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The Middle East '06

خوش آمدید

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US CENTRAL COMMAND

From: CINCCENTCOM
Attn: CENTCOM XO

To: CINCARCENT, CINCMARCENT, CINCNAVCENT, CINCCENTAF, CINCSOCCENT, CENTCOM S-1, CENTCOM S-2, CENTCOM S-3, CENTCOMPAO, CENTCOMCOS

My name is Aaron Buchman, and I will be chairing the United States Central Command committee for PICSim '06. I am looking forward to meeting all of you and working with you. We have an impressive task ahead of us, and I hope to convey to you both its nature and its gravity in this guide. I include information about our organization, how we will function in committee, and your individual roles, as well as a rudimentary primer in military matters. I wrote this guide with a complete neophyte in mind, so do not feel condescended to if you know the technicalities already. I want this committee to be open to non-experts.

Our Area of Responsibility has a population of about two-thirds of a billion people, even before counting India. Our total force to keep order and protect American interests: 150,000. That amounts to one policeman for every 4,500 people. By comparison, New York City has one for every 200 people. Not too many New Yorkers have AK-47s lying around, let alone burgeoning WMD programs. So it's not an easy job. Come ready for the challenge.

I recommend that you acquaint yourself with military acronyms, equipment, and practices. Specialize in the service that your character is assigned. Go to your university library and look up "JANE'S" in the catalogue. "All the World's Aircraft", "Fighting Ships" and "Armour and Artillery," and perhaps a few more should be at your disposal, so peruse the appropriate one(s) for basic technical information. Please follow the news stories coming from Iraq and Afghanistan. Swallow your jingoistic zeal or pacifistic disgust, as applicable. Cultivate a professional mindset; the military is strictly nonpartisan, and must maintain a level of commitment impossible if ideology interferes. If your campus has an ROTC unit, ask if you can drop in on a classroom lesson, just to pick up the atmosphere. If you have any free time, seriously consider reading either "In the Company of Soldiers," by Atkinson, or "Generation Kill," by Wright. Both are quick reads about the first phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and will give you some perspective on the contemporary US military.

An obligatory bit of biography: I'm neither in ROTC nor a military family rather I just have a long-standing interest in the military and in its place in the world. I'm a sophomore. I grew up about half an hour away from Princeton; if you walk out to Nassau Street and hang a right turn, you'll eventually get to my hometown. In my free time, I watch classic movies and try to run with some regularity. In addition to PICSim, I work PMUNC, IRC's high school-level conference. I'm also a turncoat, working for Princeton's sometimes-rival Model Congress Club as well. Enough about me. Let's get to work.



Aaron Buchman (abuchman@princeton.edu)
Chair, US Central Command

Max Weidman (weidmann@princeton.edu)
Director, US Central Command

Princeton Interactive Crisis Simulation 2006



Committee Operation

I will be representing General John Abizaid, the Commander in Chief of Central Command. You will fulfill the role of my key staff members. Each committee member has his or her own role, and will be deferred to on questions in his or her purview.

The Committee will make decisions in a manner befitting a military unit. With one exception, we are all officers, and by law gentlemen (and gentlewomen). That means that while we are engaged in a strenuous and high-risk profession, we must strive to maintain respect, cordiality, and zeal. I will consult you individually or collectively as the situation merits, and will then make a decision. Dissent is encouraged, but insubordination is not tolerated. Learn your rank and those of your fellow officers, and defer accordingly.

US CENTCOM Committee Positions (In order of rank)

- General John Abizaid (USA), CINCCENTCOM
- Lt. Gen. Lance L. Smith (USAF), XO
- Lt. Gen. R. Steven Whitcomb (USA), CINCARCENT
- Lt. Gen. Walter E. Buchanan III (USAF), CINCCENTAF
- Vice Adm. David C. Nichols (USN), CINCNVAVCENT
- S-3 Operations Officer, O-9
- Maj. Gen. John G. Castellaw (USMC), CENTCOM Chief of Staff and CINCMARCENT (acting)
- S-1 Logistics Officer, O-8
- S-2 Intelligence, O-8
- Brig. Gen. (USA), CINCSOCCENT
- O-7, Head PAO
- CMSgt. Curtis L. Brownhill (USAF), CENTCOM Senior NCO

General Abizaid

I will represent the commanding officer of Central Command.

