

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ MARDIS

1. DATE  
23 July 1975

## 2. OPERATION CODE

3. UNCLASSIFIED SUBJECT (Paraphrase if necessary so routing sheet will not be classified)

## G - INFORMATION

H - RETURN TO

I ~ INITIAL

J - DISPOSITION

### K -- DECISION

L ~ RETENTION

0 - {OTHER}

**ROUTING**—Use numbers to show order of routing

## Mayaguez Lessons Learned

4. RTG.	5. OPR. CODE	6. ADDRESSEES	7. DATE		8. INITIALS		9. NATURE OF ACTION REQUIRED	ORIGINATOR'S INITIALS	DUE DATE (If any)
			IN	OUT	CONCUR	NON- CONCUR			
		COMMANDANT CMC					ROUTINE		
		MILITARY SECY TO CMC					URGENT		
		ASSISTANT COMMANDANT ACMC							
		EXEC ASST TO ACMC							
		DIR SPEC PROJ SPD							
		CHIEF OF STAFF CS							
		SECY OF GEN STAFF							
		DC/S FOR PLANS & OPS P							
		DC/S FOR MANPOWER M							
		DC/S FOR I & L L							
		DC/S FOR R & P RP							
		DC/S FOR AVIATION AA							
		DC/S FOR RD&S RD							
		FISCAL DIR FD							
		DIR OF MC RESERVE RES							
		DIR OF INFO SYS & PMGT ISM							
		INSPECTOR GENERAL IG							
		DIR JUDGE ADVOCATE DIV JA							
		DIR OF INFORMATION FA							
		DIR OF HIST & MUSEUMS HD							
		DIR OF TELECOMM TEL							
		DIR OF INTELLIGENCE INT							
		DIR OF HQ SUPPORT HOS							
		LEGISLATIVE ASST OLA							
		COUNSEL FOR CMC CL							
		MEDICAL OFF USMC MED							
		DENTAL OFF USMC DEN							
		CHAPLAIN USMC REL							
G		DC/S for P&O							
		ExecAsst							
		AdminAsst							
		ItControl0							
EIC		Dir, Plans Div							
FI		Deputy Dir							
		Admin Br							
		Jr Plans & Pol Br							
X		Jt Strategic Br							
		Eastern Regional Br							
		Western Regional Br							
		Service Plans Br							
		Dir, Operations Div							
		Deputy Dir							
		Admin Br							
		Op & Phil Matters Br							
		MarCorCmdr							

10. REFERENCES HELD BY (Name, Grade, Office Code, Telephone Extension)  
**F. J. SCHOBBER, Lt Col, PL33, 43706**

11. REMARKS AND SIGNATURE (If additional space is necessary, attach plain paper)  
 1. Subject is briefing item for Friday OPsDepts meeting.  
 2. Information contained in attached memo is close hold and will not be made available to the Services prior to the brief.

MARDIS

Classified by the [redacted]  
 Marine Corps History and Museum  
 in accordance with the provisions  
 of CEO ltr Ser 009D523/232095 of  
 21 Feb 1979

*[Signature]*  
 Signature Date: *e/12/69*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20380

~~SECRET~~

IN REPLY REFER TO  
PL33-FJS-ar  
23 July 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PLANS AND OPERATIONS

Subj: Mayaguez Lessons Learned (U)

1. A briefing concerning subject will be presented to the OPSDEPS at 1000, Friday, 25 July 1975 by LtCol E. F. FULLER, USA, J-3. A copy of the briefing will not be available to the Services, however, ERB was invited to read the briefing and provide comments/recommendations deemed appropriate. At 0900 this date LtCol SCHOBBER read the brief and found it acceptable to the Marine Corps.

2. The following summary is provided for your information:

- After a brief introductory paragraph the operation is stated to have been successful but could have been performed better.
- There were unique problems
  - Compressed timeframe to plan and execute (16 hrs.)
  - Uncertain circumstances under which decisions were made
- The most significant lesson learned was the capability of US forces to respond, thus permitting successful accomplishment of so demanding a mission
  - Planning and decisions being made while forces were enroute
  - The more formal crisis management procedures had to be short circuited
- Critique Items
  - Planning
  - Command, Control and Communications
  - Forces
  - Reconnaissance and Intelligence
  - Joint Training Exercises

Classified By CM5 (Cdr. A)  
SUBJECT TO GENERAL DECLASSIFICATION  
SCHEDULE OF E.O. 12958, AUTOMATICALLY  
DECLASSIFIED AT 3-YEAR INTERVALS.  
DECLASSIFIED ON 21 DECEMBER 1983

DECLASSIFIED

~~SECRET~~PL33-FJS-ar  
23 July 1975

Subj: Mayaguez Lessons Learned (U)

