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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
Newport, Rhode Island

JOINTNESS FOR THE SAKE OF JOINTNESS IN OPERATION  
"URGENT FURY"

by

S.J. LABADIE  
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps

A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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## ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the use of multi-Service forces to project U.S. power. It reviews the use of all four Services during contingency operations in Lebanon in 1958, the Dominican Republic in 1965, and in particular, the Grenada rescue operation in 1983. Of primary concern during these operations was the possible inappropriate assignment of forces from Services other than the Navy and Marine Corps that added unnecessary capabilities and therefore, added complexity to the operations. In the aftermath of Operation URGENT FURY in Grenada, there were calls for more jointness. The paper concludes that past employment of the Navy/Marine Corps team and the Air Force/Army team have been extremely successful in most, if not all cases, and that the formation of multi-Service teams consisting of the Army/Navy/Air Force/Marine Corps and Special Operations Forces unnecessarily complicate operations--especially short notice contingency ops. The involvement of too many Services does not create "teams," only jointness for the sake of jointness.

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background

"It should probably be a maxim of warfare that 'added capabilities are purchased at the cost of added complexity, either of equipment or of procedures or of both.' As the capabilities of the power projection forces have expanded, so have the difficulties in their effective coordination."<sup>1</sup>

On March 3rd 1776, Commodore Esek Hopkins, hoping to capture British military stores, including some two hundred barrels of scarce gunpowder, landed all his Marines and some fifty seamen on New Providence Island.<sup>2</sup> This projection of power marked the first amphibious landing by American Marines, teamed with their Navy counterparts and commanded by a Navy commodore, on a foreign shore. It would also mark another first for the United States of America--the military use of a "joint force." It held true to the definition of a joint force--two or more Services operating under a single commander authorized to exercise operational control. What is also probably true of this first expeditionary force was that its conduct, an assault from the sea to capture two forts and New Providence Town, was the essence of simplicity. In his time, Commodore Hopkins was waging a campaign on land and sea in the South Atlantic without the benefit of a Continental Army whose mission it was to protect the homeland or an air force that did not exist because planes had not yet been invented. Little did the commodore know that he was waging war the old-fashioned way. For Commodore Hopkins, modernity and especially "modern warfare," did not exist.

According to JCS Pub 1, "the nature of modern warfare demands that we fight as a team."<sup>3</sup> So it was 207 years later, that Admiral Joseph Metcalf III found himself designated as the Commander of a Joint Task Force headed for another island in the South Atlantic--Grenada. A "team" had been formed for Admiral Metcalf by the JCS. It was not the Navy/Marine Corps team that had operated jointly for over 200 years, but the new "team" of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps. It was a complex grouping of disparate elements of all the branches of the Military Service that were assigned, not by the operational commander, but by the omnipotent Joint Chiefs of Staff who were the ones who "knew" how to fight a "modern war." With the CINCLANT plan for accomplishing the mission on Grenada significantly changed, the assignment of forces and their roles and missions reversed, all Admiral Metcalf had to do was accomplish the mission the best he knew how. In "Decision Making and the Grenada Rescue Operation,"<sup>4</sup> regarding a planning meeting for the operation, Admiral Metcalf acknowledged that "only the commander of the 82 Airborne Rangers, Major General Trabau, the commander of the Special Forces, Major General Shultie, and Major General Schwarzkopf were present. I was not concerned about the absence of Navy and Marine commanders; I knew how they operated."<sup>5</sup> [Emphasis added]

In the aftermath of the Grenada Rescue Operation, the language of the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986, would have one believe that the Services were incapable of acting jointly when, in fact, they did and had been acting

jointly for over two hundred years. The Services had been acting as a Navy and Marine Corps team, an Army and Air Force team, and an Army/Navy team (especially in multiple operations in Europe during World War II) for years. They had not, however, been forced by higher headquarters, as Admiral Metcalf had, to act "jointly" as an Army/Navy/Air Force/Marine Corps/Special Operations Forces "team" on a short-fuze mission as "Urgent Fury."

