

# **Insights on Joint Operations:**

## **The Art and Science**

### **Best Practices**

*The Move toward  
Coherently Integrated  
Joint, Interagency, and Multinational Operations*

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## Introduction

The Joint Warfighting Center's deployable training team is afforded the unique opportunity to visit and support commanders and staffs of joint headquarters worldwide as they prepare for, plan, and conduct operations. We gain insights into their challenges and their derived solutions as they support our national interests. The team also has the chance to analyze and compare practices amongst the different headquarters, reflect on the various challenges, techniques and procedures, and draw out and refine what we term "best practices."

This paper presents a compilation of our insights and best practices. It provides our observations on the increasingly complex security environment, the resultant evolution of planning and execution of joint, interagency, and multinational operations, and best practices by commanders and staffs at joint force headquarters.

We lay out the commonly viewed observation on the need for a more holistic view of the environment expanding beyond a traditional military battlefield view to one far more complex with many non-military players. We see this environment as an interconnected system of systems (including political, military, economic, social, informational, and infrastructure) comprised of friends, adversaries, and the unaligned. The paper describes how various joint headquarters visualize this complex, system of systems environment and use effects-based thinking to complement their operational planning processes. We describe how they are able to inclusively work with the many stakeholders, both interagency and multinational, to harmonize and synchronize military actions with the actions of other instruments of national and international power. This is the essence of operational art.

One overarching best practice is the continuing importance of commander-centric operations in which the commander relies on his intuition and judgment, issuing mission-type orders to achieve desired effects. This remains essential, even in this age in which the improvements in technology tempt one to centrally control operations.

The team has also culled out many best practices in how joint headquarters plan, direct, monitor, and assess operations – their decision cycles. Recognition that we cannot precisely 'model' the behavior of the complex environment makes assessment an essential part of these decision cycles. We discuss assessment in detail – it's an important best practice whose need is reinforced time and again in operational headquarters.

We live in a dynamic period. Insights and best practices are continually evolving. We hope to continue capturing and sharing these evolving thoughts and best practices in subsequent insights papers.

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## **1. Executive Summary**

Our U.S. military has significantly evolved over the past 5 years as we have adapted to an increasingly complex environment defined by the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) and other security challenges.

- Complex environment: Globalization, the information revolution, non-traditional adversaries, and our changing military capabilities have significantly changed today's security environment. It has changed from that of the traditional cold war "battlefield" to today's dramatically different and more complex "battlespace."
- Unified action: Commanders have experienced the absolute need (and challenges) of unified action - working inclusively with all the stakeholders, both U.S. and international, to understand and visualize this complex environment, and synchronize actions to achieve strategic objectives. This need for "inclusiveness" and "interdependence" is possibly the most significant adaptation we must achieve to reach ultimate success.
- Commander-centricity: Observations clearly reinforce the absolute importance of commander's guidance and intent, applying his instinct and intuition in exercising "command" -- the "Art of War". We see commanders not being lured into a control-centric "Science of War" style despite the technological and informational improvements in today's C4I systems. In fact the most successful commanders build a cohesive command, are good shepherds of their staff (giving guidance and working with them), use mission type orders, and "decentralize to the point of being uncomfortable" to empower their subordinates.

a. **The complex environment and catalysts for change:** The United States and its allies are engaged in a protracted global war within a very complex security environment. Our enemies are not only foreign states, but also non-state entities, loosely organized networks with no discernible hierarchical structure. These adversaries can not be defined only in terms of their military capabilities. Rather, they must be defined, visualized, and "attacked" more comprehensively, in terms of their interconnected political, military, economic, social, informational, and infrastructure systems.

Four major catalysts for change: globalization; the information revolution; the changing adversaries; and a smaller, more technologically enabled, military force have contributed to the complexity of this environment and fundamentally changed the way the U.S. military fights today's "global" war.