- Planning
  - No plan on the shelf
  - Staffs available who had participated in EAGLE PULL and FREQUENT WIND
  - USSAG/7th AF plan completed on 14 May but not polished as former plans
  - Not feasible to publish formal plans for every contingency
  - We must have staffs and forces ready to execute unforeseeable missions
- Command, Control and Communications
  - Normally extensive team training required for this type operation
  - Forces assembled with little time before being committed to battle
  - Hi freq radios unsatisfactory due to incompatibility
  - Lack of secure nets
  - Wide band satellite secure was good
  - Recognize establishing of responsive communications tends to expose field commander to excessive direction and may set up conditioned response of reluctance to act without guidance. This could be disastrous especially in operations of larger scope. Therefore:
    - A joint doctrine is being considered
    - Establish a parallel conference net
  - Need redundant air/ground communications which are compatible
    - Navy tacair on UHF, ground assault force had VHF/FM because FAC's radio was lost in a helo crash (TELCOM in coordination with DC/S(AIR) has for action)
    - Airborne FAC's introduced later in operation cleared up difficulty

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~~SECRET~~PL33-FJS-ar  
23 July 1975

Subj: Mayaguez Lessons Learned (U)

## - Forces

- Time sensitive problem as to how to get the Marines to the area
  - Use ARG/MAU on 16th?
  - Move Okinawa based Marines by MAC immediately?
- Decision to conduct operation on 15 May effectively limited assault force buildup
  - Limited helo assets in Thailand
  - Distance from Utapao to Kaoh Tang island
  - Enemy action cut helo capability in half
- The continuous deployment of an ARG/MAU to the South China Sea/Gulf of Thailand area would have provided a more appropriate, rapid response force. Such deployment would, among other things, require the collection of sufficient naval assets to support 2 ARG/MAU's in WPAC as during the Vietnam war.
- Particular attention must be paid to providing force flexibility, particularly in the field of airmobile support by all Services
  - This flexibility extends to a need to be able to move heavy lift helos and quickly by MAC - possibly a deciding factor for future success (DC/S(AIR) has this item under active investigation)
- Look into
  - Installing air refueling capability on heavy lift helos
  - Equipping helo external tanks with fire prevention foam devices
- OV-10 and AC-130's well suited to air/ground operations
- CINCPAC would like to retain in theater
  - Combat Talon AC-130's
  - BLU-82 bombs

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PL33-FJS-ar  
23 July 1975

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- Combined Arms existing doctrine followed generally and found to be sound - there is a need to give special attention to application of doctrine for fire support under similar incidents in the future.
- Doctrine calls for Landing Zone prep, however
  - Unacceptable threat to friendlies
  - Smoke and/or RCA may have been effective
  - Helo gunships only available if the ARG/MAU used or if they were positioned aboard Coral Sea
- Reconnaissance and Intelligence
  - U-2 data collection-processing not responsive enough
  - Collocate recon assets and photo interpretation units with command elements
  - Need compass link, or alternative, in each theater, for rapid dissemination of high interest imagery
- Joint Training Exercises
  - CINCPAC recommends increasing joint incident exercises, PACOM CPX's, and then move into higher Political-Military games (possibly inter-departmental) and then frequent exercises with joint force participation.
- Final Observation is that the Mayaguez operation was successfully accomplished by a rapid, forcible response to piracy. It evolved under specific political, diplomatic and military considerations unique to the situation at the time and therefore the lessons learned must be carefully weighed for their applicability to future incidents in which the scenario may be substantially different.

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USMC

BRIEFING PRESENTED TO \_\_\_\_\_  
ON \_\_\_\_\_

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE SS MAYAGUEZ/KAOH TANG  
ISLAND OPERATION  
SLIDE 1 ON

AT 0512 HOURS EASTERN DAYLIGHT TIME ON 12 MAY 1975, THE  
AMERICAN EMBASSY, DJAKARTA REPORTED A RADIO INTERCEPT <sup>WRONG -</sup> OF SIGNALS  
FROM THE SS MAYAGUEZ THAT THE SHIP WAS BEING SEIZED BY CAMBODIAN  
FORCES IN THE VICINITY OF POULO WAI ISLAND, GULF OF THAILAND.  
ABOUT 4 HOURS LATER A P-3 NAVY RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT WAS  
LAUNCHED FROM UTAPAO AND WITHIN 16 HOURS THE SS MAYAGUEZ WAS  
LOCATED IN THE VICINITY OF <sup>(VIC KAOH TANG)</sup> POULO WAI ISLAND. <sup>(DJS QUESTIONED)</sup>

THE CHART LISTS THESE AND OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS RELATED  
TO THE MAYAGUEZ/KAOH TANG INCIDENT, SPANNING A TIMEFRAME OF  
APPROXIMATELY 76 HOURS FROM THE SHIP'S SEIZURE UNTIL THE FINAL  
EXTRACTION OF THE MARINE GROUND ASSAULT FORCES.

