



The Role of Central Command

Each region of the world presents specific threats within a specific cultural, economic, and political context. Rather than attempt to manage this great of a diversity of threat within one organization, the United States Military has divided the world into several combatant commands. CENTCOM is one of the largest, due to the high level of threat within its purview. Its jurisdiction is largely within and around the Middle East.

The primary purpose of CENTCOM is to serve as the focal point for all military action within the theater. CENTCOM controls all military assets within the region and is tasked with coordinating military action in order to further the policy goals of the United States Government. This includes gathering intelligence, providing regional expertise, and creating courses of action to complete specific goals given to it from higher.

It is important to note that CENTCOM has no role in policy formulation. It provides intelligence and military expertise to advise policy makes but has no control over the policy decision. It exists to execute the policy decisions that are made by the Government. For instance, CENTCOM would not say whether or not the United States should go to war but would only explain its operational potential in the region and then execute the decision that the Legislative and Executive branches made.

After the end of the Iraq war, US troops pulled out of Iraq. Some forces remained as advisors for the purpose of maintaining a continued relationship between the United States and Iraq but these troops have no kinetic operating potential. Since the removal of US troops there has been an increase in regional violence but the Iraqi military has been able to maintain control of the state without the assistance of any foreign militaries.

The United States still maintains a presence Afghanistan but its scale and purpose have drastically reduced in the last few years. At this point in time, the US mission is to train and support the Afghan military. The training is being conducted across the country by small special forces teams who are embedded with Afghan units. American units are supporting the Afghan military by providing a quick reaction force (QRF) designed to aid in combat operations if an Afghan unit is in need of assistance. These units are drawn from the 3rd Brigade combat team (BCT) of the 3rd Infantry division (ID). The units currently in theater are pulled from the:

3rd Battalion, 1st Cavalry Regiment

3rd Brigade Special troops battalion

203rd Brigade Support Battalion

American Military - Regional presence



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In order to meet the demands of constant and sustained engagement the military, particularly the Army and Marine Corps, has embraced a rotational deployment schedule centered on 1 year deployment and three years dwell time. To do this, each branch has been divided into four force pools. Each force pool goes through a deployment, recovery, train-up, and redeployment cycle. Here is an example of one rotation for one force pool:

1st Year: Deployment (or maintained readiness in peacetime)

2nd Year: Recovery (divided between leave and necessary actions for re-entering garrison)

3rd Year: Regular Garrison training

4th Year: Train-up (must maintain 80% force readiness in case of emergency need)

5th Year: Deployment (or maintained readiness in peacetime)

Each pool consists of 10-11 BCTs. The most prepared pool could be deployed for a short time at a relatively low cost. However, any engagement that required more than 11 BCTs or more than a year of sustained action would be tremendously expensive because it would require speedy mobilization of unprepared units. There are many steps that a unit must take to prepare adequately for a deployment and an emergency deployment would force them to accelerate through these steps. This would come at a great fiscal cost and could lead to logistical problems due to insufficient preparation. The pools in the garrison and recovery stage are also lowest

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priority in the distribution of funds which means that they could suffer from maintenance and equipment issues which would have to be solved before a deployment. In essence, this system facilitates a sustained deployment schedule or a series of minor engagements but it hinders a massive deployment, such as one characterized by a full scale invasion.

Technological Advancements

Missile technology

The military's ground based missile defense technology has increased significantly. The increase in this capability has been spearheaded by two programs: Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) and the MIM-104F (PAC 3). THAAD is a missile system based on hit to kill technology designed to destroy short, medium, and intermediate range ballistic missiles in their terminal phase. It relies on kinetic energy to destroy its targets and therefore has no warhead. It has seen strong results in its testing phases and early deployment (single shot kill probability of 0.9) but has not been fired in anger. Its use is further increased by the ease with which it is transported. The PAC 3 upgrade has also increased the lethality of the patriot missile defense system. It has accomplished this by developing software to enhance the fire team's situational awareness and redesigning the missile to feature smaller rockets

The Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense (Aegis BMD) is a system that allows warships to shoot down ballistic missile by expanding



US Department of Defense CENTCOM their radar and missile technology. It also allows for coordination between ships to ensure that the best shot is taken. It was initially planned to encompass the entire the Navy but budget restrictions have forced the Navy to settle for only 23 ships upgraded with this technology.