- Globalization, the world's open economic system of independent global markets, global communication systems, and ubiquitous media presence have all broadened security responsibilities beyond solely a military concern.
- The information revolution has allowed unprecedented sharing of information both for us and for our adversaries.
- The realization by our adversaries that winning a conventional mil-on-mil fight is not possible, has led them to expand conflict into domains not previously considered within the realm of traditional military operations during the cold war's conventional battlefield era.

- Lastly, we've become a smaller military in size, albeit very powerful and technologically advanced, and we can no longer rely on pure "massed forces" in accomplishing missions. We've learned the need to harmonize our actions, both within the joint force and also with our interagency and multinational partners, to best achieve our collective objectives.

The combination of all these factors has led us to adopt a more integrated approach to crisis resolution which seeks to synchronize military planning and operations with those of other government and non government agencies and organizations together with our international partners to achieve our objectives. In essence, we have pursued a more fully integrated joint, interagency, and multinational approach to effectively counter today's adversary in an increasingly more complex environment.

b. **Unified Action:** To a greater degree than ever, diplomatic, informational, and economic factors affect national security in this complex environment. We continually hear our operational commanders saying that they cannot achieve strategic objectives by military action alone in this complex environment. We've observed numerous best practices, all centered on an atmosphere of inclusiveness, in how operational commanders and our interagency and multinational partners work together to achieve objectives:

- Inclusiveness in understanding the complex environment: The environment is more than a military battlefield; it's a network of interrelated political, military, economic, social, informational, and infrastructure systems that are beyond a military-only ability to visualize.
- Inclusiveness in developing plans and during execution: The best plans and operations are those fully integrated with the other elements of national power – from the very beginning of planning.
- Inclusiveness in assessment: The other stakeholders have unique perspectives and expertise. Together they help build a more enriched overall assessment than a military-only perspective. Inclusion of civilian stakeholders in the initial assessments process, estimates and planning facilitate a more complete understanding of the nature of the problem to be solved and actions required to solve it. This more inclusive analysis leads to more coherent actions and better focused effort to achieve objectives.

We fight as one team with our joint, interagency, and multinational partners. These are not just words or a slogan; we depend on each other to succeed in today's complex security environment. This is de facto interdependence: the purposeful combination of capabilities to maximize their total complementary and reinforcing effects while minimizing their relative vulnerabilities.<sup>1</sup> Within our military, we live "joint interdependence" daily, in which the joint force commander (JFC) purposely crafts the organization and command relationships, recognizing that the components must

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<sup>1</sup> Expanded from the Joint interdependence definition in FM 1, The Army, June 2005, pg 3-1.

work together, supporting each other in an atmosphere of trust and confidence, to accomplish the mission.

Observed best practices continue to reinforce the value of this interdependence - both at the unified action level and within the joint force. We've observed several best practices on necessary conditions for interdependence:

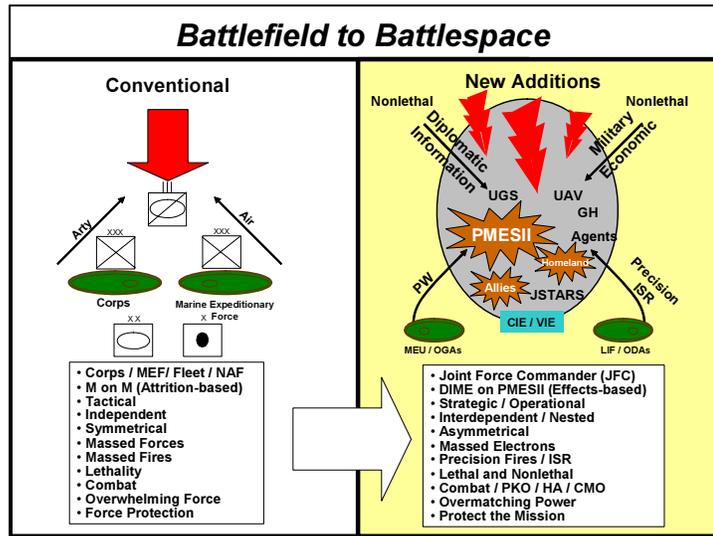
- The higher commander's setting of conditions by establishment of clear command relationships, particularly supported/supporting command relationships between components of the joint force, together with measures allowing for unity of effort with our interagency and multinational partners.
- Recognition that you don't need to 'own' your partners' forces in order to have assured access to their capabilities.
- Requisite trust and confidence that your partners will be there when you need their help in accomplishment of your assigned tasks.