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THE MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR WAS A SUCCESSFUL MILITARY OPERATION; BUT THERE WERE THINGS THAT COULD HAVE BEEN PERFORMED BETTER. THESE PROBLEMS MUST BE VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF THE UNIQUENESS OF THE MISSION, THE COMPRESSED TIMEFRAME OF APPROXIMATELY 16 HOURS FROM PLANNING TO EXECUTION, AND UNCERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH DECISIONS HAD TO BE MADE.

PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT LESSON LEARNED IS THAT THE CAPABILITY OF OUR FORCES TO RESPOND PERMITTED SUCCESSFUL ACCOMPLISHMENT OF SO DEMANDING A MISSION. IT IS ESSENTIAL TO NOTE THAT THE PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS CONTINUED THROUGH STAGES OF REFINEMENT, WHILE THE WIDELY SEPARATED MULTISERVICE FORCES WERE MOVING TOWARDS THEIR ATTACK POSITIONS. THE MORE FORMAL CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES HAD TO BE SHORT CIRCUITED.

OF THE CRITIQUE ITEMS DEVELOPED FOR THIS OPERATION, THE FOLLOWING ARE CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT IN LIGHT OF FUTURE JOINT OPERATIONS AND THEY ARE COVERED WITHIN THE GENERAL TOPICS SHOWN HERE.

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SLIDE 1 OFF

SLIDE 2 ON (PLANNING, COMMAND, CONTROL,  
COMMUNICATIONS, FORCES, DOCTRINE, RECON-  
NAISSANCE AND INTELLIGENCE)

SLIDE 2 OFF

SLIDE 3 ON (PLANNING)

FIRST THE AREA OF PLANNING.

NO ON-THE-SHELF CONTINGENCY PLAN EXISTED FOR THIS OPERATION.

EMERGENCY PLANNING CONDUCTED OVER THE SHORT PERIOD OF TIME

BENEFITTED FROM THE IMMEDIATE AVAILABILITY OF STAFFS AND OPERATIONAL

FORCES WHO HAD JUST RECENTLY PARTICIPATED IN NONCOMBATANT AND REFUGEE

EVACUATION OPERATIONS FROM SOUTH VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA. THE FINAL

OPERATION PLAN PUBLISHED BY COMUSSAG/7AF ON THE 14TH, INCORPORATED THE

ESSENCE OF THE REQUIREMENTS TO ACCOMPLISH THE TASKS. DUE TO THE RAPID

EVOLVEMENT OF EVENTS, IT WAS NOT THE POLISHED PRODUCT FOUND WHEN THE

"EAGLE PULL" PLAN WAS EXECUTED--NOR WAS IT EVEN AS DETAILED AS

"FREQUENT WIND" WHICH HAD AT LEAST A FEW WEEKS AVAILABLE FOR REFINING

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MAJOR POINTS AND FACILITATING COORDINATION AMONG THE PRIMARY FORCES OF THE JOINT TASK FORCE. IT IS NOT FEASIBLE TO ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP FORMAL PLANS FOR THE MYRIAD OF CONTINGENCIES THAT COULD ARISE WORLDWIDE. NEVERTHELESS, THE MAYAGUEZ EXPERIENCE DOES DICTATE CONSTANT PREPAREDNESS OF OUR PLANNING STAFFS AND READY FORCES TO EXECUTE UNFORESEEABLE MISSIONS.

SLIDE 3 OFF

SLIDE 4 ON

SHORTCOMINGS IN THE OPERATION RECEIVING THE GREATEST NUMBER OF COMMENTS FALL TO THOSE DEALING WITH COMMAND, CONTROL AND COMMUNICATIONS. IN THIS OPERATION, WE HAD AIR FORCE HELICOPTERS EXECUTING A COMPLEX HELICOPTER COMBAT ASSAULT, LIFTING MARINE COMBAT FORCES INTO THE OBJECTIVE AREA. TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES USED IN SUCH AN ASSAULT ARE NORMALLY REFINED THROUGH EXTENSIVE TEAM TRAINING. IN THIS INSTANCE, THE TEAM MEMBERS MET ONLY BRIEFLY BEFORE MOVING ALMOST IMMEDIATELY INTO BATTLE. --

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RELIANCE ON HIGH FREQUENCY RADIO FOR TACTICAL COMMAND AND CONTROL PROVED TO BE UNSATISFACTORY. THE LACK OF SECURITY ON TACTICAL VOICE NETS AND THE NECESSITY TO SHIFT FREQUENCIES TO ENSURE USABLE PATHS DURING CRITICAL OPERATIONS, EMPHASIZE A NEED FOR GREATER RELIANCE ON LINE-OF-SIGHT (SATELLITE/RELAY) COMMUNICATIONS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, WIDEBAND, SATELLITE-BASED SECURE VOICE CONFERENCING BETWEEN THE JCS, CINCPAC, COMPONENTS, AND USSAG/7AF PROVED INVALUABLE, CONSIDERING THE VERY SENSITIVE POLITICAL-MILITARY RAMIFICATIONS OF EVERY ACTION. FEASIBILITY OF EXTENDING THIS LINK TO ON-SCENE/MOBILE COMMANDERS IS THE SUBJECT OF FURTHER INVESTIGATION.