Lieutenant General Smith

General Smith will be represented Max Weidman, and will act as committee director.

Lieutenant General Whitcomb:

Commander of land forces under CENTCOM will specialize on ground operations. He or she keeps track of our land units and their status, fields technical and doctrinal questions, etc.

Lieutenant General Buchanan:

General Buchanan commands aviation units in Central Command, including those of the Army, Marines, and Navy.

Vice Admiral Nichols:



Commands Navy assets assigned to Central Command. Admiral Nichols has a bit more leeway than his peers at the other branches, for two reasons. First, naval operations are solely a Navy matter, so there is no one else to turn to. By comparison, there are two service branches involved in land operations and three in air, while there is only one Navy. Second, Generals Abizaid and Smith are Generals, who (for the sake of argument) know next to nothing about boats. So we'll let Admiral Nichols play expert for us.

CENTCOM S-3

S-3 is the standard military jargon for the staff unit assigned to Operations. The CENTCOM S-3 is the most senior staff officer in the Operations planning organization. In a combat unit, the S-3 is usually most senior after the commander and XO. At CENTCOM, the functional commands have a bit more seniority, but S-3 is still one of the most powerful staffers. S-3 will prepare plans for contingencies and propose appropriate actions.

Major General Castellaw:

General Castellaw is currently Chief of Staff for CENTCOM, and since that's a desk job, and he's the highest ranking Marine in CENTCOM, I'm making him MARCENT for the purposes of our committee. That gives him two hats to wear: as Chief of Staff, he'll organize the staff officers, keep track of details, and act as an informal gatekeeper against distractions, making sure the committee stays on track. As head of Marines in Central Command, General Castellaw only has operational control when only Marines are involved in an operation. His perspective may be asked for on almost anything, since he's a pilot by specialization, and as a Marine, automatically a naval infantryman.

CENTCOM S-1

As with S-3, S-1 is a staff division leader. In this case, the staff is concerned with logistics and support operations. While this may seem a drab assignment, it is vital to any military operation. The old aphorism goes "Amateurs study tactics, professionals study logistics."

CENTCOM S-2

S-2 means Intelligence. This staffer is in charge of organizing all our intelligence-gathering and analysis activities. This includes aviation imagery, reports from our forces and sensors, and information delivered from CIA or other agencies outside CENTCOM.

SOCCENT

This Brigadier General commands Special Operations under Central Command. Special Operations Command is a Joint operation by all four military branches. This officer might have under his command Navy SEALs, Army Special Forces, Marine Force Recon, and Air Force Special Operations. Special Operations are normally organized independent of other activities, and are often utilized when conventional operations are out of the question. They can provide maximum return on a small investment of men and money, but the chance of success is unpredictable. For these reasons, SOCCENT is a valuable position for a fairly young General.

Head PAO

An Army, Air Force, or Marine Colonel or Navy Captain in rank, this staff officer leads Central Command's Public Affairs Office. This officer must consider situations from a public standpoint,



interact with news media, and project a positive image for US forces and activities. The Public Affairs Officer will also coordinate with S-2 and SOCCENT on information warfare.

Command Master Sergeant Brownhill

The only enlisted man on the committee, Sergeant Brownhill is the most senior Non-Commissioned Officer in Central Command. He is an Air Force logistician by training, but his role as top NCO makes that less relevant. While he may be called on to assist in logistics or aviation matters, his more important role is that of alternate perspective. While unorthodox thinkers like Generals Castellaw and SOCCENT can provide some perspective, they remain Generals, who cannot possibly see things as an ordinary soldier does. Sergeant Brownhill acts as a reality check for the committee, offering the advice that his long experience provides.

