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

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