WE RECOGNIZE THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF RESPONSIVE COMMUNICATIONS, WITH THEIR INHERENT CAPABILITIES FOR JUMPING COMMAND CHANNELS, TENDS TO EXPOSE THE FIELD COMMANDER TO EXCESSIVE DIRECTION, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE OPERATIONS ARE SO LIMITED IN FOCUS.

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CREATION OF A RELUCTANCE TO ACT WITHOUT SPECIFIC GUIDANCE WOULD

BE DISASTROUS. THIS TENDANCY COULD HAVE OBVIOUS ADVERSE CONSE-

QUENCES, IF DECISIONS ARE MADE OR ADVICE PASSED WITHOUT AN

AWARENESS OF THE ACTUAL STATUS OF ALL THE MYRIAD AND INTERRELATED

ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH THE COMMANDER ON THE SCENE IS RESPONSIBLE,

AND WHICH ARE, OF COURSE, VITALLY AFFECTED AT ANY GIVEN MOMENT

BY THE LOCAL GEOGRAPHY. AS AN EXAMPLE: WE CAN RECALL THAT THE

PREVAILING WIND IN THE AREA FORCED THE CORAL SEA TO STEAM AWAY

FROM KAOH TANG ISLAND ONCE IT BEGAN LAUNCH AND RECOVERY

OPERATIONS. THIS FACTOR WAS NOT KNOWN IN EITHER WASHINGTON OR

HAWAII AT THE TIME, AND DID NOT BECOME CLEAR UNTIL THE EXTRACTION

OF THE GROUND FORCE WAS ORDERED AND THE CORAL SEA HAD TO REVERSE

DIRECTION TO REACH AN APPROPRIATE POSITION FOR HELO RECOVERY.

COPY RFE (C-100)

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TO PRECLUDE THIS INADVERTENT MISUSE OF THE SECURE VOICE  
CONFERENCING, JOINT DOCTRINE GOVERNING ITS USE IS BEING  
CONSIDERED. ESTABLISHMENT OF A PARALLEL SECURE CONFERENCE NET  
CONFINED TO A REPORTING ROLE WOULD PREVENT OVERLOADING OF THE  
PRIMARY COMMAND NET, AND MAY EASE THE TENDENCY TOWARD OVER CONTROL.

USEFULNESS OF LINE OF SIGHT RADIO RELAY CAPABILITY/SATELLITE COM-  
MUNICATIONS WAS DEMONSTRATED BY THE EXPEDIENT USE OF THE U-2 OLYMPIC  
TORCH AS A MANUAL VOICE RELAY FACILITY. GREATER EFFICIENCY AND  
RESPONSIVENESS COULD BE MET WITH A HIGH ALTITUDE, AUTOMATIC RELAY  
CAPABILITY. --

FINALLY, GREATER EMPHASIS SHOULD BE PLACED ON ESTABLISHING  
COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT COMPATIBILITY TO ENSURE A REDUNDANT  
COMMUNICATIONS LINK BETWEEN THE GROUND FORCE AND ITS SUPPORTING  
TAC AIR. THE SINGLE UHF RADIO AVAILABLE TO THE GROUND ASSAULT  
FORCE AND CARRIED BY THE FORWARD AIR CONTROLLER WITH THAT FORCE  
WAS LOST WHEN A HELICOPTER WAS SHOT DOWN AND DESTROYED. THIS LOSS  
SHOWED THE NEED FOR THIS EQUIPMENT COMPATIBILITY. THE GROUND

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ASSAULT FORCE PRIMARY COMMUNICATIONS WAS VHF/FM WHILE NAVY TAC AIR HAD UHF ONLY. USE OF AN AIRBORNE FORWARD AIR CONTROLLER IN THE LATTER STAGES OF THE OPERATION PROVED EFFECTIVE IN REESTABLISHING COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THESE TWO FORCES.

SLIDE 4 OFF

SLIDE 5 ON (FORCES)

NEXT ARE LESSONS PERTAINING TO FORCES.