While all of this technology has been fully designed and implemented its mass production has been largely stalled. This means that the United States has the ability to protect its own key infrastructure in most regions of the world but it remains unprepared to defend against a broad spectrum ballistic missile attack or to export this technology to allies without a significant increase in capital.

The Ballistic Missile Defense program has been further hindered by an unwillingness of regional allies to allow the United States to place its missiles on their soil. This problem is particularly large within CENTCOM because many of the nations within this command's jurisdiction are wary of US military power and feel that the technology would only be used to benefit the United States without any tangible increase to their security. This has created a debate over whether the Military's policy should focus on fostering relationships in the region to allow for increased ground emplacements or should focus on spreading systems such as the Aegis BMD which can operate within the Navy but are less accurate and harder to maintain.

F-35

The F-35 program, which was initially sold as a cost cutting, multi-purpose tool, has

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suffered significant budget cuts. The planned fleet of 515 by 2016 has been cut to 250 and we have only reached 130 of these (65 F-35A, 40 F-35B, 25 F-35C). This slow progress makes it very unlikely that we will reach the reduced goal by 2016 without a massive push from Congress; however, Congress has been reluctant to throw more funding at the JSF project because it has a history of absorbing money without any tangible increase in effectiveness. The long term viability of the F-35 as a universal aircraft has been called into question and a temporary solution of upgrading other aircraft to extend their lifespan is being enacted. This plan focuses mainly on the F-16 but covers the majority of the fighter and bomber systems. With the notable exception of the F-22, which has received little to no funding or new purchase orders on the grounds that it is unsustainably expensive. These measures have been taken in order to reduce cost but there have been increases in maintenance issues related to extension of life spans and there is a growing concern that the United States is allowing other nations to close the gap in air superiority.

Littoral Combat Ship

In 2012, the three stealth littoral ships were created for the US Navy. Two are designed for surface warfare and the other is designed for anti-submarine operations. The combination of stealth and speed that these ships embody makes them ideal for coastal operations. There had been talk of creating a proper fleet of littoral ships but they were not deemed to be worth the expense because of the relative naval supremacy that the United States has enjoyed.



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Israel attempted to design its own littoral combat ship, with German financing, in an attempt to expand its supply of Israeli designed weaponry. When the economic hardships hit the European Union, Germany was forced to remove its funding for this ship. Without this funding, Israel's development attempts have stalled. The US has offered to sell its variant of the ship but Israel has been unwilling to abandon what has been a lengthy and costly project. This leaves a gap in Israel's ability to protect its coast against precision attacks.

Space based Infrared system (SBIRS)

The US has successfully deployed 4 geosynchronous satellites (2 in 2010 and 2 in 2012) which have given the capability to monitor the entire globe. This system has greatly increased missile detection and defense, technical intelligence, and battlefield awareness. It provides the earliest warning of missile launch and the best method of tracking the missile while it is airborne. This is an advantage that is particular to the United States as no other nation has comparable technology or even a full understanding of the capability that it grants.

Chemical demilitarization

In 2012 the United States finished its project of complete chemical demilitarization. This means that the entirety of its chemical weapon supply was destroyed in a safe and controlled manner. The US did this in compliance with several other countries, mainly Russia who also safely destroyed its entire stockpile. This destruction includes chemical weapons, precursor chemicals,

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chemical weapon delivery systems and development facilities for chemical weapons.