This paper will suggest that there are alternative models, based on historical precedents--including Operation "Urgent Fury," wherein the NCA and CINCs can effectively employ the combat power of "sister service" teams and then sequence follow-on forces requested by the operational commander should additional combat power be required. By doing so, the national and theater-level decision-makers can avoid the complexity and increased difficulties associated with added capabilities, doctrines, procedures and equipment into a war-winning quotient.

Scope. This paper compares the multi-Service application of military force used during contingency operations in Lebanon in 1958 and the Dominican Republic in 1965 with the employment of forces in the Grenada Rescue Operation in 1983. Research for this paper was limited to unclassified sources in the belief that keeping it unclassified would enhance its simplicity, acceptability and readability.

Organization. The material is organized to demonstrate that the new term "joint," as it applies to the application of the United States' military forces, actually has its background rooted in the Revolutionary War. More recent uses of military

forces are provided by historical examples of multi-Service contingency operations in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic. The complexity, lack of interoperability, and command structure weaknesses in those Operations serve as a backdrop to the analysis in Chapter III of Operation URGENT FURY. Some of the principles of war and tenets of the operational art are examined with the resultant conclusion that "jointness for the sake of jointness" can be detrimental to the employment of the Armed Forces of the United States.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF RECENT JOINT OPERATIONS

"An amphibious force of modern type, operating from the sea and equipped with helicopters, is free from dependence on airfields, beaches, ports, land-bases, with all their logistical and political complications. The use of an airborne force, or of any land-based force, is a more irrevocable step, since its commitment is more definite and its withdrawal more difficult."<sup>1</sup>

The contingency operation in Grenada involving amphibious forces co-joined with the "irrevocable" insertion of airborne, land-based forces, was not a "new" event in the annals of modern warfare. Earlier precedents of the operations in Lebanon in 1958 and the Dominican Republic in 1965 indicated that simultaneous conduct of amphibious and airborne operations added to the complexity of the battlefield. Of particular note were the problems associated with unity of command of "land forces," communications between converging forces of two military Services and differing concepts of operations. An historical review and short analysis of these two earlier operations will preview some of the same difficulties encountered in Grenada in 1983.

#### Operation BLUEBAT: Lebanon-1958

Christian and Moslem factions in Lebanon had been in a power struggle for control and threatened to topple the pro-U.S. Chamoun government. Additional assassinations of pro-Western rulers in the region and the constant, looming specter

of a communist take-over of the Mid-East prompted U.S. officials to intervene militarily.

On 15 July 1958, U.S. Marines stormed ashore in the face of Arab sunbathers on the beach, (See Appendix I) to secure their objective--the Beirut International Airport. Meanwhile, Army and Air Force units, both in the U.S. and Europe, prepared for their part in the operation. By the 16th another Marine battalion had come ashore to reinforce the one that had secured the airport. By the 18th of July, 4 battalions of Marines were ashore, both by surface means and flown in from Camp Lejeune, NC, while the Sixth Fleet stood ready off the shores to support them. Four days later, and still with no mission for U.S. forces, Army and Air Force units arrived at Beirut International Airport. "It was not until the introduction of Army Forces on 19 July that the issue of a single land forces commander arose."<sup>2</sup> Major Lockwood, in his analysis of BLUEBAT stated that there were numerous other problems in this Army/Navy/Marine Corps/Air Force operation. "Most significant of these were: a lack of joint fire control measures; lack of airspace control and interface with civilian airspace control; a lack of standardized communications equipment, procedures, and codes; no provisions for a joint landing force command and staff; no pre-coordination between the country team and the military forces; and no means of controlling Air Force strikes and reconnaissance."<sup>3</sup> He went on to note that most of the problems were resolved over time; but, had the landing been opposed, the result would have been tragic.