c. **Commander-centric operations:** The commander's role in "command" - employing the "Art of War" - in this complex, unified action environment is critical, regardless of the technological and informational improvements in "control" -- the "Science of War." Without exception, we find that commander-centric organizations out perform staff-centric organizations that lack clear commander guidance and intent enriched by the commander's experience and intuition. Our "observer/trainer-senior mentor" teams observe and offer several best practices gleaned from these operational commanders:

- "The more things change, the more they stay the same" in leadership.
- Commander's vision / guidance and intent provide clarity in today's dynamic, ambiguous environment. Mission type orders remain key to success.
- Commanders who work with their staffs, giving guidance, and then staying with the staff and helping them, get better solutions in a tenth of the time.
- Maintain a broad perspective on the environment; it's more than a mil on mil conflict. Understand the power of DIME on PMESII.
- Rely on your instinct and intuition. Anticipate and seize opportunity. Guard against the staff tendency to "over-control" the fight. Work with and through your subordinate commanders. Continue battlefield circulation.
- Personal relationships count in the joint, interagency, and multinational world. Build these relationships, and foster trust and confidence with your partners.
- Be inclusive versus exclusive with your joint, interagency, and multinational partners in how you assess, plan, and make decisions.
- Focus on unity of effort, not unity of command. Recognize the reality of different perspectives and goals of your partners. Strive to arrive at a set of common desired effects to promote unity of effort.
- Stay at the operational level. Set conditions for operational and tactical success. Delegate authority to subordinates to fight the tactical fight.
- Decentralize where possible to retain agility and speed of action. This will likely entail decentralization -- some operational commanders have termed the phrase "uncomfortably decentralized" as the only way to be agile enough to take advantage of opportunities in today's operational environment.

## 2. Understanding and Visualizing the Environment.

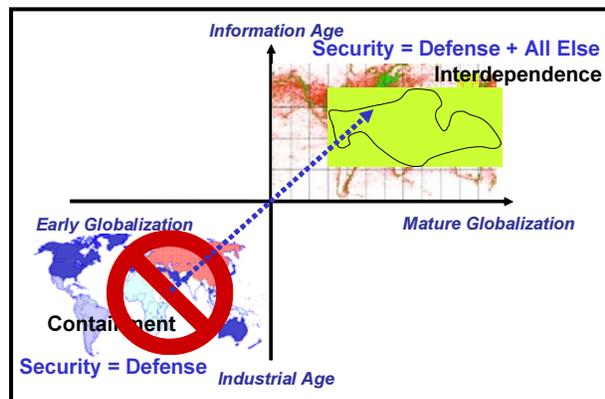
Globalization, the information revolution, and likely adversaries have made today's environment much more complex than what we faced just a few years ago. Operational commanders have adapted to the realities of this dramatically different and more complex security environment from that of the traditional cold war "battlefield" to the complexities of today's evolving "battlespace."



