

cartographic perspectives

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cartographic perspectives on the news

MAPS & WAR

... whatever our politics and social conscience, we cannot deny the strong historical bond between map and soldier, nor can we dispute that much of the present digital cartographic effort is inspired or sustained by a concern for national defense.

Mark Monmonier, Technological Transition in Cartography, 1985

Operating at a wartime pace, the U.S. Defense Mapping Agency says it has shipped 35 million maps to the nearly 300,000 U.S. troops stationed in the Persian Gulf.

Cartographers at the agency's two major production centers in St. Louis and Brookmont, MD, have been working ten to twelve hour shifts, seven days a week since shortly after the United States began sending troops to the Persian Gulf.

All of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq have been committed to paper, Black said. The agency has had every country in the volatile Middle East mapped for several years, relying heavily on detailed satellite photos.

Map production already has overstepped what was done