The proliferation of U.S. Military Service personnel in Lebanon on the ground rose to a peak total of 8,515 Army and 5,842 Marine Corps.<sup>4</sup> The U.S. ground forces were more than double the size of the Lebanese Army (our allies) and "most of these forces arrived after the crisis passed."<sup>5</sup> The purpose of such a rather large (and in my estimate, unwieldy) multi-service force was purportedly the demonstration to the rebels, the world, and communist hegemony, that the United States had the will, power, resolve, and capability to project such a massive force half-way around the world to protect its interests.<sup>6</sup>

Although this is the first of two antecedent contingency operations to URGENT FURY, it starts to become apparent that the use of multi-service (three or more) forces does not necessarily result in "team warfare." It could also begin to show that a headlong desire to engage in battle, as many of the Military Services as possible, flies in the face of the operational desire to use combat power sparingly. The strategic wont of sending a strong message and amassing of an overwhelming combat power ratio on the tactical battlefield both need to be tempered by the operational necessity to use appropriate force and forces.

#### Operation POWER PACK: The Dominican Republic - 1965

A deteriorating and turbulent political situation arose in the Caribbean country of the Dominican Republic after the death of its long ruling dictator - General Trujillo. The situation caught the attention and U.S. interest because of the "Cuba syndrome." Here was another island nation that lay close to U.S. shores; was

a sugar economy; had been ruled by a long dictatorship; and, was now faced with the possibility of a Communist takeover. The safety of U.S. citizens was also at stake.

"In the early evening of 28 April 1965, Marines of the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment air assaulted into rapidly deteriorating conditions in the heart of Santo Domingo (See Appendix II). Their mission was to secure a polo field near the U.S. enclave as a site for non-combatant evacuations (NEO) and to protect the U.S. embassy. Their introduction heralded the commencement of the intervention, by the United States, into the Dominican Republic--an operation which spanned more than a year, involved elements of all services, and peaked with 23,000 U.S. soldiers on Dominican soil."<sup>7</sup>

Follow-on forces of the U.S. Army 82d Airborne division loaded on their airplanes on the 29th for Puerto Rico--an intermediate staging base. The Commanding General of the 82d Airborne was designated as the commander of all ground forces as he was flying down to the Dominican Republic to land at an airfield that was not considered secure. General York "had no idea of the situation on the ground, no clearly defined mission for the 82d Airborne Division much less the Marines, and no independent means of communication with the Marines,"<sup>8</sup> when he landed with his lead elements at a darkened San Isidro airfield at 0216, 30 April. Because of a shortage of staff and communications assets he was unable to take control of the Marine forces. Efforts to physically link-up these two forces coming

from opposite directions was complicated by a lack of ability to communicate between the approaching Marine and Army units.

Further deployments of additional Army units to complete the link-up with the Marines and secure the links of communication between them, were estimated to require 12-18 additional Army battalions.

In this Operation, two friendly forces were tasked to approach each other from opposite directions; whereas in Operation BLUEBAT, the follow-on Army forces arrived at the same destination as the Marine forces--an airfield already secured for them by the Marines. Additionally, in Operation POWER PACK, "the establishment of the Land Forces staff and Headquarters was delayed over a week by the failure to plan for adequate command and control means during the planning process."<sup>9</sup> This same issue during Lebanon was "resolved over time."

This second historical precedent to Operation URGENT FURY peaked the principle of mass, by employing an Army/Navy/Air Force/Marine Corps multi-service team in a contingency operation, with 23,000 U.S. soldiers on Dominican soil.<sup>10</sup> It also provided an operational direction (or lack thereof) that counter-posed two U.S. "land" forces against one another.

## CHAPTER III

### OPERATION URGENT FURY

By analyzing some of the principles of war and a few of the tenets of the operational level as they pertain to conflict, in Operation URGENT FURY, it is hoped that we can arrive at a better understanding of the theory and application of force and forces by all the Military Services--as a team or many types of teams.