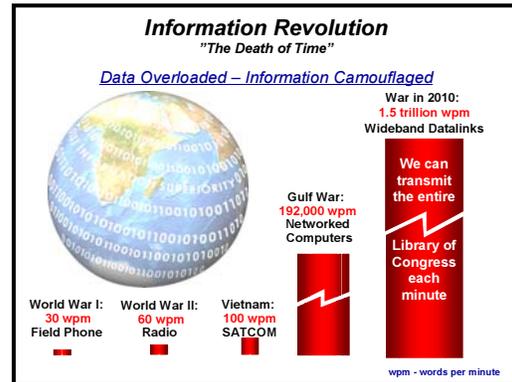
**Globalization:** Thomas Friedman, in his book, "The Lexus and the Olive Tree," defines globalization as "The dispersion and democratization of technology, information, and finance." We see this today. Open economic systems allow for increased trade on a global scale. Global brands foster familiarity and interdependence of economies and institutions. Communications, transportation, and information technology, together with this interdependency of economies connects activity around the world all the time. Events in one region have immediate impacts in other regions.

Globalization has also brought to the forefront other actors such as ethnic groups, transnational, non-state sponsored terrorism, and organized crime organizations. Globalization has precipitated more visible clashes of ideology through much fuller awareness of contrasts and gaps in cultural, religious, and value differences. There is more blurring of internal and external threats, and diminishment of traditional notions and authorities of national sovereignty.

This globalization has security ramifications. The world is much more interdependent; it is more vulnerable to regional issues, things like world oil flow, terrorism, and population displacements. This is reality; we're there, and we can't back away from it. Security in this global environment can no longer be guaranteed by traditional, military means alone. It has shifted from a military defense focus to that of using all elements of National Power.



**Information Revolution:** The information revolution has clearly changed the way our world operates. We have unprecedented ability to transmit and receive data, and it is growing exponentially, both in speed and volume. This has affected us in many ways: our command and control systems have changed, we have unparalleled situational awareness, but the environment which we operate and our adversary has also changed. The media has near instantaneous ability to broadcast events around the world, affecting both regional audiences as well as those in the states. Governments have access to information much more quickly and can affect national level decisions affecting our operations. And our adversaries also have gained ability to gain and share information much more quickly and in some cases surreptitiously.

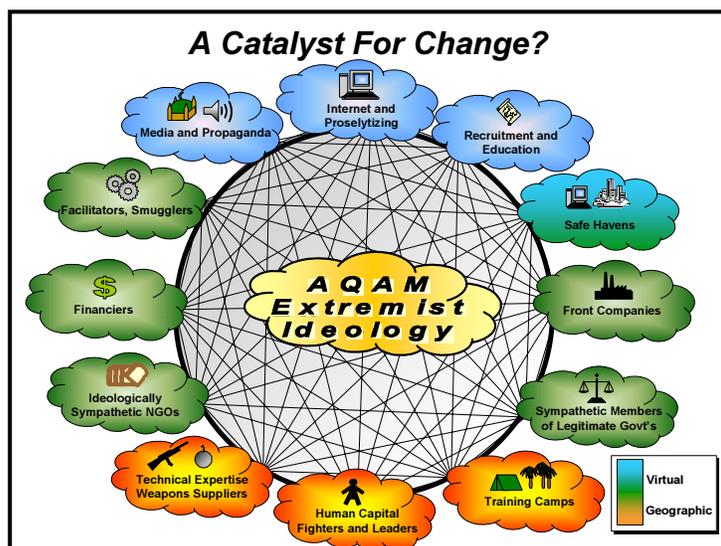


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**Challenges:** Together with the benefits of information revolution has come some challenges. The amount of information has exceeded our ability to manage or understand it. Vital information is often camouflaged / buried in the volume of transmitted data. And the human brain has not grown exponentially to keep abreast of the flood of information. Nor is everyone equal in their ability to send, receive, and understand data. The 'pipes' are different; tactical units are often not able to receive and process what higher headquarters can 'pump' out from their larger headquarters and more sophisticated systems.

The information revolution has also changed expectations. We're expected to keep up with whatever media report comes out; tactical units may be inundated with requests for information based on the insatiable demand for information both from the media, national leadership, and higher headquarters.

