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**Operational Design of Campaigns  
A Hedge Against Operational Failures**

**A Monograph  
by  
Major Charles D. Allen  
Field Artillery**



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**School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
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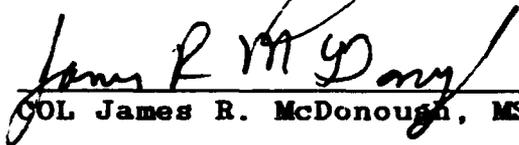
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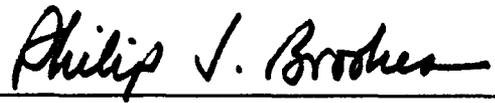
Approved by:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
COL James L. Moody, MS

Monograph Director

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
COL James R. McDonough, MS

Director, School of  
of Advanced Military  
Studies

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D

Director, Graduate  
Degree Program

Accepted this 13<sup>th</sup> day of May 1991

ABSTRACT

OPERATIONAL DESIGN OF CAMPAIGNS: A HEDGE AGAINST OPERATIONAL FAILURES by MAJ Charles D. Allen, USA, 50 pages.

This monograph will examine the Mesopotamia campaign up to the British surrender at Kut in April, 1916. The purpose of this monograph is to answer the following research question: What are the modern implications of the operational failures of the British forces in the Mesopotamia Campaign of 1914-1916. The study of the World War I campaign provides a doctrinal context by which to view other campaigns and operations. It also provides insights for the use of the operational design model for campaigns.

The evidence included official historical accounts of the British strategy for the theater of operations and operational plans for the campaign. Other sources include the personal accounts of soldiers who served in the theater.

Results of the ensuing battles of the campaign were analyzed using the methodology of the Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch book, Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War. That work serves as the theoretical approach to identify the operational failures and to answer the research question.

The operational design model provided the doctrinal approach for analyzing the campaign. The model was used to determine: the end states/military conditions sought by the British, the strategy employed, and the allocation of forces and resources in support of the campaign.

The monograph concludes that the British failure was the result of the loss of strategic direction. The British sought to capitalize on the earlier successes and allowed the operation to go beyond its intended purpose. The path to the misfortune of Kut illustrates the value of the operational design model. The operational commander must perform an assessment of ENDS-WAYS-MEANS and develop a campaign plan to successfully attain the national strategic goals.



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If war is a part of policy, policy will determine its character, as policy becomes more ambitious and vigorous, so will war.'

Clausewitz<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

With the outbreak of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, there were three objectives put forth by President Bush:

- 1) Withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwaiti territory,
- 2) Restoration of the sovereign Kuwaiti government,
- 3) Regional stability in the area.

The difficulty for the US military was to develop a campaign plan that would accomplish the President's strategic objectives. What actions would be necessary to force the withdrawal of Iraqi forces -- defeat of Iraqi forces in Kuwait or a march on Baghdad? What would achieve regional stability -- the destruction of the Iraqi Republican Guard, the occupation of Iraq, or the overthrow of Saddam Hussein? The over-arching question is one of what are the military conditions that will achieve the strategic goals.

The next challenge was to develop a military strategy that would accomplish the desired conditions. The strategy had to be commensurate with the available resources. The strategy would incorporate the combat and support units across the Armed Services to include the forces from other nations. The campaign plan that

evolved presented a military strategy that integrated joint and combined operations to accomplish the theater objectives.

The Persian Gulf region has been the site of other campaigns throughout the twentieth century. Basra, Nasiriyeh, Baghdad, and the rivers Tigris and Euphrates were familiar to another group of soldiers over seventy-five years ago. With the outbreak of World War I, Britain deployed her forces on Arabian Peninsula in a country called Mesopotamia, situated in present-day Iraq. After the initial seizure of the oilfields, military operations expanded to the conquest of Basra and other cities enroute to Baghdad. The British forces met with disaster at Kut-el-Amara where the second phase of the campaign ended with the surrender of a garrison of 13,000 troops and over 23,000 casualties incurred during the relief operations.

Historians have criticized the British military and civilian leaders for providing inadequate operational direction for the campaign. In contrast, the recent United States operations in the Persian Gulf reportedly have been conducted in accordance with an integrated campaign plan to achieve the operational objectives in the region.

This study will examine the Mesopotamia campaign up to the British surrender at Kut. The purpose of this

monograph is to answer the following research question: What are the modern implications of the operational failures of the British forces in the Mesopotamia Campaign of 1914-1916. The study of the World War I campaign will provide a doctrinal context by which to view other campaigns and operations. It should also provide insights for the use of the operational design model for campaigns.

The evidence used will include historical accounts of the British strategy for the theater of operations and operational plans for the campaign. The Mesopotamia Commission Report<sup>2</sup> will provide the official British history of the campaign. Other sources will include the personal accounts of soldiers who served in the theater.

Results of the ensuing battles of the campaign will be analyzed using the methodology of the Eliot Cohen and John Gooch book, Military Misfortunes.<sup>3</sup> That work will serve as the theoretical approach to identify the operational failures and to answer the research question.

The operational design model will provide the doctrinal approach for analyzing the campaign. The model will be used to determine: the end states/military conditions sought by the British, the strategy employed, and the allocation of forces and resources in support of the campaign.

## Theoretical Foundations

### Military Misfortune

Today's operational planners seek to discover the secrets to successful planning through education and training. The training is performed in the staff colleges and in operational assignments that exercise the mechanics and thought processes resulting in an operational plan. The education of officers in operational planning often begins with the study of doctrine followed by the study of classic military campaigns.\* The lessons sought from the campaigns are basically twofold: what actions did the victor take to secure success and what were the operational failures that led to the defeat of the vanquished?