Mass, Economy of Force and Maneuver. Mass is defined as "superior combat power that must be concentrated at the critical time and place for a decisive purpose ..."<sup>1</sup> Economy of Force is the "skillful and prudent use of combat power which will enable the commander to accomplish the mission with minimum expenditure of resources. This principle is the corollary of the principle of mass. The object of maneuver is to dispose a force in such a manner as to place the enemy at the relative disadvantage and thus achieve results which would otherwise be more costly in men and material."<sup>2</sup>

In URGENT FURY, the principle of mass was chosen, by others than the CINC and the JTF commander, as the primary method by which force would be applied to achieve a military victory. The mission statement of conducting "military operations to protect and evacuate U.S. and designated foreign nationals from Grenada, neutralize Grenadian forces, stabilize the internal situation, and maintain the peace"<sup>3</sup> could have been construed to be so all encompassing that it would, of necessity, require masses of men, arms and material to accomplish. The require-

ment to "do it fast and minimize casualties"<sup>4</sup> may have also placed added emphasis on achieving mass. The resultant mass of over 10,000<sup>5</sup> strong comprised of Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Special Operations Forces provided the "mass" that was to rescue 1,000 Americans and neutralize the small Grenadian and Cuban forces.

The corollary use of economy of force, by employing the Marine Expeditionary Unit of 2,000 men embarked aboard the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and accompanied by a Carrier Battle Group (CVBG), was originally designated by CINCLANT as the force that was to conduct the NEO and neutralize the enemy forces. Mistakenly (or purposely) viewed as a mere Marine battalion (instead of a Marine Expeditionary Unit consisting of men, tanks, amphibious assault vehicles, artillery, helicopter gunships and armed helicopter transports) reinforced by a carrier battle group, this force was supplanted by a "multi-Service team." For whatever reasons, and they range from the desire to achieve "overwhelming" power, inter-Service desire for "a piece of the pie," quick victory, to adequate intelligence estimates of the enemy forces, the Navy/Marine Corps team was deemed incapable of accomplishing the mission without the Army and Air Force (and Special Operations Forces). Admiral Metcalf stated that we "put together a logo that emphasized the participation of all services in the operation [emphasis added]. This sense of participation was one of the key operational objectives."<sup>6</sup> Mass, or "the participation of all services,"<sup>7</sup> instead of the skillful and prudent use of combat

power that would enable a commander to accomplish the mission with minimum expenditure of resources, became the operational objective. This was certainly not what Clausewitz had in mind when he defined the enemy's "center of gravity."

The principle of maneuver in Operation URGENT FURY was nonexistent. The island was simply divided into two sectors. "The Marines were to take responsibility for the northern portion of the island and the Army would seize the southern half. The logic behind this division of responsibility was that by separating the two forces the amount of coordination would be minimal."<sup>8</sup> The real feat of maneuver, however, is to determine the correct direction for the forces in the most continuous, rapid and effective manner in order to make full use of their might in the least amount of time. The operational direction imposed on the two forces--Army and Marine--put them in counter-posing positions on the same track--a collision course (See Appendix III). This was the case of the Army forces at San Isidro airfield and the Marine forces at the Embassy compound trying to link up with them in the Dominican Republic only eighteen years earlier. Both operations lacked an axis along which they could unify their various tactical actions.

Command and Control. At the operational level of war command and control and leadership are critical. Contrary to a post URGENT FURY criticism and recommendation that "joint experience should become a prerequisite for command of a joint task force, and of course, joint experience should continue to be a prerequisite for promotion to flag rank,"<sup>9</sup> Admiral Metcalf possessed both the

leadership and "joint" experience gained during his participation in the evacuation of Saigon. Perhaps misguided by the sense of participation of all the services, multiple aims, overwhelming resources, unclear rules of engagement, and counter axes of operational direction, he was still able to succeed by telling subordinate commanders "what" to do and not "how" to do it. Additionally, the theater of war commander had not appointed subordinate unified ground and air commanders to support him as the joint task force commander, Admiral Metcalf had to compensate by assigning General Schwarzkopf as his deputy.