THE REQUIREMENTS FELL INTO THREE CATEGORIES: AIR ELEMENTS TO PROVIDE AIR RECONNAISSANCE AND TACAIR OPERATIONS; NAVAL ELEMENTS THAT COULD QUICKLY RESPOND TO THE OBJECTIVE AREA; AND GROUND FORCES WITH A HELICOPTER LIFT CAPABILITY.

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WHILE SUFFICIENT AIR ASSETS WERE AVAILABLE IN A TIMELY MANNER, THE PROBLEM OF TRANSPORTING MARINE ASSAULT FORCES TO THE AREA WAS NOT SO DEFINED. TWO OPTIONS WERE AVAILABLE: WAIT UNTIL AN ARG/MAU COULD ARRIVE ON THE SCENE ON THE 16TH, OR RESPOND IMMEDIATELY BY MOVING MARIN TO UTAPAO BY FIXED WING AND THEN INTO THE ASSAULT BY AIR FORCE CH/HH-53 HELICOPTERS. WHEN THE DECISION WAS MADE THAT THE ASSAULT OF KAOH TANG ISLAND WOULD BE EXECUTED ON THE 15TH, THE COMPOSITION, SIZE AND RATE OF BUILDUP WAS IMMEDIATELY LIMITED BY THE RELATIVELY FEW HELICOPTERS AVAILABLE AND THE LONG TURNAROUND TIME FOR EACH LIFT. THE HELICOPTER LOSSES SUSTAINED IN THE INITIAL ASSAULT CUT TO ABOUT HALF THE CAPABILITY TO CONTINUE THE INSERTION FROM UTAPAO. ONCE THE CORAL SEA WAS WITHIN ABOUT 10 MILES OF KAOH TANG ISLAND, DRASTICALLY REDUCING THE HELO TURNAROUND TIME, ADEQUATE SUPPORT WAS AVAILABLE FOR THE EXTRACTION PHASE. THE CONTINUOUS DEPLOYMENT OF AN ARG/MAU TO THE SOUTH CHINA SEA/GULF OF THAILAND AREA WOULD HAVE PROVIDED A MORE APPROPRIATE, RAPID RESPONSE FORCE.

SUCH DEPLOYMENT WOULD, AMONG OTHER THINGS, REQUIRE THE COLLECTION OF SUFFICIENT NAVAL ASSETS TO SUPPORT TWO ARG/MAUs IN WESTPAC AS DURING THE VIETNAM WAR.

THUS, PARTICULAR ATTENTION MUST BE PAID TO PROVIDING FORCE FLEXIBILITY, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF AIRMOBILE SUPPORT BY ALL SERVICES.

THIS FLEXIBILITY EXTENDS TO A NEED TO BE ABLE TO MOVE HEAVY LIFT HELICOPTERS QUICKLY BY MAC AIRLIFT; POSSIBLY A DECIDING FACTOR FOR SUCCESS OR FAILURE IN SUCH SITUATIONS IN THE FUTURE. PRESENT

LACK OF THIS CAPABILITY WAS EVIDENT DURING PRELIMINARY OPTION

STUDIES CONDUCTED FOR NEMVAC OPERATION EAGLE PULL. IT WAS NOTED

THAT IT WOULD TAKE 10-12 DAYS TO MOVE A MARINE HELICOPTER SQUADRON

BY C-5 AIRCRAFT FROM KANEOHE, HAWAII TO U-TAPAO, AND ATTAIN AN

OPERATIONAL STATUS FOR APPROXIMATELY 12 OF THE 16 HELOS. PRIMARY

CAUSES FOR THE LENGTHY DISPLACEMENT ARE: THE NEED TO PARTLY

DISASSEMBLE THE ROTOR AND TRANSMISSION SYSTEMS, REMOVE THE NOSE

WHEEL, USE SPECIAL RIGGING GEAR NOW IN SHORT SUPPLY, AND REASSEMBLE

AND TEST THE AIRCRAFT AT THE FORWARD OPERATING BASE.

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CAPABILITIES OF HELICOPTERS AVAILABLE IN AN OBJECTIVE AREA COULD BE ENHANCED BY EQUIPPING THEM FOR AERIAL REFUELING AND INSTALLING A FIRE PREVENTION FOAM SYSTEM IN EXTERNAL FUEL TANKS.

TACAIR SUPPORT WAS READILY AVAILABLE WHEN REQUIRED THROUGHOUT THE OPERATION AND FLOW WAS CONTROLLED BY THE ABCCC.

THE ABCCC PROVED TO BE AN ESSENTIAL FORWARD EXTENSION TO THE TACAIR AIR CONTROL SYSTEM.

THE OV-10s LOW SPEED, LOW ALTITUDE CAPABILITIES COMBINED WITH EXPERIENCED AND TRAINED OV-10 FORWARD AIR CONTROLLERS MAKE THESE AIRCRAFT WELL-SUITED TO THE SUPPORT OF AIR-GROUND OPERATIONS.