CENTCOM's Role in the US Military

United States Central Command is a headquarters unit composed of members of all four military branches. It was created in 1983 following a reorganization of the entire Defense Department. Since then, instead of a service branch ordering combat actions directly, the Navy, Air Force, Army, and Marine Corps simply create and prepare units. When the President decides to send US forces into combat, he orders the Secretary of Defense to transfer units to a regional command. The entire globe is divided into these areas of responsibility, and Central Command covers today's best-known hot spots. East Africa, Arabia, Central Asia, and the Indian Ocean are our zone of operation. When troops are sent to the aforementioned places, they are organized and controlled under our command structure, based out of from Tampa's MacDill Air Force Base. Within CENTCOM, the air, sea, and land forces are commanded centrally. For example, all air units are under one CENTAF commander. All uniforms are treated equally under this structure, and assets are not wasted by inter-service rivalry.

The arrangement results in scenarios like the following: a Navy officer in Florida orders Marine Harrier jets flying out of the Persian Gulf to support Army troops in Iraq, and to receive refueling from Air Force tankers based from the continental US and flying orbits over Kuwait. The orders are relayed by US Space Command satellites, and are received moments later. Everyone can communicate over compatible, encrypted radios, from the Corporal on the ground to the Lieutenant in the air to the Lieutenant Commander back in Tampa. For us in command, it's a bit like a video game, especially with GPS giving every vehicle's position to the meter.

Of course, it doesn't always work out so neatly. This system might be ideal for an all-out war against a high-tech foe, but a street battle moves too fast to coordinate over a satellite feed. Officers on the ground have to be trusted to make the right decisions, and cannot be micromanaged. In practice, we will order unit commanders at the Brigade level and higher. Occasionally, individual missions will be ordered from on high; these will mostly be Special Forces operations or air strikes.



Committee Goals

Unlike any of the nation-states represented at PICSim, we at US CENTCOM are willing to put our goals in writing and have the audacity to publish them onto the internet. I have reduced an official list of fifteen general CENTCOM goals to nine key, operational goals:

1. Protect, promote and preserve U.S. interests: the free flow of energy resources, access to regional states, freedom of navigation, and maintenance of regional stability.
2. Deter conflict through demonstrated resolve in such efforts as forward presence, pre-positioning, exercises, and confidence building measures.
3. Protect the force by providing an appropriate level of security and safety.
4. Maintain, support and contribute to coalitions and other collective security efforts that support U.S. and mutual interests in the region.
5. Promote and support responsible and capable regional militaries.
6. Promote efforts in the region to counter threats from weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, information warfare, and drug trafficking.
7. Establish and maintain close relationships with regional political and military leaders.
8. Develop integrated regional engagement approaches through cooperation with counterparts in the interagency, other unified commands, and key non-governmental and private volunteer organizations.
9. Promote and support environmental and humanitarian efforts and provide prompt response to humanitarian and environmental crises.

These nine goals outline what we will achieve. The most important goal is naturally the first on the list, a goal that suggests military force as our primary means. But we will also use nontraditional means in tandem with force, and unorthodox thinking is a powerful asset, evidenced by the other eight goals.

TOE (Table of Organization and Equipment)

As the situation changes in the ongoing Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, forces assigned to USCENTCOM will vary frequently. Navy assignments vary constantly with the patrolling of various fleets and task forces, but the level of presence is generally stable, usually one Carrier Battle Group, with another available nearby, and two Amphibious Squadrons, with at least one more available. Ten Active-Duty Brigade-equivalent units are deployed to Iraq, with another one in Afghanistan. Additional three to five Brigade-equivalents of National Guard and Reserve formations are deployed to CENTCOM AOR. One Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF, equivalent to three US Army Brigades) is deployed to Iraq. Keep in mind that the CENTCOM force complement can be augmented within as little as 24 hours for ground units, 72 hours for naval units, and as little as 12 hours for combat air units, as the situation may warrant. At the time of our convening, I will provide an up-to-date list.

