

Letters . . .

ON THE BORDER

To the Editor—Your piece by Glenn Weidner entitled “Operation Safe Border: The Ecuador-Peru Crisis” (*JFQ*, Spring 96) presented a sound assessment of the role played by the Military Observer Mission Ecuador-Peru (MOMEP). The author’s insightful analysis reflects his able performance as the first commander of the mission’s U.S. contingent. But the article also includes inaccuracies that have been repeated for forty-five years and muddy an already complicated dispute. Moreover, it distorts the current talks being conducted by the two parties and four guarantors of the 1942 Rio Protocol. The article also risks undermining the crucial role which the United States has been playing in the peace efforts.

The first major misconception is accepting the claim that Peru invaded Ecuador in 1941 and forced a settlement under the Rio Protocol. It was the lack of mutually-accepted boundaries which triggered that conflict. At the time, both countries only recognized the military possession of the disputed area in place since 1936. Skirmishes flared up as the two sides increasingly ignored the de facto border. The resulting treaty—the Rio Protocol—was not imposed by one party but rather was brokered by the United States, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile. Those mediators, who became the Protocol guarantors, had to convince each country to relinquish its maximum territorial claims. Peru and Ecuador accepted a proposal by the mediators to find an equitable solution by establishing the boundary based on the pre-1936 status of territorial possession. Logically, hard-liners on both sides were opposed to the settlement, but moderate and realistic viewpoints prevailed and Peru and Ecuador approved and ratified the treaty.

The second major misconception is the claim that in 1946 an unknown geographic feature, the upper Cenepa River, was discovered near the border. According to this inaccurate version, the alleged “geographic discovery”—made thanks to a U.S. aerial survey of the border—led Ecuador to interrupt boundary demarcations along the Cordillera del Cóndor. But in reality the three-year mapping effort painstakingly carried out by the U.S. Army Air Force allowed Peru and Ecuador to jointly resume demarcation along the mountain range in 1947. Moreover, binational field teams of the Peru-Ecuador Border Commission had made accurate surveys of the upper Cenepa River as far as its headwaters in 1943.

Such misconceptions reflect long-standing use of secondary sources. Weidner specifically acknowledges a 1986 study, “Ecuadorian-Peruvian Rivalry in the Upper Amazon,” as his source. That

inaccurate account by William Krieg—based almost solely on the work of two Ecuadorians, Julio Tobar and Jorge Pérez—is reproduced in Weidner’s summary of the historical background. Official joint Peruvian-Ecuadorian and U.S. records dating from 1942 to 1949 (released this year by Peru’s foreign ministry) clarify the historical account. They show that the Border Commission duly marked the boundary along a watershed in the Cordillera del Cóndor and was fully aware of the region’s geography, as well as the often mentioned Cenepa River.

This evidence suggests that the Ecuadorian government decided to suspend the demarcation process despite the fact that Peruvian and Ecuadorian experts agreed in September 1948 to define the small stretch of the Cordillera del Cóndor which remains to date without boundary markers.

Weidner’s account of MOMEP during initial implementation of the 1995 Itamaraty peace declarations deserves careful study. But by repeating historical inaccuracies, he has unwittingly contributed to the misconceptions that have hindered previous efforts to find a solution to a dispute which requires objectivity from all the parties concerned.

—H.E. Ricardo V. Luna
Ambassador of Peru to the
United States

LODGEMENT

To the Editor—After finishing Anthony Tata’s detailed and insightful article entitled “A Fight for Lodgement: Future Joint Contingency Operations” (*JFQ*, Spring 96), I breathed a sigh of relief that the plan for a forced entry into Haiti did materialize, thanks to pressure placed on the local regime. At the same time I’d find it enlightening if a future contributor to *JFQ* could cover the 24 hours of the operation when the JTF commander and staff had to quickly transition from an airborne forced entry scenario to using air assault forces in what was still a hostile environment.

The intelligence picture for Uphold Democracy would most likely have remained the same except that it would have taken place in daylight, which would have negated our night fighting capability and the element of surprise and also enhanced the opportunity for hostile forces to see their targets. Moreover the fire support, operations, communications, and logistics annexes of the plan probably were heavily modified and had to be re-briefed to widely dispersed JTF elements. Another matter of concern may have been the lack of rehearsals for an operation such as this.