Regional Balance of Power

Israel

Israel remains the preeminent conventional power in the region but has fallen on hard times in the global recession. This has come two fold as its own economy and foreign aid suffered due to economic woes in its principal donating countries. It maintains a large technological advantage over its neighbors but several factors make a protracted war an unattractive option for Israel. Its entire military consists of reservists which come with a large activation cost and a large disruption to the functioning of society while they are deployed. The most likely course of action that Israel would take in the event of an armed conflict would be a lengthy and destructive air campaign followed by a blitzkrieg style ground assault to assure victory. Israel has the most powerful air force in the region by far but several of its neighbors have invested in complex air defense systems which could make the initial air war difficult. If Israel was unsuccessful in its attempts to cripple an enemy through the air, a protracted ground war would most likely ensue. This would come at a huge cost to all parties involved because of the lack of precision guided weaponry and the effects of ground war on society.

Iran

Iran is the principal balance to Israel's power in the region. It has the second most powerful conventional military but its air force is particularly behind Israel's. Iran has



US Department of Defense CENTCOM sought to compensate for this disadvantage through several methods, most of them asymmetrical. It has a long history of arming militia's whose policies align with its goals in any ways which means that any invading force would be faced with roving bands of militants armed with anti-air and anti-armor weaponry. Furthermore, Iran has developed and equipped its Navy for hit and run tactics which could allow it to compensate for any technological disadvantage in the gulf by avoiding a toe to toe conflict. Iran's nuclear program has continued in its development but its progress has been hard to track. Most estimates say that it is not capable of developing any kind of nuclear weapon until at least 2016. Thus, in the grand scheme of things, Iran is able to threaten aggressive action against almost any nation in the region and is at least able to defend itself against Israel.

Egypt

Egypt has developed a simmering enmity with Israel and its ties with the United States have weakened. While it is one of the stronger powers in the region Egypt has still not shown much of an interest in truly engaging in regional politics yet. It has appeared too focused on developing and stabilizing its relatively new government to return to its role as the Pan-Arab leader. However, it is powerful enough to sway the balance of power if it were to enter the conflict and at this time its interests appear to align better with Iran's than any other party in the region.

Positions within CENTCOM

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CENTCOM will be marked by a more rigid chain of command than is typical for crisis committees. Each position in the command works directly for the commander and is responsible for providing the best advice to the commander. They are tasked with pushing the agenda that they believe is best for the operation but the goals of each member will be subjugated to the requirements of the commander, which in turn come from the demands of the policy makers. In essence, the CENTCOM Commander will play a much more active role in deciding courses of action than an impartial chair would.

Service Branch representative (ARCENT, AFCENT, USMARCENT, USNAVCENT, and SOCCENT) – It is the job of each representative to serve as the main correspondent between the CENTCOM Commander and their respective branch. Each controls their branch, within the theater, and is responsible for ensuring that their branch takes action in accordance with the decisions made by the Commander. They are also responsible for keeping the Commander posted on their branches capabilities, disposition, and combat effectiveness (which speaks to the percentage of the branch's resources which are ready for combat).

CYBERCOM Representative – CYBERCOM is tasked with centralizing all of the DoD's cyber warfare assets into one organization. As a member of this command, the CYBERCOM representative will be tasked with advising the Commander on all options and threats involving cyber warfare. This ranges from protecting sensitive information to launching a cyber attack on a state actor.



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He has access to the resources of every organization within the DoD that is tasked with cyber warfare which should assist him in advising the Commander.

J-2 – The J-2 is a member of the Commander's staff tasked with handling intelligence. Each intelligence organization within CENTCOM funnels intelligence through him so that he can prepare an intelligence packet which provides the relevant intelligence for the Commander. He is often provided with an overwhelming amount of intelligence, so a key part of this job is separating the important from the distracting.

J-3 – The J-3 is another member of the Commander's staff and is tasked with training and operations. The training portion of his job requires that he coordinates training throughout the command to ensure that each unit is prepared for the tasks which it receives from higher. The operations portion involves drafting an operation order (OpOrd). An OpOrd is a detailed document which explains the plan that will be employed and each unit's role in fulfilling this plan. In essence, the J-3 takes the discussions and decisions that happen in the Commander's tent and turns it into a concrete document that subordinate units can use to orchestrate their actions.