In their book Military Misfortunes, Cohen and Gooch developed a framework for analysis to study campaigns and identify operational failures in the conduct of war. Military misfortunes are defined as defeat or lost opportunities for victory. The basic premise is that military misfortunes result from the failure of organizations to accomplish key tasks, and the occurrence of critical lapses.

The military has the responsibility for the critical tasks that go unfulfilled during the planning and execution of military operations. Cohen and Gooch

contend that all military misfortunes have their roots in one of three organizational failures. They are the failure to learn, the failure to anticipate and the failure to adapt.<sup>6</sup>

Military organizations have the opportunity to learn through knowledge gained by their own war experiences or vicariously through the experiences of other nations. When lessons are culled from similar events and circumstances, the military must be able to assimilate them. The study of past military operations can provide invaluable insights to planners in future conflicts. The experience of the U.S. in both the Korea and Vietnam wars have had a substantial impact on the current generation of military leaders. Cohen and Gooch hold that the military and the government need a dedicated institution that extracts lessons through historical studies.<sup>6</sup>

The second type of failure results when the organization fails to foresee and take appropriate means to handle enemy capabilities and intentions.<sup>7</sup> This is the failure to anticipate. Had the U.S. not developed and deployed the Patriot anti-missile system to the 1990-91 Persian Gulf war to counter the expected Iraqi SCUD threat, it would have been guilty of the failure to anticipate. Cohen and Gooch suggest that the doctrine writers have the responsibility to envision future wars

and develop warfighting concepts.<sup>9</sup> Michael Howard maintains that whatever doctrine is developed will be wrong while posing the challenge 'to prevent the doctrines from being too badly wrong.'<sup>10</sup>

The third and last failure is not being adaptable. It is the failure to respond to 'unexpected setbacks in a coordinated and flexible manner.'<sup>10</sup> Uncertainty, the fog of war, and the friction that occurs in doing the simple thing presents challenges to military organizations. These challenges must be overcome to achieve success. The old adage states that the best laid plans often go astray, and thus the military must cope with adverse circumstances as they arise. Howard asserts that 'the advantage goes to the side which can most quickly adjust itself to the new and unfamiliar environment.'<sup>11</sup>

If only one of these failures occurs, it is considered a simple failure from which recovery is likely. Complex failures are defined when two or more failures occur. There are two degrees of complex failure: aggregate and catastrophic. Aggregate failures have only two failures occurring simultaneously. Military organizations have more difficulty recovering from aggregate failures than from simple failures. Generally, aggregate failures are combinations of the failures to learn and to anticipate.<sup>12</sup>

In catastrophic conditions all three failures are present. If an organization is unable to adapt to meet the challenges in the face of the other failures, recovery is unlikely and disaster is imminent.

The Cohen and Gooch methodology is based on Clausewitz's *Kritik* technique for conducting historical analysis of military campaigns. The analysis is conducted in three steps: the discovery of facts, tracing the effects to causes, and the investigation and the evaluation of means.<sup>13</sup> The following methodology will be used to identify the key elements that led to operational failures in the campaign:

- a. Identify the failures that confronted the force.
- b. Identify the critical tasks judged incomplete or unfulfilled.
- c. Conduct a "layered analysis" of the organizations and their contributions to failure.
- d. Develop an "analytical matrix" that graphically depicts the key problems leading to failure.
- e. Determine the "pathway(s) to misfortune" that illustrates the larger cause of the operational failures.<sup>14</sup>

Cohen and Gooch provide a framework for analysis of military campaigns and for the identification of operational failures. The analysis focuses on the critical tasks that must be accomplished to ensure

success. When misfortunes occur, they can be traced to the inability of the military organization to: learn the lessons of previous campaigns, anticipate the actions of its opponents, and/or effectively adapt to the warfighting circumstances. The military misfortune is evidence of a failure in the conduct of operational warfare.

### Operational Warfare

In evaluating operational failures, it is necessary to develop the concept of the operational level of warfare. "War is an act of force to compel the enemy to do our will"<sup>16</sup> and "[w]ar, therefore is an act of policy."<sup>16</sup> When national interests are threatened, the decision may be made to commit military force to secure the interests. It is important that the objectives sought by the military are subordinate to the national policy goals.

The United States military recognizes three levels of war: strategic, operational and tactical. The U.S. Army has accepted the following definition of the operational level of war as the "level of war at which campaigns and major operations are planned, conducted and sustained to accomplish goals within theaters or areas of operations."<sup>17</sup>

Since war is an act of policy, strategic direction

is required and expressed in three forms: its national security strategy, its national military strategy, and for a theater of war/operations, its theater military strategy. The challenge for the operational commander is one of achieving the national strategic and military objectives (ENDS) through the application of national resources, military forces and supplies (MEANS) in the execution of national policies and military concepts (WAYS).

To achieve the strategic objectives, a campaign plan is developed for the theater using the operational (or campaign) design model. The operational design model is a process of determining the appropriate military ENDS, WAYS, and MEANS to accomplish the goals. The model requires the operational commander to answer the following questions:

- (1) What military conditions must be produced in the theater of war or operation to achieve the strategic goal?
- (2) What sequence of actions is more likely to produce that condition?
- (3) How should the resources of the force be applied to accomplish that sequence of actions?<sup>18</sup>

Central to answering the questions are three of the key concepts of operational design: the center of gravity, the line of operation, and the culminating point.

The center of gravity is a term used by Clausewitz to denote the "hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends."<sup>19</sup> An excellent presentation of the different interpretations is given in the monograph, "A Conversation at the Club."<sup>20</sup> I choose to accept Jim Schneider's interpretation that the center of gravity is the mass of the enemy's force that provides its source of strength.<sup>21</sup> Once it is defeated the enemy no longer possesses the ability to resist.