AC-130 SPECTRE AIRCRAFT WERE VERY USEFUL DUE TO THEIR SOPHISTICATED SENSORS, COMMUNICATION, AND ARMAMENT CAPABILITY. THE FORWARD-LOOKING INFRA-RED SYSTEM WAS PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE IN LOCATING ENEMY POSITIONS BY OBSERVATION OF MUZZLE FLASHES.

SPECIALIZED TACTICAL SYSTEMS REPRESENT ASSETS THAT MUST BE  
CONSIDERED BY ALL COMMANDERS IN ANY FUTURE CRISIS. CINCPAC HAS  
EXPRESSED A DESIRE TO RETAIN IN PACOM CERTAIN OF THESE SYSTEMS.



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THAT PROVED VALUABLE IN THE MAYAGUEZ AFFAIR OR, IN RETROSPECT,

COULD HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVELY USED: THE COMBAT TALON C-130

UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE AIRCRAFT WITH TERRAIN FOLLOWING RADAR

AND FORWARD LOOKING INFRARED; ABCCC AIRCRAFT; AND THE BLU-82B,

15,000 POUND SPECIAL PURPOSE BOMB. ONE VIEW AS EXPRESSED BY CINCPAC

IS THAT THE LOSS OF SUCH SYSTEMS COULD MAKE COMMANDS LESS CAPABLE OF

RESPONDING TO FUTURE HOSTILE CHALLENGE. ON THE OTHER HAND, CONSIDER-

ATIONS FOR BASING OF THESE AND OTHER SYSTEMS, SUCH AS: THE WILD WEASEL

AIRCRAFT, AIR DELIVERED GUIDED WEAPONS, AND HELICOPTERS, MUST INCLUDE A

ANALYSIS OF TOTAL ASSETS AND THEIR RESPONSIVENESS FOR WORLDWIDE COMMIT-

MENT VICE THE COLLECTION OF LIMITED ASSETS BASED IN SUPPORT OF ONLY

ONE COMMAND. LIMITED ASSETS HELD UNDER CENTRALIZED CONTROL IN

CONUS AND CRISIS ORIENTED MUST BE MAINTAINED IN A READY STATUS

THAT WILL PLACE THEM OPERATIONAL AT THE DESIRED PLACE, WITHIN

THREE DAYS FROM THE TIME THE DECISION IS MADE THAT THE SYSTEM IS

TO BE EMPLOYED.

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(ALL ON DES)

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THE EXISTING DOCTRINE FOR JOINT OPERATIONS WAS FOUND TO BE  
SOUND. ITS BASE OF SIMPLICITY, PRAGMATISM AND COMMON SENSE WAS  
LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUCCESSFUL EXECUTION OF THE VERY  
COMPLEX TASKS. FUTURE APPLICATION OF DOCTRINE IN THE CONDUCT OF  
SIMILAR INCIDENTS DEMANDS SPECIAL ATTENTION TO ENSURE MAXIMUM  
SUCCESS WITH MINIMUM CASUALTIES. AS AN EXAMPLE: TACTICAL DOCTRINE  
GOVERNING HELICOPTER ASSAULTS NORMALLY CALLS FOR EXTENSIVE LANDING  
ZONE PREPARATION BY TACAIR AND ARTILLERY OR NGF, WHEN THE MISSION  
IS TO RESCUE UNLOCATED FRIENDLIES, HOWEVER, NORMAL LZ PREPARATION IN  
SITUATIONS SUCH AS THIS MAY POSE AN UNACCEPTABLE THREAT TO THEIR LIVES,  
AND ALTERNATIVE INSERTION TECHNIQUES ARE REQUIRED. THE USE OF SMOKE  
SCREEN/RIOT CONTROL AGENTS OR HELICOPTER GUNSHIPS TO SCREEN/PROTECT  
HELO MOVEMENT OR THE EMPLOYMENT OF A SINGLE HELO OR FIXED WING AIRCRAFT  
TO TEST ENEMY RESISTANCE MAY HAVE BEEN EFFECTIVE. HELICOPTER  
GUNSHIPS COULD HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE ONLY IF AN ARG/MAU HAD BEEN ON  
STATION OR IF ATTACK HELOS HAD BEEN ABOARD THE CORAL SEA. THE  
CONFUSION OF BATTLE AND LOSSES DURING THE INITIAL INSERTION OF

REWRITE & ADD  
(J334 LTC FOLGER)