**Our adversary** has also changed. Our enemies are not only foreign states but increasingly are nonstate entities, loosely organized networks with no discernible hierarchical structure. They operate in an environment of failed or failing governments, ethnic stratification, religious violence, humanitarian disasters, stateless militants and proliferations of information technology and increasingly dangerous



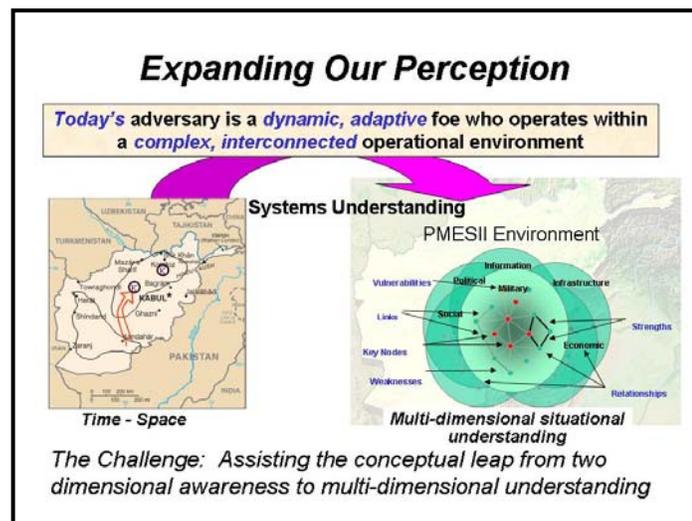
weapons. Our adversaries are an increasingly complex mix of local, regional and internationally organizations that can no longer be defined solely in terms of their military capabilities.

Many of these adversaries realize the futility in attacking us symmetrically in a conventional military-on-military fight. Rather they've discovered the more advantageous way of operating on the fringes – in domains not traditionally associated as being within the realm of military operations. They fight us by taking advantage of globalization and the information revolution – those same things that have dramatically improved our quality of life. They fight us through the internet, through terrorism, through diplomatic means by leveraging sympathetic governments and international organizations, through the use of the media, and by hurting us and our allies both economically and financially. Their strength is no longer tanks, airplanes, and ships – it is financiers, webmasters, and terrorists. These adversaries sustain themselves by nontraditional means – gone are the large, easily targeted supply depots, the characteristic communication systems and headquarters. They work out of nondescript locations, internet cafes, hotels, and safehouses.

**Visualization challenge:** The challenge for us then is how to understand and visualize this new adversary so that we can effectively defend our national interests. The traditional military-centric single center of gravity focus that worked so well in the cold war doesn't allow us to accurately analyze, describe, and visualize today's emerging networked, adaptable, asymmetric adversary. This adversary has no single identifiable 'source of all power.' Rather, because of globalization, the information revolution, and, in some cases, the non-state characteristic of our adversary, this form of adversary can only be described (and holistically attacked) as a system of systems.

A systems understanding: Every operational headquarters we've observed has implemented some form of 'systems' perspective to better understand and visualize the complex environment. They have all emphasized the need for an expanded perception of the environment beyond a

traditional military battlefield view to a more multi-dimensional situational understanding. They have recognized the importance of understanding the various Political, Military, Economic, Social, Informational, and Infrastructure (PMESII)



systems and their interrelationships.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, they have recognized the likely interrelationships of the broader friendly, adversary, and neutral or unaligned systems.