The line of operation connects the friendly force with its base of operation and its operational objectives. The line of operation provides the "directional orientation of a force in relation the enemy."<sup>22</sup> Culminating points are also an important concept. As an attacking force moves along its line of operations, supplies are consumed, attrition occurs and the force loses some degree of combat effectiveness due to the exertions of battle. At some point in time and space, the force will lose its relative advantage over the enemy. Operational commanders must seek to accomplish their objectives before their forces are overextended and the culminating point is reached.

The operational level of war provides the linkage between the strategic goals for the theater to the tactical actions. The operational commander must design and execute his campaign to achieve the strategic goals

established for the theater of operations. In designing his campaign he must continually assess the ways and means that are available to attain the ends. Ideally, the ends are established by the national command authority. The operational commander must then determine the military conditions that will achieve the strategic goals for the theater. These are translated into the operational objectives to provide the direction for all campaign planning and execution.

Since the military condition is normally associated with the defeat/destruction of the enemy army, it is the "principal task of the theater commander ... to concentrate superior strength against enemy vulnerabilities at the decisive time and place." The commander must identify or create vulnerabilities and opportunities. He must determine a sequence of actions that will set the conditions for tactical success. This represents the theater military strategy to gain the military conditions. The strategy is the way which may involve either direct action against the center of gravity (e.g., the mass of enemy combat forces), or it may indirectly influence the center of gravity by targeting decisive points in the theater that would force enemy reaction.

Operational movement and maneuver is an integral part of the way developed by the theater commander. Its

definition in FM 100-5, Operations, is expanded in TRADOC

Pam 11-9 as:

the disposition of forces to create a decisive impact on the conduct of a campaign or major operation by either securing the operational advantage of position before battle is joined or exploiting tactical success to achieve operational or strategic results.<sup>24</sup>

Operational maneuver is the extension of forces to operational depths through offensive or defensive actions for achieving positional advantages over enemy operational forces.<sup>25</sup> The purpose of operational maneuver is to set the conditions for the decisive defeat of enemy forces in theater.

To execute the way, an allocation of resources must be made to provide the means of the operational plan. It is necessary to note that the determination of the means is an iterative process. The commander must make an assessment of the resources available -- forces, equipment, supplies and facilities. He must determine if the resources are sufficient for the conduct of operations. In effect, he must measure the means available to execute the ways to achieve the ends. He must allocate forces, establish logistic priorities and perform other necessary actions to facilitate the application of combat power. In the case of insufficient resources, the commander may either adjust his strategy to be commensurate with the available

resource, or he may choose to assume risk in the execution of the campaign.

The means of the operational plan have two components; the forces provided to the commander, and the sustainment required to support their execution of the plan. Both are subject to the constraints and restrictions of the theater. At the operational level, sustainment is referred to as operational support:

...the logistical and support activities required to sustain the force in campaigns and major operations ... balancing current consumption in the theater of operations with the need to build up support for subsequent [actions] ... lengthening lines of communications (LOCs) and staging of support forward as required to sustain the tempo of operations.<sup>20</sup>

Properly planned and executed sustainment fulfills the following functions; arming, fueling, fixing, manning the force and the distribution of stocks and services. Successful operations are characterized by anticipation of force needs, the provision of continuous support, integration and close coordination of the logistic support into the operation, and responsiveness to changing requirements.

Operational sustainment includes provision of support during operational maneuver in conducting exploitation and pursuit operations to operational depth. Otherwise, the campaign will reach its culminating point

before achieving its operational or strategic objectives.

While the ability to sustain the forces will define the limits of what is physically possible to accomplish, sustainment can have significant impact on operational maneuver. Sustainment can enable the operational maneuver, it can preclude maneuver by forcing either culmination or a pause, or it can misdirect the maneuver from its focus on the operational objectives.

In summary, the conduct of operational warfare is aimed at achieving the strategic goals set by the national command authority. The operational design model is a tool to develop an effective campaign. The operational commander must determine the appropriate military strategy and commit the necessary resources in order to be successful. The strategy must be clearly focused on defeating the enemy center of gravity while not losing sight of the purpose for the campaign. The commander must integrate the operational maneuver and sustainment to provide superior combat power against the enemy before culmination occurs.

The study of the British efforts in World War I provides an opportunity to overlay the operational design model on the conduct of the Mesopotamia Campaign. The resulting analysis will present modern implications for campaign planning.

### The Mesopotamia Misfortune, 1914-1916

Prior to World War I, the British Army in India numbered 80,000 English and 150,000 thousand Indian troops. The British were concerned with the security of the region and planned for the deployment of a number of expeditions from its India Office. Expedition "A" was to be deployed to France and Egypt, Expeditions "B" and "C", respectively, were to conduct defensive and offensive operations in Eastern Africa. Prior to September, 1914, the composition and strength of the deployed forces would number 290,000 British officers, Indian officers, and soldiers.

A major concern of the British was the protection of the island of Abadan and its oilfields located in western Persia. The oilfields were owned by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in which the British government was a major shareholder. These oilfields assumed a strategic importance since over seventy-five percent of the oil used by the British Navy was produced in the Middle East.<sup>27</sup>

The principle threat to the British in WWI was the Germans in the European theater. This threat was extended to the Persian Gulf region. The Germans had developed close economic ties with Turkey at the end of the nineteenth century. The German strategy *Drang nach Osten* -- Thrust to the East, was designed to expand its

empire to the Persian Gulf and co-opt Turkey as a dependent nation.<sup>20</sup> German support extended to supplying arms and ammunition to the Turkish forces. In fact, under the War Minister Enver Pasha, the 1st Turkish Army was commanded by a Prussian officer and German officers served in the major command and staff positions.<sup>20</sup>

The outbreak of World War I in August, 1914, served to increase the tensions between Britain and Turkey. A declaration of hostilities was announced after the Turkish invasion of Egypt. Pasha, prompted by the Germans, sought to declare a Holy War against Britain with the aim of restoring Egypt as a Turkish province. However, the major Turkish focus was directed toward the Russian activities in the Caucasus.