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ASSAULT FORCES ON THE ISLAND TENDED TO STULTIFY THE SIGNIFICANT  
AVAILABLE FIRE SUPPORT FOR A PERIOD OF TIME. STRIKES COULD NOT  
BE MADE BY NAVAL GUNFIRE OR TACAIR UNTIL LOCATION OF FRIENDLY  
POSITIONS WAS KNOWN AND POSITIVE COMMUNICATIONS ESTABLISHED. IN  
ONE OF SEVERAL ACTIONS TO TRY AND RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM, AN AC-130  
GUNSHIP INNOVATION PROVED SUCCESSFUL. IDENTIFICATION WAS MADE BY  
HAVING THE GROUND FORCES IN THE WESTERN LZ AREA USE A COMBINATION OF  
MARKING SMOKE AND REFERENCING OF POSITIONS FROM THE IMPACT POINT IN  
THE WATER OF ORDNANCE DELIBERATELY FIRED BY THE GUNSHIP FOR THIS  
PURPOSE. EFFECTIVE FIRE SUPPORT WAS BEGUN IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THIS  
IDENTIFICATION.

SLIDE 6 OFF      SLIDE 7 ON

NEXT ARE THE CATEGORIES OF RECONNAISSANCE AND INTELLIGENCE.  
WARNING PROVIDED BY INDICATIONS AND WARNING (I&W) WAS ADEQUATE  
AND TIMELY. BOTH NSA AND IPAC REPORTED ON THE FIRST KC ACTS AGAINST  
FOREIGN SHIPPING.

THERE HAS BEEN SOME CONCERN EXPRESSED OVER THE ALLEGED FAILURE  
OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY TO SEEK AND PRODUCE ADEQUATE  
TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE, THEREBY CAUSING UNDUE LOSS OF LIVES AND  
MATERIAL. IT IS DIFFICULT TO CONCEIVE WHAT MORE COULD HAVE BEEN  
DONE GIVEN THE TIME CONSTRAINTS. FOLLOWING THE INITIAL  
SEIZURE REPORT, INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES BEGAN TO SEARCH AND COLLATE

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INFORMATION TO INCLUDE THE RAPID PROCUREMENT AND INTERROGATION OF AN OILMAN FROM HOUSTON, TEXAS WHO AT ONE TIME HAD BEEN ON KOAH TANG ISLAND. DETERMINATION OF THE APPROXIMATE SIZE AND ARMAMENT OF THE ENEMY FORCE WAS REASONABLY ACCURATE. THE INTELLIGENCE SHORTFALL WAS THE LACK OF INFORMATION AS TO THE ENEMY'S ORGANIZATION FOR DEFENSE OF THE ISLAND AND AS TO THE EXACT LOCATION OF THE SHIP'S CREW, A DIFFICULT IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE TASK IN LIGHT OF THE SHORT TIME AVAILABLE TO RESEARCH AND ANALYZE FOR A COUNTRY SO RECENTLY SEIZED BY AN UNSOPHISTICATED AND BELLICOSE COMMUNIST FORCE.

INTELLIGENCE DISSEMINATION WAS TIMELY. HOWEVER, SOME SMALL DELAYS WERE ENCOUNTERED BECAUSE RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT AND PHOTO INTERPRETATION FACILITIES WERE NOT COLOCATED WITH COMMAND ELEMENTS. COLOCATION OF ALL ELEMENTS WHENEVER POSSIBLE, WOULD ENSURE RAPID PHOTO INTERPRETATION IN SUPPORT OF FAST MOVING CONTINGENCIES.

PROCESSING OF PRODUCTS FROM STRATEGIC PHOTO RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT (U-2) WAS NOT TIMELY ENOUGH FOR USE IN SUCH A FAST-MOVING EVENT.

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P-3 AIRCRAFT PROVED VALUABLE BUT DEMONSTRATED THE NEED FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURES TO RAPIDLY INTRODUCE HAND HELD PHOTOGRAPHY INTO OTHER RECONNAISSANCE DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS.

FINALLY, THE NEED FOR COMPASS LINK, OR A SIMILAR SYSTEM, IN EACH THEATER FOR RAPID TRANSMISSION OF HIGH INTEREST IMAGERY SHOULD BE EXAMINED.

SLIDE 7 OFF

SLIDE 8 ON

JOINT TRAINING EXERCISES APPEAR TO BE ONE OF THE KEYS TO SUCCESS IN FUTURE INCIDENTS. CINCPAC RECOMMENDS THAT THE NUMBER OF JOINT INCIDENT EXERCISES BE INCREASED TO MAINTAIN THE EXPERTISE REQUIRED TO SUCCESSFULLY PLAN AND EXECUTE AN OPERATION OF THIS TYPE. CINCPAC INDICATES THAT SUCH TRAINING WILL COMMENCE WITH PACOM CPXs AND PLANS TO MOVE TO HIGHER LEVEL POLITICAL-MILITARY GAMES (POSSIBLY INTER-DEPARTMENTAL), AND THEN TO FREQUENT EXERCISES WITH JOINT FORCE PARTICIPATION.