Except for the excellent training that the 10th Mountain Division received at Fort Drum and the Joint Readiness Training Center, and a few “old timers” who deployed to Somalia, the operation would suddenly have been an entirely new mission

that had never been previously attempted by a JTF, except for experience gained during a “warfighter” exercise. Those next 12 hours were most likely the toughest for the JTF commander and staff, and it would be exciting to read how they were able to plan, coordinate, and execute a nearly flawless operation in minimal time.

—LTC Mark Lopshire, USA (Ret.)
Nampa, Idaho

MEDICAL SUPPORT

To the Editor—Having read “Medical Dimensions of Joint Humanitarian Relief Operations” by Randolph and Cogdell (*JFQ*, Spring 96), I would like to offer a few comments. I was chief of the customer support branch at U.S. Army Medical Materiel Center, Europe (USAMMCE), during Restore Hope in Somalia. The article’s authors are correct in their description of medical logistics elements of the mission (something planners routinely underestimate). With a large medical supply inventory in Europe, straddling the major transport route was invaluable to theater medical support. International maritime satellite (INMARSAT) messages for specific supplies could be handled in minutes.

Having dedicated space for medical supplies on scheduled flights from Germany simplified transport greatly. Even with just a pallet location reserved, we could adjust the contents of delivery packages to cover the greatest needs, and theater medical staff could be guaranteed delivery times.

The initial Army medical logistics battalion that deployed to Somalia did not know how to operate the theater Army medical materiel information system (TAMMIS), nor were they versed in the basics of forward deployed medical supply management. Two staff members of USAMMCE were rushed to Somalia and spent the month of January 1993 getting TAMMIS on-line, setting up the warehouse, and establishing the INMARSAT communication link.

INMARSAT is not cheap, but its speed and convenience far outweigh its cost. Using it for official business should not be limited by any consideration except operation security.

—LCDR Jim Walters, USN
Acting Director for Logistics
National Naval Medical Center

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and comments

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(202) 685-4219/DSN 325-4219
or send it on the Internet to
JFQ1@ndu.edu

PKO IMPERATIVES

To the Editor—Two articles that appeared in *JFQ* (Autumn 95)—“Lessons Unlearned: Somalia and Joint Doctrine” by Kenneth Allard and “Military Education for the New Age” by Ervin Rokke—emphasized a critical flaw in current operational planning. The missing element is consideration of the relationship between political and military requirements, especially in the types of operations that characterize the post-Cold War world. What is the cause of this breakdown and how can it be avoided in Bosnia and similar operations? Regrettably, the professional military education (PME) system may be the perpetuating and even compounding factor.

In *National Security and International Stability*, Bernard Brodie noted, “We need people who will challenge, investigate, and dissect the prevailing dogmas” of foreign policy and strategic studies. He cautioned that “the most basic issues of strategy often do not lend themselves to scientific analysis . . . because they are laden with value judgments and therefore tend to escape any kind of disciplined thought.” Clausewitz, said Brodie, warned us “to stress the superior importance of the political side of strategy to the simply technical and technological side,” words that seemed well suited to the age of nuclear deterrence.

Brodie therefore makes two critical points: analysis the military seeks to perform is potentially flawed because issues of strategy do not mix well with “military/scientific analysis”; and, the political component of strategy ought never be forgotten.

One should thus analyze linkages between political concepts and military objectives in detail. For example, in Somalia the military ignored political objectives and focused on military aims. The result was a decoupling of the two. A similar thing could happen in Bosnia, suggesting that the Armed Forces must relearn a key lesson of Vietnam, the relationship between political and military objectives. The political situation will more often than not define the realm of the possible for the military. In short, the military element of power is never a pure policy option. Recognizing the synergism among political, economic, and military components of strategy will result in a more pragmatic and achievable national effort—one where elements of power are synchronized. This is the endstate planning should seek to achieve.