The Admiral's ability to command and control were additionally hampered by poor communications. "Probably the largest single problem was the inability of some units to communicate. Many Army and Navy units could not communicate with one another. There were also problems between the Army and Marine units on the ground."<sup>10</sup> The Senate staff committee went on to say in their report that "poor communications between the Army and Navy are unacceptable."<sup>11</sup> From this same report, and in all other after-action reports, analyses, and references on URGENT FURY, what were never faulted were the communications and interoperability between the Navy/Marine Corps team and the Army/Air Force team. Command, control and communications (C<sup>3</sup>) during this operation were excellent-- between the Army and Air Force and between the Navy and Marine Corps. C<sup>3</sup> for the Army/Navy/Marine Corps/Air Force/Special Operations Forces "team" were, by

their nature, complex. This complexity was only exacerbated by the short time frame in which Admiral Metcalf had to accomplish all his missions.

**Simplicity.** In On War, Clausewitz said "the whole of military activity must ... relate directly or indirectly to combat operations. The end for which a soldier is recruited, clothed, armed and trained, the whole object of his sleeping, eating, drinking and marching is simply that he should fight at the right place and at the right time." Regarding joint operations, Admiral Metcalf stated that "you can carry out an operation of this nature, in minimum planning time, if the plan is kept simple. The Grenada plan was simple."<sup>12</sup>

On the contrary, the plan, assignment of forces, and simultaneous assault by Rangers on Salinas airport and Marines at Pearls were not simple! The initial axiom of this paper requires restatement. "Added capabilities are purchased at the cost of added complexity ... and as the capabilities of the power projection forces have expanded, so have the difficulties in their effective coordination."<sup>13</sup> The added requirement to have a CONUS-based force of U.S. Army Rangers parachute in at a defended airfield at five o'clock in the morning to secure it for another Army follow-on force of the 82d Airborne, while simultaneously conducting a helicopter-borne assault from amphibious ships at sea against another defended airport was difficult. It was much more difficult than a surface landing comprised of amphibious assault vehicles with troops and tanks to secure the same objectives. Using primarily Navy and Marine Corps forces (or Army and Air Force forces as in

Operation "Just Cause") instead of the multitude of assigned forces would have greatly simplified the projection of forces.

**Sequencing and Synchronization.** In the Grenada Rescue Operation it would have been possible to sequence a battle for Salinas airport before the attack on Pearls, in order to selectively concentrate in time and space. The aim of sequencing these actions would be to create overwhelming combat power against one specific, clearly defined objective that would hopefully annihilate the opposing force if the enemy sought to defend it with all his resources. This would leave the attainment of Pearls airport the next in sequence if it was still capable of being defended by the enemy. By sequencing the attainment of these operational objectives, the Grenadian and Cuban forces may have been destroyed to the degree that they could not defend a second airport; and, more importantly they would be unable to oppose the rescue of either American citizens or the Governor-General. Speed of execution would be necessary in a series of successive battles; but, that speed was essentially lost on the first day at Salinas.

Synchronization was the order of the day for URGENT FURY in that the enemy was attacked throughout the island. The result of this synchronization had a diluting effect on the U.S. forces' ability to concentrate and thus achieve what might have been attained by sequencing. What was not achieved at the Salinas Airfield by the Rangers, Air Force "Spectre" gunships and the 82d Airborne might have been attainable by using Marine forces with AAVs and tanks supported by

**Navy A-7s and Naval Gunfire Support. The Service team with more firepower and armor may have had an advantage over the very light and outgunned team air landed at Salinas.**