Britain became increasingly concerned with the threat posed by Turkey in the region. The Military Secretary of the India Office, Sir Edmund Barrow, advocated a expedition to be deployed to Basra for the following reasons:

- (1) It would checkmate Turkish intrigues and demonstrate our ability to strike.
- (2) It would encourage the Arabs to rally to us, and confirm the Sheiks of Muhammerah and Koweit [sic] in their allegiance.
- (3) It would safeguard Egypt, and without Arab support a Turkish invasion would be impossible.
- (4) It would protect the oil installations at Abadan.<sup>20</sup>

Primarily to protect its oil interests, the British government planned to redesignate a portion of Expedition 'A', originally bound for France and Egypt, as the Indian Expeditionary Force 'D'. The 16th Brigade commanded by General Delamain of the 6th Poona Division was the lead element of the expedition and arrived in Bahrain on 23 October, 1914. The initial instructions to the expedition commander were to conduct a demonstration at the head of the Persian Gulf. The force was restricted from landing on Turkish territories or engaging in hostile actions. The force was required to 'occupy Abadan Island with the object of:

- (a) Protecting the oil refineries, tanks and pipelines.
- (b) Covering the landing of reinforcements, should the[y] be required.
- (c) Assuring the local Arabs of our [British] support against Turkey."<sup>31</sup>

On 5 November, war with Turkey was formally declared. Two additional brigades of the 6th Division were added to the expedition under the command of General Arthur Barrett. A qualifier in the original instructions permitted the Indian Expeditionary Force (IEF) commander to take military and political action including the occupation of Basra if necessary. Barrett assumed command of the expedition on 14 November. By 22

November, IEF 'D' had easily taken and occupied Basra.

The British political officer, Sir Percy Cox, immediately recommended an advance to capture Baghdad. This recommendation was seconded by Sir Barrett because of the light resistance presented by the Turkish forces and the perception that the local Arabs would welcome and support the British action.<sup>32</sup>

Upon notification of the success at Basra and receipt of Cox's recommendation, Sir Barrow advocated a more limited advance to Qurna. The city was 50 miles north of Basra, located at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Barrow held that Qurna was a strategic position because it had "commanding military value" and "control...of the whole navigable [Shatt-al-Arab] waterway to the Persian Gulf."<sup>33</sup>

The proposed drive to Baghdad was disapproved because of the lack of reinforcements that could be provided to the theater by the India Government. In light of the original intent to protect the oilfields and pipelines, the occupation of Basra was not sufficient. The oil facilities were threatened by Turkish forces to the west and north as well as by indigenous Arab tribes. Damage to the oil facilities were being inflicted by local Arabs responding to the call for a Holy War against the British and monetary incentives provided by the Turkish government.<sup>34</sup>

On the 29th of November, the India Government approved the decision to occupy Qurna and the city was secured by 9 December. At this point, it could be argued that the oil facilities were secured from Turkish threat, and that the original mission of IEF 'D' had been accomplished.

The success of the campaign had been relatively inexpensive. The British forces had defeated the Turkish 38th Division and captured 1200 prisoners. The Turkish forces organized a counteroffensive to recapture Qurna in early 1915. Forces were concentrated in the east at Ahwaz, Persia and in the west with Right Wing Command in Nasiriyeh consisting of two divisions and over 60,000 troops under Sulaiman Askari. The attack at Qurna failed and the Turks were decisively defeated in a battle at Shaiba just east of Basra. In this battle three British Indian brigades defeated a Turkish Army corps. Turkish casualties doubled the British number of 1200 and 1700 Turkish prisoners were taken.

In response to a Turkish successful operation at Ahwaz, the Indian government reluctantly ordered an additional brigade to the theater. The Home Government in England also ordered the deployment of additional forces to form the 12th Division under General George Gorringe. The Home Government relieved the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, and the India Commander in Chief, Sir

Beauchamp-Duff, from responsibility for the depletion of the Indian Military Reserves for the expedition.

On 1 April, the Indian government reorganized the expedition into an Army Corps consisting of the 6th and 12th Divisions. General Barrett retained command of the 6th and General John was appointed as the expedition commander. With his appointment, Nixon received new instructions from Beauchamp-Duff. His mission was to "retain complete control of the lower portion of Mesopotamia ...including...such portions of neighbouring territories as may affect your operations." His instructions also required him to submit a plan for the occupation of the Basra vilayet and, in a significant departure from previous guidance, to plan for an advance to Baghdad.

These instructions were provided by the India Commander in Chief. It should be noted that the new instructions were neither approved by England, nor was the Viceroy informed as to their nature. In fact, the Home Government received its copy in the mail nearly six weeks later in mid-May. The instructions essentially subordinated the protection of the oil facilities to the control of the Basra region extending north to Kut-el-Amara and west to Nasiriyeh. Nixon's request for additional forces to accomplish the task was disapproved by the Secretary of State for India. Lord Crewe also

disapproved any extended military operations outside of the region. Only operations that would enhance the security of the oil pipelines along the Karun river to the east were favored and supported by England.

With the early defeat of Turkish forces and the consolidation of the Qurna-Basra region, England's assessment was that the situation was 'a strategically sound one and we cannot afford risks by extending it unduly. In Mesopotamia a safe game must be played.'<sup>36</sup>

Nixon envisioned the greatest potential threat from within Mesopotamia to be presented at Nasiriyeh. His personal assessment was that opposition in the theater would be light based on previous Turkish performances. A more viable threat would come from Turkish forces concentrating just across the Persian border in Ahwaz and from regional Arab tribes.