What must be done to make highly political post-Cold War missions successful? We must never forget the primacy of the political. The use of force is a political act for political objectives. Normally each side in a conflict in which force is threatened or used wants the opponent to change political objectives to accommodate its own. But this may not apply in peacekeeping operations (PKOs) since one seeks to create conditions that allow each side to

reach political accommodations which preclude the use of force. This is in fact a change of political objectives by both sides.

Americans have not adjusted to peacekeeping or peace enforcement and other nontraditional uses of military power. They are still looking for bad guys. This is reflected in efforts to legislate restrictions on PKO participation and the isolationist jabs which critics take at the United Nations. In discerning the possible, politicians and soldiers alike should remember that the public must often be educated on the complexities of operations. Popular support is critical. Without it, belligerents will realize that the Nation is unlikely to stay committed and thus they can simply wait us out. This is also the problem with definitive statements about withdrawal dates, which is directly related to the fact that too many issues currently are brought before the United Nations. Some believe that the world organization offers an economy of force approach to crises which is cheaper and easier. Thus, PKOs are evolving into multidimensional operations that are usually part of a larger social or humanitarian problem, increasingly related to internal conflicts, and a result of the “CNN factor.”

The notion that “if it bleeds it leads” in TV news coverage—the CNN factor—results in the United Nations, NATO, and other international organizations becoming involved in operations for which they are neither designed nor equipped. Military planning does not take this into account as yet. The CNN factor influences decisionmakers, not just the public. This results in pressure to do something—anything—and the military option has become more attractive since it is both available and highly visible. Politicians thereby can argue that they are doing something without addressing the sources of the problem, which are usually social and political.

In this context what works is what participating states will support at a given point in time. In the hurry to do something, however, the conditions necessary for a peace operation to succeed are regularly ignored, which usually causes PKOs to fail. Common violations include:

- insufficient resources available—funding is tough when countries like the United States are a billion dollars in arrears
- consent of the parties does not always exist—the countries involved in an operation are not neutral with respect to the original belligerents; or impartiality is not observed—peacekeepers back one side or the other
- self-defense is not perceived by peacekeepers to include defense of their mandate
- the mandate is not clear and achievable
- rules of engagement (ROE) are not usually the problem—rather it is available resources and political will of the Security Council to sustain the operation.

In order to postulate what will work in post-Cold War PKOs one must understand that the focus of such operations is preventing conflict escalation and/or humanitarian relief. These operations are more difficult than traditional PKOs and require new criteria, including answers to the following:

- Do conditions exist for reaching peace? What can be done to create them? Do all sides want them? Are nations participating in the PKO willing to expend resources to achieve them?
- Is a PKO appropriate? Has fighting subsided to a point where all parties believe that the operation and forces are sufficient? Or must an end to the fighting be imposed through peace enforcement?
- What is the political, military, or humanitarian mission? How much force is necessary? Is there support for the operation at least within the governmental elite?
- Can infrastructure work be done early? Can speed be achieved politically and militarily?

Once a PKO is approved, whether it is a quick fix or an effort to eliminate the root causes of a problem, a clear set of achievable political objectives must be developed—namely, a mandate. This should reflect the governing consensus of those with the political will to carry out the mandate while being flexible, not overly detailed, and written so that it will not result in ambiguous ROE. Force size is mission-dependent and should be clearly stated. In essence, a mandate is the political mission statement and tasking order for the military. Mission creep occurs if a mandate is changed in word or deed. Debate over a mandate should present its full intent, especially the limits of the possible as defined by public support. Soldiers trained in the skills implied by Brodie should be thoroughly involved in drafting mandates. Linkages should be explicit, and the military must understand that progress depends on achieving political, not necessarily military, objectives.

PKOs have political, military, and humanitarian components. Humanitarian actions may be at variance with political and military efforts and make them harder. They must be impartial, while military and political actions are not. There is a need to consider which component takes priority. Moreover, domestic political considerations may be paramount to those of the country in question.

The Armed Forces bring many capabilities to PKOs but are reluctant to participate in them. These operations are seen as detractions from readiness and departures from traditional missions. But that attitude and others discussed above must be changed if the military is to be a useful partner in peace operations, and that change means transforming PME.

—COL Bruce B.G. Clarke, USA (Ret.)
Tabuk, Saudi Arabia