## **CHAPTER IV**

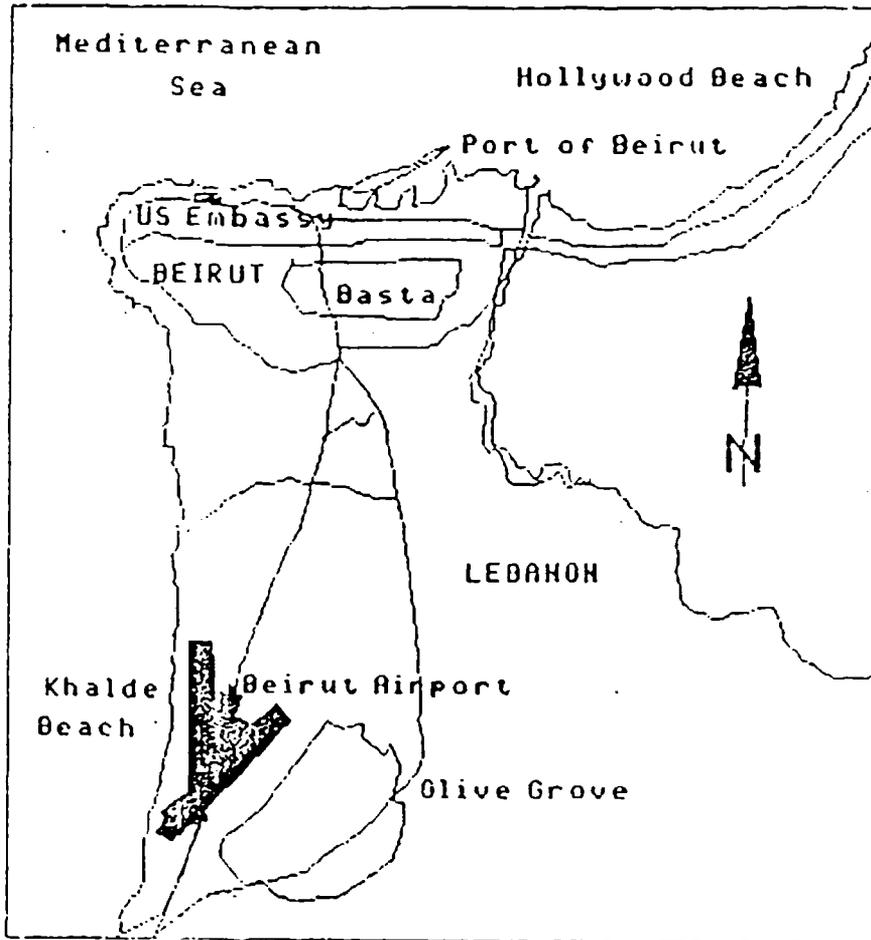
### **CONCLUSIONS**

For over two hundred years the Navy and Marine Corps have worked jointly as a team to project military power overseas, oftentimes on short notice, when directed to do so by national-level decision-makers. The U.S. Army has used both ships and the advanced technology and speed of Air Force aircraft in recent years to respond to those same decision-makers. By analyzing some recent contingency operations, in particular Operation URGENT FURY, and comparing and contrasting it with BLUEBAT and POWER PACK, one can begin to recognize that the term "joint" has taken on a new meaning. It means that all Services must participate for it to be considered "joint."