General Gorringe and the 12th Division were given the mission of clearing the area of Turkish forces and pacifying the Arabs in order to restart oil pumping operations along the damaged pipeline in Persia.<sup>37</sup> With the advance of the 12th Division to Ahwaz, the Turkish forces and hostile Arab tribes declined to give battle and withdrew.

Now that the threat to the east was resolved, Nixon looked to Amara, 90 miles north of Qurna. Amara was a commercial and administrative center for the region whose

occupation would facilitate the control of hostile Arab tribes in between the Tigris and Karun rivers. Nixon's proposal for the offensive was approved by the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge. Lord Crewe, however, chastised Nixon for his offensive intentions. Crewe reiterated the fact that no reinforcement would be available from England to support the operation. He further questioned Nixon's ability to defend Amara from an attack by Turkish forces in Baghdad.

Nixon was understandably confused by the rebuke of the Secretary of State in light of the instructions he received when he assumed command of the expedition. He requested clarification of his orders from England regarding the occupation of Nasiriyeh and Amara. Lord Crewe begrudgingly approved the advance. Crewe was succeeded by Sir Austin Chamberlain who was also curious about the "immediate object" of the military operations and the force required to sustain it.<sup>30</sup>

Major General Charles Townshend relieved the ailing Barrett and assumed command of the 6th Division on 22 April, 1915. He was immediately given the mission of capturing Amara. After an initial skirmish, the Turks again withdrew. Townshend pursued the retreating forces with the "Townshend Regatta" along the Tigris river. The Turkish garrison at Amara was bluffed into surrender by a force of approximately 100 sailors and soldiers in

Townshend's advance group on 3 June. The Turks believed that the British forces were just downstream and did not realize that they were actually separated by 24 hours from the advance group.<sup>30</sup>

Nixon's next objective was Nasiriyeh, 70 miles to the west of Basra on the Shatt-al-Hai. He considered it to be the most threatening to Basra and that its capture would secure the Basra vilayet. In conjunction with holding Amara, its occupation would close communications between the Tigris and Euphrates. On 14 June, England stated that the occupation of Nasiriyeh was not necessary to the security of the oil facilities. However, Viceroy Hardinge still favored the advance and gave Nixon approval in spite of concerns from England.<sup>40</sup>

The mission to seize Nasiriyeh was assigned to Gorringe and 12th Division. After an initially fierce defense, Turkish forces surrendered or fled the city on 25 July. The operation cost the British 533 casualties while taking 950 Turkish prisoners.

The next objective for Nixon was Kut-el-Amara, 170 miles northwest of Amara. He insisted that Turkish forces were concentrating there for a defensive stand. He convinced his superiors that control of Kut would provide a better strategic position in Mesopotamia. The battle actually took place at Es Sinn approximately eight miles down river from Kut where Turkish forces had

prepared a formidable defense under Turkish commander Nur-Ud-Din.

The mission to occupy Kut was given to Townshend and the 6th Division. Through a combination of skillful planning and fortunate circumstances in the execution, the 6th Division was able to roll up the enemy forces on the left bank of the Tigris and force the Turkish withdrawal. Turkish forces evacuated Kut without a fight as the British forces entered the city of Kut on 29 September.

The degree of optimism felt by Nixon and his expedition was understandable. As with the other major operations in Mesopotamia--Basra, Qurna, Amara, Nasiriyeh and now Kut, once the initial defenses of the Turks had been broken, the enemy consistently chose to retreat and accepted defeat. Likewise, the local Arabs quickly demonstrated support for the British once the victor was decided. Moral ascendancy was clearly on the side of the British.

In light of the successful operation, General Nixon, with the full support of Viceroy Hardinge, proposed an immediate advance to Baghdad. England, however, was still cautious in approving the operation. Nixon felt that the Turkish opposition would be light and that the opportunity to capture the city could not be refused. By his estimate, there were only 9,000 Turks

available to defend Baghdad. England's assessment concurred, but its intelligence sources projected that up to 60,000 forces would be available for the Turkish reinforcements by February, 1916. This estimate, however, was not relayed to Nixon.

England's concern was with the ability to hold Baghdad once it had been seized. The Home Government had previously promised Nixon an additional Indian division to be redeployed from France to assist in Mesopotamia although no firm date was given. Nixon viewed Baghdad as the "golden ring" to be snatched, thereby successfully ending the Mesopotamia Campaign. In his mind, Baghdad could be taken with forces available to the expedition and held with the forthcoming reinforcements.

The only recorded dissenter was General Townshend. Although he had been instrumental in the success of the operations, he was concerned about both the lack of sufficient troops to conduct further actions and the extended lines of communication. Townshend's personal assessment and recommendation to Nixon was that consolidation at Kut was the prudent course of action. The lines of communication to the Gulf covered 380 miles and required Gorringe's 12th Division to secure it.<sup>41</sup>

Townshend had also been assured by Beauchamp-Duff that additional divisions would be provided before any

operation would commence against Baghdad. The proposed advance would require the seizure of Ctesiphon, a Turkish stronghold eight miles from Baghdad under command of Nur-Ud-Din. Townshend judged that three full divisions would be required to seize Ctesiphon and then Baghdad. One of the three division would be required to protect the 502 mile long line of communications from Baghdad to Basra. Additional forces would be needed to garrison Nasiriyeh, Ahwaz, and Amara.

Nixon's response to Townshend's concerns reaffirmed his intent to march on Baghdad. His faith in the promised reinforcing divisions from France remained resolute. He chose to ignore a report of 30,000 Turkish reinforcements being sent to the theater in November from Constantinople. At Ctesiphon both the British and Turkish forces were roughly equal with 12,000 men each. After a fierce battle, the Turks again withdrew due to a false report of approaching British reinforcements. When Nur-Ud-Din realized that the British were not being reinforced, he returned to battle with additional troops and forced Townshend to withdraw. The 6th Division had suffered their first major defeat in the campaign receiving thirty percent casualties -- 690 killed and 3800 wounded.