J-5 – The J-5 is a staffer in charge of Strategy, Policy and Plans. This primarily centers on taking guidance from policy makers and creating long term strategic goals in theater that will accomplish the policy maker's goals. This includes the evolution of relationships with allies, the training of

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regional forces, and long term troop presence. The key difference between the J-5 and the J-3 is scale. The J-3 operates on a tactical level and is focused on accomplishing short term goals while the J-5 operates on a strategic level and is tasked with focusing those short term goals to ensure that they build to the completion of a national goal.

JAG – The JAG representative for CENTCOM provides legal advice to the Commander. This advice ranges from individual soldier's rights in the event of a violation of regulations to his legal scope within the command. He will serve an influential role in ensuring that the command does not exceed its legal limits.

Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA)– The DIA representative for CENTCOM is tasked with providing intelligence resources that exist outside of the traditional military purview. This will include multiple forms of intelligence, such as: human intelligence, signal intelligence, measurement and signature intelligence, etc. He will serve as a counterpart to the J-2 and, hopefully, should fill in all gaps in intelligence.

National Clandestine Service (NCS) – The NCS is tasked with handling active intelligence agents within the CIA. This service embodies the cloak and dagger operations of the United State's intelligence capabilities. The NCS representative will be tasked with coordinating the actions of the clandestine actors with the goals of the overall command. He will provide a valuable role in acquiring additional intelligence and conducting covert operations.



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Defense Threat Reduction Agency

(DTRA) – DTRA is tasked with reducing the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction. As a function of this goal, the DTRA representative will provide intelligence on possible WMD's within the region and expertise on the destruction or neutralization of those weapons. His primary function will be ensuring that the Commander is aware of all threats related to the use of unconventional weapons and advising him on the best policy to mitigate those threats. He has control over inspection agencies across the region but these are severely hampered if the host nation is uncooperative.

State Department Representative – CENTCOM works with many different nations to coordinate its actions and avoid international incidences. The State Department Representative is tasked with spear heading this cooperation in order to ensure that the United States maintains friendly relationships with its allies. It is also tasked with fostering cooperation with our allies in the region by encouraging them to work towards the goals enumerated by the Commander.

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) Representative – DARPA is tasked with conducting advanced research in a huge variety of fields in order to keep the United States military at the cutting edge of technological innovation. These projects are long term which means that they will not have a tactical role in the operations of CENTCOM. The main job of the DARPA representative is to keep CENTCOM aware of emerging technological and scientific trends and to provide analysis of unknown enemy

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technology. In essence, the DARPA representative is the primary scientific voice of CENTCOM.

National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)

Representative – Historically the NRO has been tasked with obtaining intelligence through imagery. Their specific focus is in gathering imagery in areas that are inaccessible to most types of technology. They use this for a variety of purposes such as: monitoring proliferation of WMDs, tracking terrorist and criminal organizations, and supporting international relief efforts. In recent years, the NRO has grown to include cyber operations. Their mission overlaps somewhat with CYBERCOMs but they have a more specific focus on offensive cyber operations, specifically designed to gather intelligence, but with broader capabilities.

National Security Agency (NSA)

Representative – The NSA is an intelligence agency designed specifically to protect national security. While the CIA is focused broadly on defending American interests across the globe, the NSA has a more specific mandate of defending the United States and its allies specifically. Therefore, the NSA representative will be tasked with providing intelligence and advice designed to protect America and its allies in any situation that arises. This advice will be strengthened by the vast intelligence and cryptology assets of the NSA.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

Representative – The United States military often works in conjunction with its NATO allies. They provide intelligence and assets which are vitally useful in the modern fight. The primary



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job of the NATO representative will be to coordinate CENTCOM's actions with NATO partners in the region and make sure that the CENTCOM commander is fully aware of the actions of our NATO partners at all times.

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