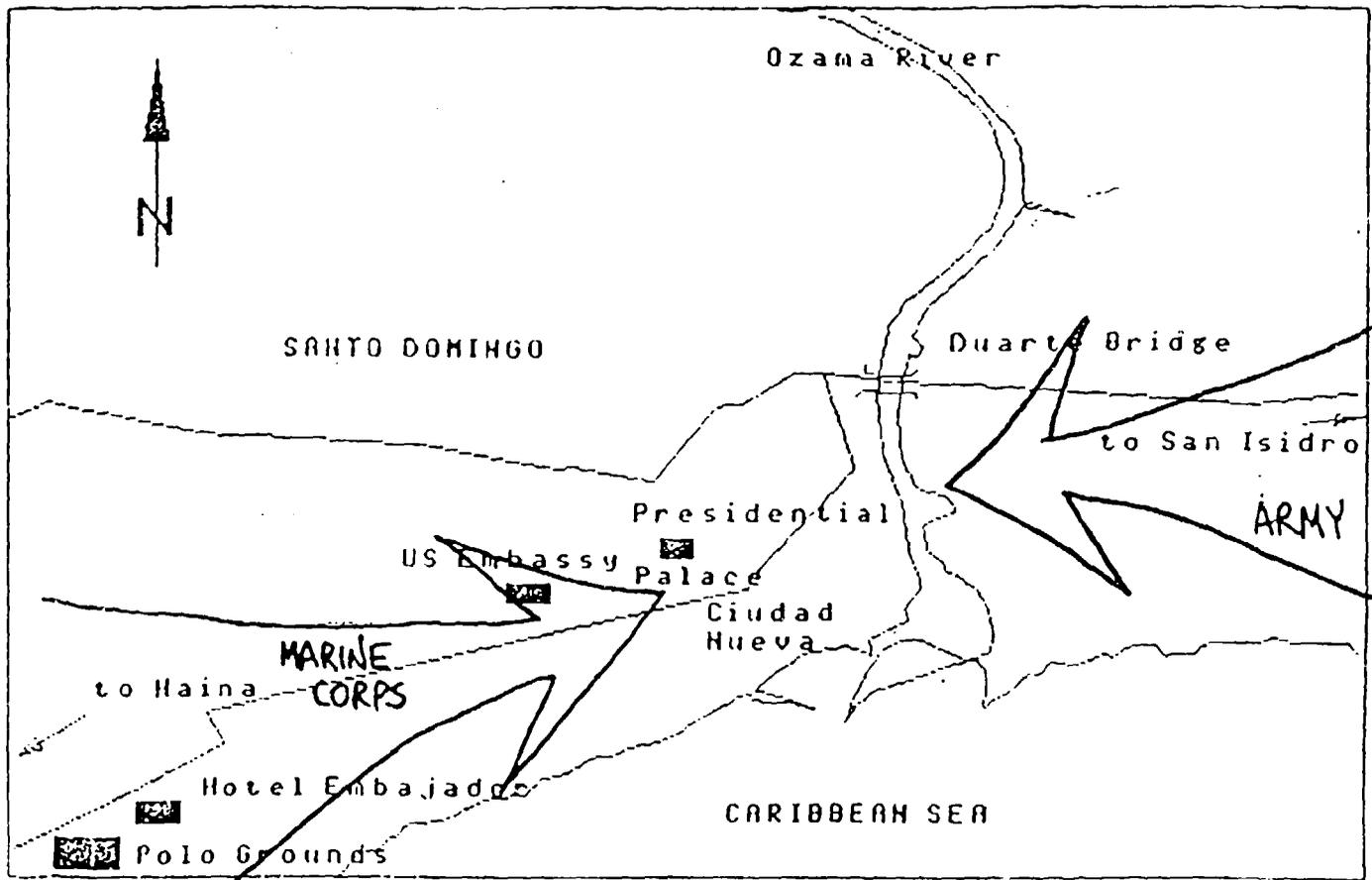
Jointness for jointness sake is wrong. As the examples provided in this study have hopefully indicated, the more the number of military Services involved, the greater the difficulty for theater, operational and tactical commanders to employ them effectively--especially on short notice. The invasion of Panama was a good example of the use of a two-Service (Army and Air Force) team to project power overseas. Added capabilities, by using all the Services, can be a war winning strategy as was the case during the Gulf War.