I want this committee to be open to anyone, not just the enthusiasts. I therefore include a bit of background on US military equipment and technical specifications. I will try to keep it conceptual rather than detail-oriented.



CENTCOM forces are predominantly American, but remember that a substantial number of British and Coalition forces are also participating in our area, and (sometimes) are under our command. Mostly their equipment is similar but I will leave the specifics to the curious among you to find on your own.

Ground Forces

US ground forces are either US Army or Marine Corps. They use similar equipment, but the Marines have some specialized equipment and a different structure and tactical focus. Both branches use a “combined arms” approach, with air, artillery, helicopters, and in the case of Marines, naval assets backing ground troops. As mentioned earlier, air and sea units are organized separately under CENTCOM, but at the operational level may be commingled. The Marines find it especially hard to centralize air assets, since they have a high degree of integration in their organization and tactics. I will describe the Army version of things, and then compare the Marines.

The most obvious assets of ground forces are armored vehicles. This is a point of difference between Marines and Army units; Marines use their tanks and armored vehicles in small groups to augment infantry, while the Army tends to have infantry parceled out among mechanized units. This means that in open battle the Army projects more force, but the Marines have more operational flexibility.

Both branches use the same main battle tank, the M1 Abrams. The US Army has mostly new M1A2 models, while the Marines have mainly older M1A1 versions, many of them Army hand-me-downs. The original tank was designed in the late 1970s, and updated in the late 1980s and again in the mid 1990s. The original M1 is no longer in service, with some scrapped, and others upgraded. That means the Marines’ A1 model is as old as this committee’s participants. Both versions A1 and A2 share an armor, weapon, and propulsion package, and have a crew of four. The Abrams is almost alone among tanks in being powered by a jet engine like that in a helicopter. This makes it fast for such a heavy vehicle, but wastes lots of fuel and creates a supply nightmare.

The Abrams has a special composite armor on its front and turret, designed to prevent other tank shells or missiles from penetrating. As a practical matter, this armor package makes the Abrams virtually invulnerable from frontal attack. The sides, bottom, top, and rear are not composite armored to save weight, but tactics are planned so that vehicles protect each other’s vulnerable parts. In fact, the main difference between Army M1A2 and Marine M1A1s is a high-tech map display that lets tanks cover each other better in large maneuvers. The Marines decided the expensive system was unnecessary for their small-unit tactics, and did not upgrade.

Both versions have a huge 120mm (just under 5-inch) diameter cannon, hooked to a targeting computer and thermal sight. This high-velocity weapon is great against tanks, bunkers, and light vehicles, but it uses mostly kinetic energy to destroy targets. This means it has little explosive charge, so knocking down buildings is hard. The Abrams has several machine guns to defend against infantry or helicopters, but tanks mostly rely on others for protection against these threats.



For the Marines, these jobs mostly fall to the infantry with hand-held weapons, but the Army designed special support vehicles to scout and screen for tanks. Primary among these is the M2 Bradley. This vehicle is about one third the weight of the Abrams, and can carry a few infantry men inside, as well as a crew of three. The Bradley uses a conventional diesel engine for power, and has fairly thin steel and aluminum armor, unless upgraded with high-tech attachments. These are often used when enemy anti-tank missiles are expected, because even a small missile can destroy a Bradley otherwise.

The Bradley has a 25mm (1-inch) automatic cannon, which is simply a large machine gun hooked to a target computer similar to the Abrams'. This is designed to destroy light armored vehicles, soft structures, and kill infantry. The Bradley also has a few machine guns, and an anti-tank missile launcher that doubles for destroying buildings. Some Bradleys have the missile launcher replaced with an anti-aircraft launcher, although enemy air attacks are very rare in practice.

The Bradley's scout and screening role is sometimes filled instead with lightly-armored wheeled vehicles. The Marines use a vehicle called the LAV-25; the Army equivalent is very similar. With an automatic cannon similar to the Bradley, the LAV (Light Armored Vehicle) is well-armed, but with much less armor and less all-terrain capability because it is not tracked. It is fast though, and since Marines are amphibious troops, it has propellers for swimming.