SLIDE 8 OFF

SLIDE 9 ON

CRISES, SUCH AS THE MAYAGUEZ, COULD EASILY DEVELOP AT ANY

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

LOCATION WORLDWIDE. THE POTENTIAL WAS THERE DURING THE MIDDLE EAST CRISIS OF 1973 AND DURING THE TURKISH INVASION OF CYPRUS IN 1974. IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO PREDICT NOR MAINTAIN DETAILED OPERATIONS PLANS FOR EVERY CONTINGENCY. RATHER, WE SHOULD ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF TRAINED, EXPERIENCED STAFFS AT EACH REGIONAL COMMAND ECHELON CAPABLE OF REALISTIC, SHORT NOTICE PLANNING, AND TIED TOGETHER THROUGH AN EFFECTIVE WORLDWIDE COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM. COUPLED TO THIS CAPABILITY MUST BE A MIX OF APPROPRIATELY BASED TACTICAL, STRATEGIC, AND SUPPORT FORCES MAINTAINED IN A HIGH STATE OF READINESS AND FLEXIBLE ENOUGH TO BE RAPIDLY AND EFFECTIVELY ASSEMBLED INTO A SPECIAL PURPOSE TASK FORCE.

UNDERSCORING THE WHOLE EPISODE OF THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT IS A FINAL OBSERVATION -- THE MISSION WAS SUCCESSFULLY ACCOMPLISHED BY IMMEDIATELY, RAPIDLY, AND FORCEFULLY RESPONDING TO A BLATANT CASE OF UNLAWFUL SEIZURE. SUCH RESPONSE, HOWEVER, EVOLVED UNDER SPECIFIC POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY CONSIDERATIONS UNIQUE TO THE SITUATION AT THE TIME; AND THEREFORE, THE LESSONS LEARNED

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

MUST BE CAREFULLY WEIGHED FOR APPLICABILITY IN FUTURE INCIDENTS  
IN WHICH THE POLITICAL, DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY FACTORS MAY BE  
SUBSTANTIALLY DIFFERENT.

THIS COMPLETES MY BRIEFING.

17  
~~SECRET~~

## LESSONS LEARNED -PLANNING-

- NO EXISTING PLAN
- SOUND EMERGENCY PLANNING
- NO DETAILED OPORDS
- FUTURE PLANNING FEASIBILITY
- KEYS TO FUTURE SUCCESS



## LESSONS LEARNED POINTS COVERED

- PLANNING
- COMMAND, CONTROL, COMMUNICATIONS
- FORCES
- DOCTRINE
- RECONNAISSANCE AND INTELLIGENCE

## LESSONS LEARNED

### -COMMAND, CONTROL, COMMUNICATIONS-

- SHORTCOMINGS

- APPARENT NEEDS

- SECURE VOICE NET UPGRADE/EXTENSION
- HIGH ALTITUDE RELAY CAPABILITY
- EQUIPMENT COMPATIBILITY

## LESSONS LEARNED -FORCES-

### ● HELICOPTERS

- AVAILABILITY
- COMPATIBILITY WITH MAC AIRLIFT
- REFUEL CAPABILITY
- PROTECTED FUEL TANKS

### ● OTHER

- TACAIR
- ABCCC
- FAC AIRCRAFT
- AC-130's
- COMBAT TALON AIRCRAFT
- BLU-82B

## LESSONS LEARNED DOCTRINE

- BASICALLY SOUND
- FIRE SUPPORT FOR HELICOPTER ASSAULT
  - TACAIR/ ARTILLERY/NGF
  - SMOKE SCREEN/RIOT CONTROL AGENTS
  - HELO/FIXED WING TEST LANDING ZONE
  - HELO GUNSHIPS
- FLEXIBILITY AND IMAGINATION
- RESULTS PROPORTIONAL TO PLANNING AND COORDINATION TIME

## LESSONS LEARNED

### -JOINT EXERCISES-

- MAINTAIN EXPERTISE
- CINCPAC PROPOSED PROGRAM

LESSONS LEARNED  
-RECONNAISSANCE AND INTELLIGENCE-

● WARNING

● DISSEMINATION

● PHOTO PROCESSING

● HAND-HELD PHOTOGRAPHY

● COMPASS LINK

DECLASSIFIED

DECLASSIFIED

## LESSONS LEARNED

SUMMARY

- SHORT NOTICE PLANNING/EFFECTIVE COMMO
- FORCE READINESS AND FLEXIBILITY
- COMMAND/CONTROL SYSTEM EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIVE
  - WEIGH LESSONS BEFORE APPLYING

IMMEDIATE, RAPID, FORCEFUL RESPONSE = MISSION SUCCESS