The use of all the military Services for the sake of increased mass, participation, unneeded or unwanted capabilities and/or a piece of the budgetary pie raises the level of complexity in an already complex world and can be counter-productive

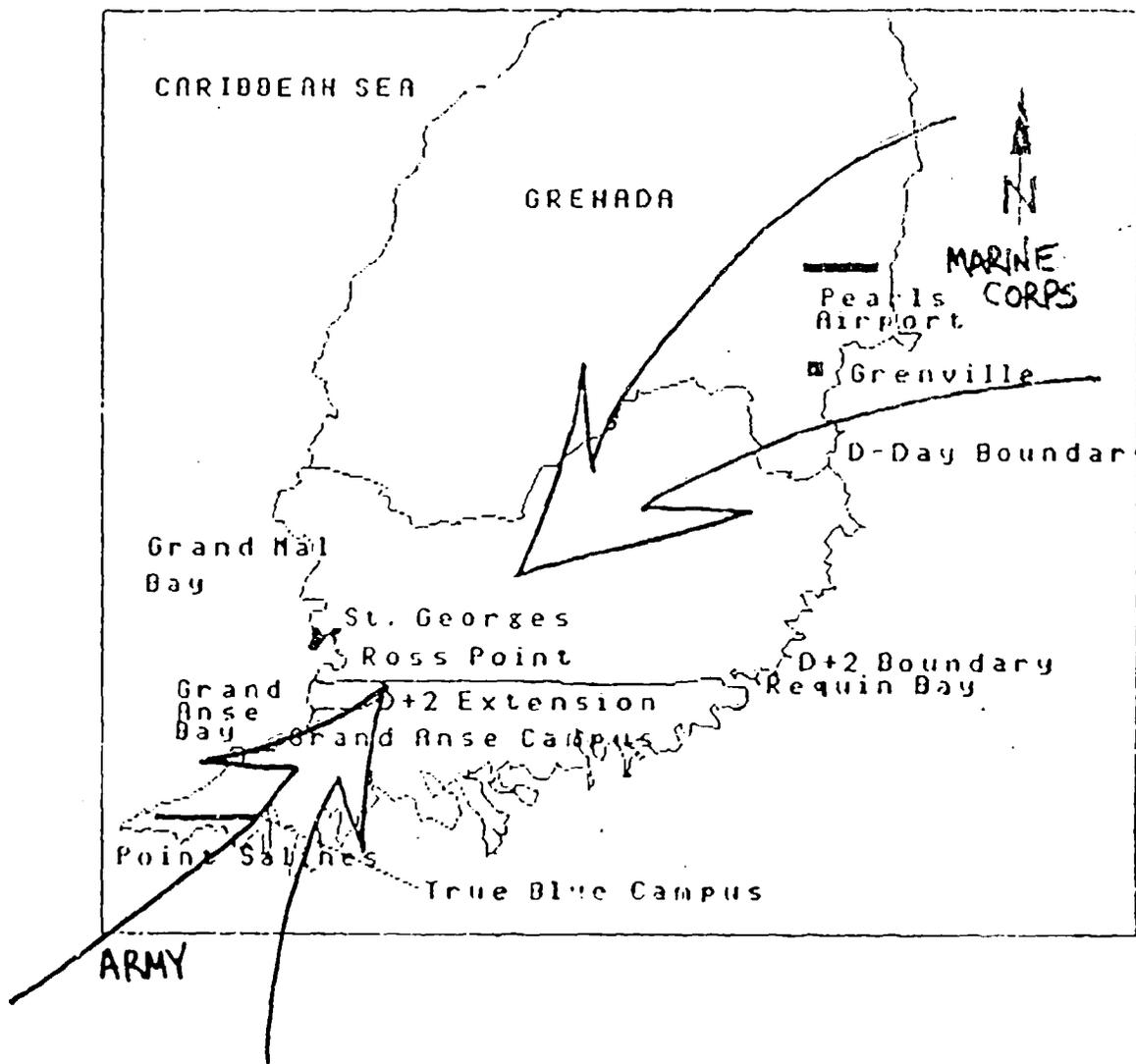
to winning wars. "In an environment of friction, uncertainty, and fluidity, war gravitates naturally toward disorder. Like the other attributes of the environment of war, disorder is an integral characteristic of war; we can never eliminate it,"<sup>1</sup> but we can reduce it by curbing jointness for the sake of jointness.



APPENDIX I



APPENDIX II



APPENDIX III

## NOTES

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