Townshend conducted his withdrawal for 90 miles in the face of heavy Turkish pursuit and arrived back in

Kut-el-Amara on 3 December. In agreement with Sir Nixon, Townshend would defend with the 6th Division in Kut until relief operations could be conducted by the reinforcing units from France and other theaters.<sup>42</sup> On 7 December, 1915, Turkish forces surrounded Kut and began the siege that would last 147 days.

The Turks attempted a series of major attacks throughout the remainder of December that were repulsed by the British defenders. After the Christmas night assault, the Turks decided to blockade the town and to prevent its relief.

General Percy Lake, the Chief of the General Staff in India, replaced the ailing Nixon in January 1916 and received the promised reinforcements from Europe. Lake designated the British relief force as the Tigris Corps. The corps was comprised of the 3rd and 7th Indian Divisions from France under the command of General Fenton Aylmer. The 7th Division arrived to the theater in early January, 1916, while the 3rd Division would not arrive until the end of the month. General Aylmer's initial attempt of relief was conducted with the 7th Division and met with stiff resistance at Sheikh Saad.<sup>43</sup> The British lost 4,000 casualties in the first relief attempt. Subsequent attempts resulted in several fierce battles where the relief force was unable to reach Kut. The 13th Division was added to the operation and General

Gorringe made the last unsuccessful attempt to rescue his comrades on April 5th. The relief operations cost the British 23,000 casualties. Starvation and disease forced the surrender on 29 April, 1916, of approximately 13,000 British troops at Kut.

The campaign had started as a limited defensive operation to protect the oil facilities and to limit the Turkish threat in the region. After gaining relatively cheap successes, the expedition became more ambitious and transitioned to a series of offensive operations. The object of the campaign for the civilian and military leadership became the occupation of Baghdad. Baghdad was seen as the crowning achievement for the campaign. The desire to achieve a cheap campaign victory began the path to misfortune.

#### Insights for the Operational Design of Campaigns

What can be learned from the British experience in the early years of the Mesopotamia Campaign? First, it is vitally important for policy-makers and operational commanders to clearly define the strategic goals to be accomplished by the campaign. Second, once the strategic direction has been established, constraints and restrictions placed on the conduct of the campaign must be identified. Third, the operational commander must continuously perform an ENDS-WAYS-MEANS assessment to

ensure that the campaign goals can be achieved. These actions are essential to the design of an effective campaign plan.

"No one starts a war--or...ought to do so--without being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."<sup>44</sup> These simple words by Clausewitz should be etched in the minds of national leaders and military commanders. Since war is an instrument of policy, it is imperative that the military objectives of war be subordinated to serve the strategic interests. It is the responsibility of both civilian and military authorities to determine if the strategic goals can reasonably be accomplished by military means.

Strategic direction provides the intent and purpose of the theater campaign. In the United States, the strategic direction is expressed through national security strategy, national military strategy, and theater military strategy. These strategies serve to integrate national objectives and policies, military objectives and concepts, and national resources and military force. The national security strategy is provided by the President as the plan to achieve national objectives. The national military strategy is formulated by the Department of Defense using the military means of power to support the President's strategy. The theater

military strategy is developed by the commander-in-chiefs (CINCs) and the operational commanders to achieve the strategic goals.

Specific limitations on the conduct of the campaign must be supplied in the strategic direction to the operational commander. Constraints on what the military force must accomplish and restrictions on what can not do should be outlined. Before the campaign plan is finalized, strategic and operational commanders must agree on the ends states that constitute success. In this manner the strategic commander determines in advance the criteria by which to judge the campaign's success in attaining the strategic goals.

The challenge is on the operational commander to translate the strategic guidance into an operational direction for his subordinates. Throughout the campaign planning process, the commander must employ the operational design model to effectively perform the ENDS-WAYS-MEANS assessment. Keeping in mind the strategic direction for the campaign and the limitations placed upon the use of force, he must determine the military conditions that will achieve the military goals.

Developing a campaign strategy is the next step in the operational design model. This involves the identification of the enemy center of gravity and sequencing actions to defeat it. The commander must

first develop the where and when of the campaign.

The center of gravity may not be easily identified or targeted. At the operational level it is normally a combat force that can decisively influence the conduct of the campaign. It can be a reserve element, or a unit with superior moral character or physical capability. The attack of the center of gravity may be accomplished by direct methods or indirectly through the attack of selected decisive points. The resulting sequence of action provides lines of operation to the operational objectives. This is the preliminary campaign strategy.

Next, an assessment must be made of the resources available and the sufficiency to support the campaign strategy. The commander will allocate his resources (e.g., military forces, equipment and supplies) to enhance the overall conduct of the campaign and to prevent his force from reaching a culminating point. Early identification of critical manpower and logistic needs is indispensable to find alternate solutions and to modify plans. If, in the commander's assessment, the resources are not sufficient there are a number of steps to be taken:

- 1) Develop alternative campaign strategies to achieve the military conditions.

- 2) Seek additional resources to support the campaign strategy.

3) Re-validate the strategic goals and military conditions sought.

4) Accept a degree of risk in the execution of the campaign strategy.

The commander must constantly ensure that his campaign planning and execution does not stray from the strategic direction. The higher authorities also have a responsibility to ensure that the subordinate campaigns are consistently focused on attaining strategic goals.

The failure to effectively plan the campaign can lead to disastrous outcomes. If the means provided to the operational commander are not sufficient, the military force may not be able to attain relative superiority over the enemy and risks defeat. Since the defeat of the military forces can be equated to the non-attainment of the theater goals, then operational failures have occurred.