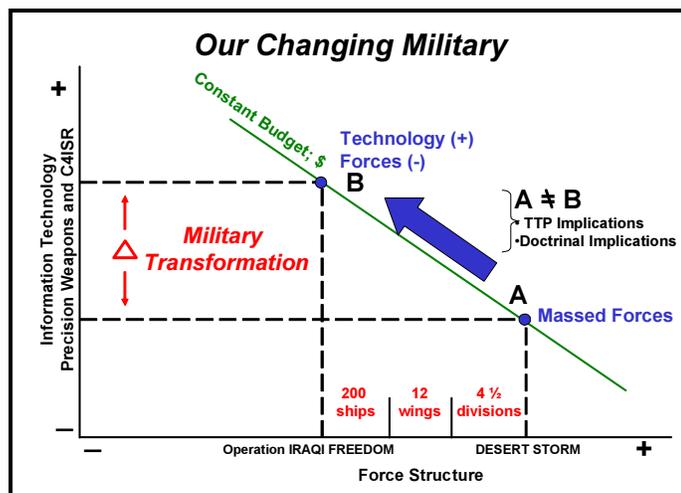
This systems perspective better enables a shared understandable visualization of the complex environment across both military and non-military audiences. We see this common visualization framework as the first key step in promoting cohesive action amongst disparate players. Now, some argue that our adversary can be precisely defined and modeled through this system understanding – and we can predict its behavior. We disagree. We believe today’s complex environment is far too complex for reliable modeling and prediction of outcomes. That said, we have seen the value in using the systems perspective to visualize the environment, gain a baseline appreciation of the environment, and organize information in a form useful to the commander and stakeholders. We have also seen its value in identifying likely key nodes and links as decisive points for action. In all cases though, continued feedback and assessment remains critical as we adjust actions to ensure we are attaining the desired effects and achieving our objectives.

**The ‘friendly environment’** has also changed significantly. We’ve changed from the days when General Colin Powell made famous the so-called Powell Doctrine, also known as the Powell Doctrine of Overwhelming Force, as part of the run up to the 1990-1991 Gulf War. His doctrine was based on the large force structure we had in 1990. However, since then we have become a smaller military in size, albeit very powerful and technologically advanced, and can no longer solely rely on “massed forces” in accomplishing missions, especially against this evolving, adaptive enemy.

Looking at the figure, we as a nation lost military force structure to pay for new technology in the years after Desert Storm. So today, we’re at point “B” with more technology and less forces.

A is different from B, not only in types of forces and our technology, but also in terms of the doctrinal and TTP<sup>3</sup> implications of those differences. We can’t simply

transfer the old doctrine and TTP that was so successful at point A (when we had a much larger force structure and different environment) to point B. Old doctrine (overwhelming force) and TTP simply won’t work in today’s complex environment and force structure. We need new doctrine and new TTP.



<sup>2</sup> I use these systems and the acronym ‘PMESII’ simply as one way to illustrate this broader view of the environment. These ‘systems’ could be described differently and include other aspects.

<sup>3</sup> TTP – tactics, techniques, and procedures

Another observation on our changing military is that our national leadership and the American people expect the “B” capabilities to be equal or greater than “A” capabilities. The technology enhancements have served us well in the more conventional fights. However we’re still finding the need for more ‘forces,’ both military and other elements of national power, for today’s challenges, especially the counterinsurgency fights. This remains a challenge. Our commanders are working hard at harmonizing our actions, both within the joint force and also with our interagency and multinational partners, to best achieve our objectives.

The joint force commanders and their component commanders have made great strides in enhancing their capabilities to operate in this complex environment despite being a smaller force – to keep B greater than A. They are leading the way in thinking through the doctrinal and TTP implications of point B.

We’ll discuss their thinking and best practices throughout this paper, but a few selected insights up front:

- Effects based thinking. Changing our perspective from that of friendly versus enemy military warfare (military on military thinking) to the use of all elements of national power affecting the broader adversary’s environment (DIME on PMESII).<sup>4</sup> Commanders are thinking this way, and developing and using desired effects as a means to provide common visualization and better achieve unity of effort with our partners.
- Arrangement of operations. The operational commanders conduct both sequential and simultaneous operations to achieve the desired effects. They recognize that there is value in both types of operations.
- Agility and Flexibility. Much progress has occurred here. The collective recognition of the value of interdependent over independent operations, mission type orders, and decentralization of decisions, coupled with agile supported and supporting command relationships based on developed trust and confidence has significantly increased the agility and flexibility of our joint force.
- Information technologies. We have better situational understanding than ever before thanks in large part to emergent technologies. Our operational headquarters are sharing information within the joint force and with our stakeholders to better enhance both planning and execution.