Since the LAV can only fit a few scouts, when Marines need to move troops quickly, they use the LVPT-7, also known as an Amtrack (the name means Amphibious Tractor, and has nothing to do with the railroad company). Amtracks are big, flat sided, and very seaworthy. They have treads, and serve alright to bring infantry to battlefields. However, big flat sides and thin armor make them poor combat vehicles. The worst casualty incidents in Iraq have been bombed Amtracks.

Besides these armored vehicles, the Marines and Army have identical supply vehicles. The Army uses tracked artillery, the better to keep up with tanks on the move. The Marines prefer to move fixed artillery with helicopters as needed, but the guns are the same. Both use a light 105mm (4 inch) howitzer and a heavy 155mm (6 inch) howitzer. Unit commanders use command vehicles based on the 1950s era M113 armored personnel carrier.

A word on Humvees. The High-Mobility, Medium-Weight, Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV, hence Humvee) is the military equivalent of a pickup truck. A Hummer may look impressive on civilian roads, but it is really just a small supply truck. Only the armored model is even remotely combat-worthy (and then not much), but unarmored versions are so versatile they often get put in harm's way.

Infantry equipment is nearly identical between services, but they use remarkably different tactics. Both Marines and Army start by organizing men into 4-man "fire teams." One man has a light machine gun, three have M-16A2 rifles, or possibly the near-identical M-4 carbine. All of these have ranges of about half a mile, but most infantry combat takes place at less than 100 yards. Usually the most senior soldier or Marine has a grenade launcher attached to his rifle. From here



things are different. The marines will group three teams with a sergeant and call that a 13-man squad. The army tends to pair teams, add a sergeant and call it a 9-man squad. Army squads can also get as small as 6 (to fit into a Bradley) or as large as 11. A few squads and a machine gun team, and the Army has a platoon. The Marines take three squads and no support unit into their platoons. This pattern continues on up the hierarchy of units. The Army uses more specialized support units, and the Marines have bigger basic units. It may not have consequence to our conference, but it is sociologically fascinating. Consider how the design difference reflects tactics and philosophy.

US Army Airborne and Light Infantry units have no armored vehicles, so they tend to organize in flexible units like the Marines. It's often said that the Airborne Corps is as different from the rest of the Army as the Marine Corps. We are unlikely to have any Airborne units assigned, so air-dropping paratroops is only going to happen with special forces.

Special Forces

Special Forces are really no more than excellent infantrymen all brought together in one unit. The Navy SEALs, Army Rangers, Special Forces, and Delta Force, the Marine Force Recon; all of them have the same basic job. They sneak past more powerful units and destroy valuable but vulnerable targets. Each is specialized as well. SEALs of course tend to stay near oceans and naval targets. Army Rangers specialize in taking over airfields, which is more important than it sounds. Delta Force is a hostage rescue team. Force Recon do mostly tactical reconnaissance for Marine Corps units, but sometimes get sent on special assignments. Air Force Special Ops fly the helicopters for these units, and also rescue pilots shot down behind enemy lines.

Air Forces

Aviation assets were among the first to bridge differences between services, but they still each use their own equipment. You might begin to see why unified combat commands like CENTCOM are sometimes a headache, after centuries of rivalry and specialization. For example, in the 1960s the US Army and US Air Force agreed that the Air Force would have all the fixed wing combat aircraft, while the Army would have only helicopters. The Air Force uses single engine jets all the time, while the Navy has almost never accepted planes without two engines. The Marines have planes all their own, some specialized for amphibious support. Some models get used by all four services, some by only one. Some of the details are literally rocket science, and don't matter here. So again, I will give the rudiments, so that everyone has a basic understanding.