#### Analysis of Failure

The study of historical campaigns plays an important role in the education of the operational planner. The purpose of the study is to provide an understanding of the conduct of operational warfare, and through that understanding, reveal the causes for the successes and failures of the opponents in the conflict. In Mesopotamia, the British experienced great success in the

earlier operation of the campaign but met a humbling defeat with the surrender of Kut. What caused the British military organization to fail?

An analysis of the campaign was conducted using the methodology of Cohen and Gooch to determine the operational failures. The approach is predicated on the failure of military organizations to perform critical tasks. The operational failures have their roots in the organizational failures to: learn from past experiences, anticipate and counter enemy actions, and/or adapt to circumstances in an effective manner.<sup>40</sup>

The critical failure of the British forces in Mesopotamia was the failure to anticipate. England did not foresee the degree of commitment required for the campaign and did not provide the appropriate means to ensure success in the theater. The strategic direction and support necessary for success were not present in the early phases of the campaign. The British failed to maintain the intent of the campaign at the strategic and operational levels.

The British strategic priorities were distinctly outlined as: 1) Major effort against Turkey at Gallipoli, 2) Protection of the Suez Canal, 3) Protection of the Anglo-Persian oilfields. The campaign was third on the list of priorities and as

General Gorringe put it, Mesopotamia was 'believed to be a side show and 'no man's child'.'<sup>46</sup>

The British saw conflict with Germany as increasingly likely as early as 1912 and assigned the Indian Government the responsibility for the Persian Gulf inclusive of the lands surrounding Basra. This included Mesopotamia even though armed conflict with Turkey was deemed improbable. India's tasks were was to 'protect the Anglo-Persian oilfields, maintain authority in the Persian Gulf, and defend the northwest frontier of India.'<sup>47</sup>

The British strategic intent was to defend the oil-producing facilities required to support its Royal Navy. The subsequent instructions to occupy Basra was provided to allow depth to the defense and to protect the arrival of reinforcements.

The Indian Army had been organized and equipped for the defense of the Indian frontier. It was not provided mechanized transport and relied on animal-drawn carts to move supplies. Only light artillery pieces suitable for use in skirmishes with local tribesmen were part of the organization. The equipment for the army only provided for a few heavy machineguns and did not include light machineguns.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the Indian Army was not intended for out-of-area use against an organized force. With its deployment to Mesopotamia, IEF 'D' was 'called upon to

participate...in an external warfare for which no preparation had been made."\*•

Once the expedition force was committed, the India Office in England should have maintained the strategic direction. The campaign in Mesopotamia would be an economy of force--a defensive operation while the major action would take place against Turkish forces at Gallipoli.

The government in England did not anticipate the overwhelming early successes of the expedition. When it was apparent that the campaign had taken an offensive turn, the Home Government did conduct its own risk assessment for the theater. England had intelligence information on the threat of Turkish reinforcements, knowledge of British troop strength, and awareness of the capability to redeploy British forces as reinforcements. It did question Nixon's capability to take and hold Baghdad. Although suspicious of the operation, the British Cabinet deferred to the assessment of the commander on the ground. If successful, the occupation of Baghdad would counterbalanced the recent debacle at Gallipoli.

The failure was also evident at the strategic-operational level. The eyes of the India Government looked toward Baghdad immediately after the capture of Basra. But, the resources were not provided

to gain the prized city. From the initial landings in Basra, it was a matter of record that the port facilities were insufficient. There was a lack of docks, storage houses and road networks to support operations. The rail network was virtually nonexistent.

In spite of the projection of extended operations in the theater (if only for defense of the oilfields), the India Government did not take action to improve the port or transportation facilities. Any operation based out of Basra was dependent on rivercraft for the transport of men and supplies. The India Government was cited for its lack of corrective action in providing the needed transport.

A greater failure was providing Nixon with the guidance to plan for the advance to Baghdad in conflict with the strategic intent. The instruction to expand operations to occupy the Basra vilayet was given without consultation with England. It may have been sufficient to maintain the Qurna-Ahwaz line to secure the oilfields and pipelines. However, the administration was caught up in the optimism that occurred after the decisive defeat of the Turkish counteroffensive at Shaiba. The India Office saw a chance for greater prestige and could not let slip what was perceived to be a great opportunity.

With the installation of an aggressive commander, the India Commander in Chief had only to point Nixon in

the direction of Baghdad and the campaign effectively transitioned from a defensive to an offensive phase. Beauchamp-Duff should have realized that the number of forces designated for the defense of the oilfields would not be numerically sufficient to conduct offensive operations without augmentation. He had previously acknowledged that the India Military Reserve had been depleted and could not provide support. He was also informed by England that reinforcements from Europe would not be available.

As the operations moved away from Basra, more supplies and men would be required along with the means to transport them. The failure to improve the port facilities and transportation means would greatly hinder the Kut relief operations. The port could neither handle the large influx of personnel from the reinforcing units, nor were the transportation means available to support the relief.

The operational level failures can be attributed to the aggressiveness of Sir John Nixon. He was a man accustomed to success and visualized the opportunity to seize Baghdad. He arrived in theater and assumed command in the wake of significant British victories. He believed that the Turks were essentially defeated and that the march on Baghdad would be met with light resistance.

Nixon did accomplished his primary mission by clearing Ahwaz to the east, seizing Amara to the north, and defeating Turkish forces at Nasiriyeh to the west. He succeeded although his request for reinforcements to conduct the later two operations had been denied by England. His proposal for the operations toward Amara and Nasiriyeh was questioned by England. Nixon responded to Lord Crewe's challenge that he did not intend to go beyond the two cities. At this point Viceroy Hardinge sought to calm the English officials and continued to encourage Nixon. As a result of the operations, the Basra vilayet was secured, and the protection of the oilfields and pipelines were assured.

