Karen McGuire Rugh, Nurse, U.S. Embassy, Mogadishu
Mike Rugh, Director, U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), Somalia
Col. David Staley, USA, U.S. Embassy, Mogadishu
Linda Walker, Department of State, Ambassador Bishop's Secretary