Jet fighters are the pride of any military. They're sleek, fast, and expensive. And for the most part, they're useless. Jet fighters mostly do one thing: shoot down other fighters. And since the US has the best ones, jet fighters tend to have one purpose: get shot down by American jet fighters in front of CNN cameras. In the last 62 years, American ground forces have been attacked by enemy planes twice: once in Saudi Arabia in 1991 (some sources say this was actually friendly fire, and not Iraqi planes), just before Desert Storm began, and once in 1944, at Kasserine Pass in Tunisia, when the Nazi Luftwaffe snuck through American fighter cover. Not an impressive record for the enemy. In Operation Iraqi Freedom, not one Iraqi plane took off.



The occasional helicopter got shot down, but Air Supremacy was total. So we will not worry much about jet combat, but some of these planes also fulfill other roles.

The Navy's old but powerful F-14 Tomcat has a reconnaissance role, and the Air Force's F-15 Eagle has a strike variant, designed to fly fast and low to drop smart bombs on heavily protected targets. Otherwise these two 1970-vintage planes are pure air-to-air.

The other fighters in the US arsenal are multipurpose, capable of ground attack as well as air-to-air combat. The two most common are the Air Force's F-16 Falcon, and the Navy and Marine F/A-18 Hornet, which are similar in most respects: quick, maneuverable, similar weapons and electronics. There is also a "Super Hornet" version of the F/A-18, which looks similar but has all new electronics, engines, and structure. It is used by the Navy only, and is replacing the F-14. The Marines also use a vertical-takeoff Harrier "Jump Jet" which is mostly for ground attack, but can carry anti-aircraft missiles. All of these are supersonic aircraft, with the Harrier only barely so. The others are all capable of over 1200 miles per hour for brief periods by using afterburners. The latest F-22 in limited use by Air Force is semi-stealthy, ultra-high-tech, and has engines that can cruise at supersonic speed without wasting too much fuel.

Ground attack is mostly a matter of weapons and sensors. Both Air Force and Navy use pods attached to their planes for night vision and smart-bomb targeting. The latest smart bombs are guided by GPS, meaning that laser guidance is unnecessary. The F-16 and F/A-18 can carry anti-radar missiles, which home in on enemy radar sets and destroy them. F/A-18s are capable of using anti-ship missiles, but standard anti-tank weapons and smart bombs have proven fairly effective against ships.

The Air Force operates three models of bomber, the B-52, the B-1, and the B-2. All have such long range that they simply operate out of the US, returning home after each mission. The B-52 is from the 1960s, older than its crewmen's parents, but still a heavy lifter, the size of a 747. It can carry cruise missiles and heavy bomb loads. The B-1 was designed for low-altitude supersonic attack, like a giant F-15 Strike Eagle, but with nuclear bombs instead of smart conventional bombs. In non-nuclear roles it is hampered by weapons systems designed mostly for a doomsday mission. The B-2 is stealthy and has smart bomb capability, so it gets lots of use. At upwards of \$2 billion each, they ought to be used for all they are worth.

The Air Force and Navy operate parallel fleets of support aircraft. The Air Force tends to convert airliners, while the Navy has theirs custom designed to operate off of aircraft carriers. The roles include airborne radar and control, coordinating air traffic, refueling, electronic warfare, and intelligence gathering. The Navy operates two models of anti-submarine aircraft, one land based and one carrier-based.

Helicopters are essential to all four branches. The Navy operates antisubmarine helicopters from both its carriers and from surface ships. The most common model is the SH-60 Seahawk. The Army uses a basic version as the UH-60 Blackhawk, and the Air Force uses a high-tech version for special operations as the MH-60 Pave Hawk. The Blackhawk is very common, and has a nasty tendency of getting shot down with infantry aboard, as in "Blackhawk Down". Remember that even combat helicopters are fragile things, and the Blackhawk is not a combat helicopter.