This success allowed Nixon the freedom to plan the advance. He envisioned the offensive operation moving next to Kut-el-Amara, and continuing north along the Tigris to Ctesiphon, and then on to Baghdad. Later in the campaign Nixon was questioned specifically regarding his ability to seize and hold Baghdad with the force available. He assured England that he possessed sufficient manpower and transport to be successful. He was able to convince them with his personal confidence and optimism. He foolishly disregarded information that 30,000 Turkish troops had been introduced into the theater prior to the start of the offensive.

So confident and fixated on the conquest of Baghdad was Nixon that he brushed off the concerns of his senior commander, General Townshend. Townshend was apprehensive about the lack of sufficient troops to conduct the operation and the danger to the extended lines of communications required to support it. As soon as the British Cabinet had approved the advance, Nixon sent forth Townshend and the 6th Division down the road that would end at Kut.

In summary, there were three critical tasks that had to be performed by organizations at the strategic through operational levels. First, the identification of goals for the campaign. The Home Office initially set the goal as an economy of force operation designed to protect the oil facilities. This goal was subverted by the operational successes experienced by the expedition and a more ambitious goal was set by the India Government as the seizure of Baghdad. Second, the supply of means--reinforcements and transport, to support the advance to Baghdad in face of Turkish reinforcements. The Home and India Government approved the advance without the means to sustain it. Specifically, the India Government did not improve the support facilities required for sustained operations. Third, the coordination and control of subordinate organizations. The India Office failed to consult England on its

proposed shift to offensive operations. It also failed to coordinate the arrival of reinforcements before the advance to Baghdad was initiated. Annex A provides a simplified version of the layered analysis depicting the organizations, critical tasks, and failures.

### Conclusions and Implications

#### Conclusions

"If war is a part of policy, policy will determine its character, as policy becomes more ambitious and vigorous, so will war."<sup>50</sup> The key lessons from the British campaign are at the strategic and operational level. Strategically, there must be a maintenance of the strategic direction and clarity of purpose for the campaign. The desired end state must be a stationary target to allow for a successful campaign. Operationally, the commander must be able to distinguish between the bold risk that seeks to capitalize on opportunities and the dangerous gamble that leads to military misfortune. In this campaign, the British allowed operational success in the early operations to drive the strategic policy. The new policy was beyond the means available and overextended the force.

The British were able to recover from the initial misfortune by adapting its conduct of the campaign. The Imperial General Staff of the British War Office was

placed in control of the operation relieving the India Office. The added emphasis the campaign received ensured the troops, transport, and sustainment were more than sufficient to achieve success. Under General Stanley Maude, the 13th Division successfully seized Baghdad on March 11, 1917.

### Implications

Campaign plans are essential because they provide specific purpose and direction to warfighting. Since wars are logically fought to secure national interests, it is imperative to develop a plan that will effectively attain strategic goals. The use of the operational design model is an invaluable tool for the operational commander.

The first step in the model requires that, early in the campaign planning process, the strategic goals be specifically defined and the military conditions be determined as the desired end states. The next step establishes the campaign strategy that outlines the sequence of actions to be accomplished. Then there is the allocation of resources to support the campaign strategy. Concurrent with the steps is the commander's assessment of the ways, means, and the degree of risk accepted in order to accomplish the ends.

Desert Shield/Desert Storm demonstrated the successful use of the operational design model to develop the campaign plan. President Bush stated the U.S. strategic objectives early during the crisis. The intent and the purpose of the campaign were maintained by the strategic direction provided through the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). This strategic direction was manifest in the military conditions to achieve the desired end states.

The strategic and operational commanders developed a campaign strategy conducted in phases aimed at the destruction of the Iraqi center of gravity, the Republican Guard forces. The center of gravity was targeted directly and indirectly through the attack of decisive points in the theater.

The CINC, General Schwarzkopf, in his assessment of ENDS-WAYS-MEANS, examined the available resources to ensure adequate support for the campaign. He requested and received additional resources, modified the plan, and accepted risk (the "Hail Mary Play") in the execution of the plan.

Throughout the ground phase of the campaign, the coalition forces experienced overwhelming success. Within four days, 42 Iraqi divisions were destroyed and its force in Kuwait was largely ineffective. Once the CINC reported to the President that the military

objectives had been accomplished, the temporary cease-fire was initiated. The strategic goals assigned to the military had been successfully attained.

The decision not to advance on Baghdad will continue to be challenged. GEN Schwarzkopf recommended the advance to the President who decided against it. After a study of the Mesopotamia Campaign, I agree with President Bush. . It was entirely possible that, given the lessons gleaned from the British experience, the endeavor could have resulted in a military misfortune caused by a failure to learn.

ANNEX A - MATRIX OF FAILURES

Critical Task

Command Level	<u>Identification of Goals</u>	<u>Supply of Means</u>	<u>Control &amp; Coordination</u>
1. British Home Office (Lord Crewe, Sir Barrow)	1.1 Focus on strategic defensive with main effort at Gallipoli	1.2 Training and organization of Indian Army not suitable for out-of area operations	1.3 Allowed subordinates to subvert strategic intent
2. India Government (Lord Hardinge, Sir Beauchamp-Duff)	2.1 Failed to restrict actions to defense of oil facilities. Established Baghdad as the campaign objective	2.2 Failed to improve port and transport facilities for extended operations. Failed to provide sufficient force to accomplish assigned task	2.3 Failed to consult Home Govt on offensive shift. Failed to coordinate reinforcements from France
3. Expedition Commander (Gen John Nixon)	3.1 Mission to secure lower Mesopotamia within limits. Gambled for Baghdad success w/o adequate forces or reinforcements.	3.2 Failed to insist on transport means. Overextended forces in operation to Baghdad	3.3 Acted IAW instructions. Failed to coordinate the arrival of reinforcements to support Baghdad operations

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