The Army also uses the AH-64 Apache, which has high-tech electronics and radars. The Apache can carry 16 Hellfire antitank missiles, which theoretically can kill 16 tanks in 2 minutes. To find all those targets they use the OH-58 Kiowa scout helicopter, which is based on the commercial model used to report for TV news stations. The Apache is big and expensive; the Kiowa is small and cheaper. The pairing is analogous to the Abrams and Bradley pairing in armored warfare. The Marines also use ground attack helicopters, but they use the Vietnam-era AH-1 Cobra, which uses simpler missiles and guidance systems. The Army brought in the Apache to replace the Cobra in the 1980s. Again the Marines get hand-me-downs and limited funding, but they also preferred the simpler, more reliable old model. It also has less weapons capacity.

The Marines and the Army use the UH-64 Chinook for heavy lift, especially the Marines for moving artillery pieces. Instead of the UH-60 Blackhawk the Marines have a scaled-down version of the Chinook called the Sea Knight. The Sea Knight is no more combat-worthy than the Blackhawk, but it looks more ungainly. Perhaps the Blackhawk's deceptively sleek appearance encourages the Army to put them in harm's way. The Marines and the Air Force use variants on the giant H-53, a massive Vietnam era rescue copter. The Marine version is called the CH-53 Super Stallion, and it can hold an entire platoon of 40 Marines.

Both the Marines and the Army use helicopters for "Vertical Envelopment," using the third dimension to place ground troops where they otherwise could not get. Every Marine Corps unit is mostly air mobile; only the M1A1 and the LVPT-7 are too heavy for helicopter lift. The Army concentrates its lift capacity in a few special air-mobile units, specifically the 101st Airborne Division (Air Mobile). This unit fought a good part of Operation Iraqi Freedom, performing the two longest combat helicopter air lifts in history and totally confusing the Iraqi army.

Naval Forces

The pride of the Navy is its aircraft carriers. They have twelve, ten nuclear powered. The other two are old steam powered carriers. There are plenty of other conventional carriers sitting in mothballs, which could be reactivated if ever necessary. Of the twelve active carriers, two or three at a time are usually under long-term repairs or nuclear refueling. Another two or three have just come off long term deployments or exercises. That leaves about six carriers to patrol the seven seas. Yet such is their power that the Navy pays for twelve just to have six at a time. Each can carry nearly one hundred aircraft, about fifty of them attack planes. This force is enough to destroy any other navy in the world. All of the US military strives to be the best in the world. The Navy is as good as *twelve* Chinese, Russian, or Indian navies. No direct naval threat exists in CENTCOM AOR.

There are indirect naval threats, like submarines, mines, fast-attack boats, and cruise missiles. The rest of the US Navy basically functions to protect carriers from these threats. The "surface warfare" branch of the Navy mostly protects carriers from missile or submarine attack. Submarines mostly hunt submarines, but they do some special operations as well. Minesweeping, often neglected during the Cold War, is a fast-growing task for the Navy. With all that extra muscle, the Navy spends most of its energy helping the other service branches, especially the Marines. The Navy operates a fleet of ships just to carry Marines and their equipment. These travel in Amphibious Squadrons, composed of a helicopter aircraft carrier



and two or three ships for cargo and landing craft. One squadron carries a only battalion of Marines, but the helicopters and landing craft can move them to any point near navigable water without warning. Though rarely used, this threat of amphibious invasion is always taken seriously by threat countries.

Strategic Forces

PICSim routinely winds up with at least one nation trying to obtain nuclear weapons to make up for their bad breaks. The US is the only confirmed nuclear power represented at this conference, but CENTCOM almost never has strategic weapons assigned to it. The purpose of this passage is really to establish as PICSim’s “reality” what sort of weapons we have, just in case things get fun.

The US has no Biological or Chemical weapons. The Air Force leaves its nuclear missiles in silos and its bombs in bunkers in the US. The Navy keeps its ballistic missile submarines close to home. But this does not leave CENTCOM without a doomsday recourse. Typically, the nuclear-powered attack submarines assigned to us will have one or two nuclear-tipped cruise missiles, and aircraft carriers usually have a few nuclear bombs stowed away under lock and key. These arms are not enough to flatten a nation, but they could destroy a few cities or ultra-deep buried command bunkers. Remember however that National Command Authorities (read: the President) has to authorize any nuclear strike. So it is best left out of mind. For now.

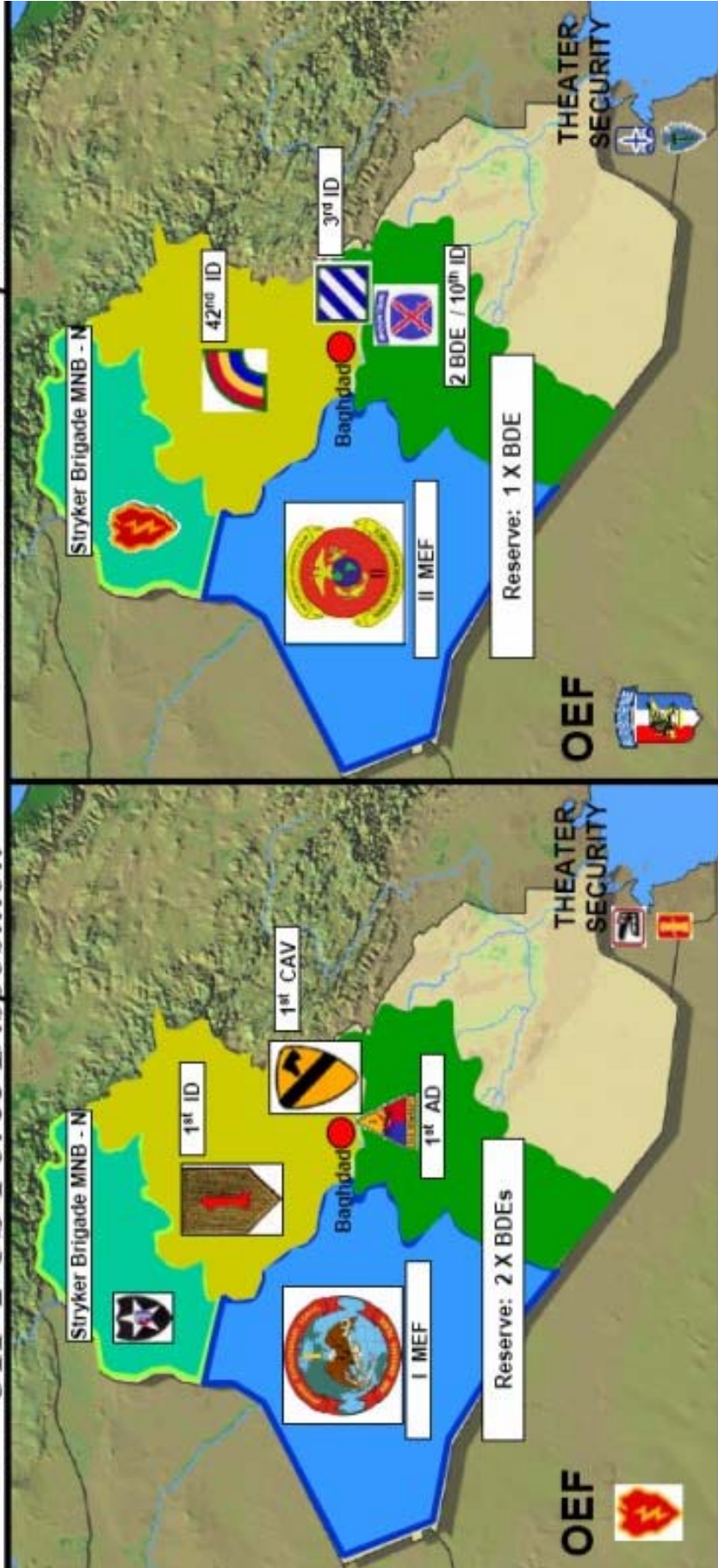


OIF 2 - OIF 3 US Force Disposition



OIF 2 US Force Disposition

OIF 3 US Force Disposition



4 (+) Divisions

(18 US Brigades)

~140,000

3 (+) Divisions

(17 US Brigades)

~135,000

UNCLASSIFIED