#### **Emerging doctrine and TTP**

- Effects based thinking
- Better harmonization with all Elements of National & International Power (DIME)
- Arranging Operations both Sequentially and Simultaneously to achieve desired effects
- Increasing Agility and Flexibility within the force
- Leveraging Information Technologies to enhance situational understanding and command and control
- Maturing Military aspect of Strategic Communications
- Limiting Footprint through host nation support and contractor support
- Extensive use of Special Operations Forces

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<sup>4</sup> DIME – diplomatic, informational, military, economic elements of power. Like PMESII, I use this acronym simply as to get across the broader means to achieve objectives. There are numerous other acronyms / elements of national and international power.

- The military aspect of strategic communication has matured greatly, but still needs more improvement. Our field commanders are continually focusing on promulgating their messages using all means available, not just their public affairs or PSYOP capabilities, but also through civil military operations activities, maneuver forces, key leader interaction, and by leveraging the many non-military assets. Interaction with the US embassies and other stakeholders is continually improving, expanding the means for promulgating the commanders' messages.
- Integration with special operations forces has greatly improved due in large part to commander efforts, improvements in agility and flexibility described above, and the simple act of continuous interaction from the tactical to operational level over the past five years.

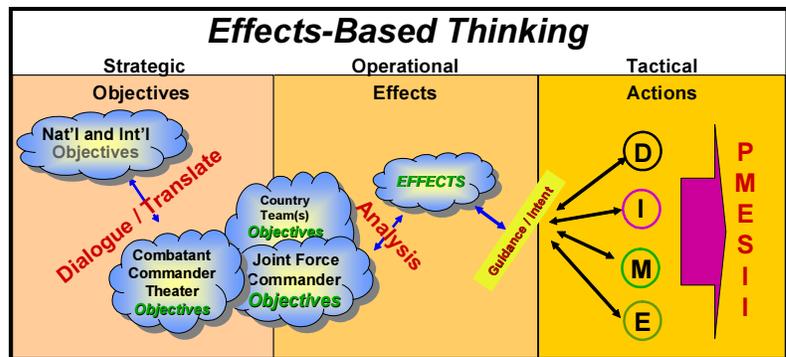
### 3. Unified Action.<sup>5</sup>

Every headquarters we visit identify the need for unity of effort as one of the keys to success in achieving strategic objectives in this complex security environment. All recognize the value of harmonizing and synchronizing military actions with the actions of other instruments of national and international power. This is basic and long standing; JP 0-2 even states “The United States relies for its security on the complementary application of the basic instruments of national power: diplomatic, economic, informational, and military.”

We’ve observed a very inclusive approach of working hand in hand with stakeholders (both interagency and multinational partners) in achieving this unified action. We don’t see the commanders taking an “overall direction” role vis-a-vis stakeholders (as noted in the definition in the footnote) but rather working together with the stakeholders to jointly develop objectives and the plans to achieve those objectives. This is significant. These commanders understand the different perspectives and ‘cultures’ among both our interagency and multinational partners, and that taking an authoritative lead role is often counterproductive to overall unity of effort and mission accomplishment.

#### **Effects-based thinking:**

Many of the joint headquarters use an effects-based thinking approach to help harmonize this application of all elements of national power (Diplomatic, Information, Military and Economic) against the interdependent systems (Political, Military, Economic,



Social, Information and Infrastructure) that comprise the adversary’s environment. In essence we see effects-based thinking as simply developing and using desired effects as a way to better achieve unity of effort with our partners. Three key elements (referring to the figure):

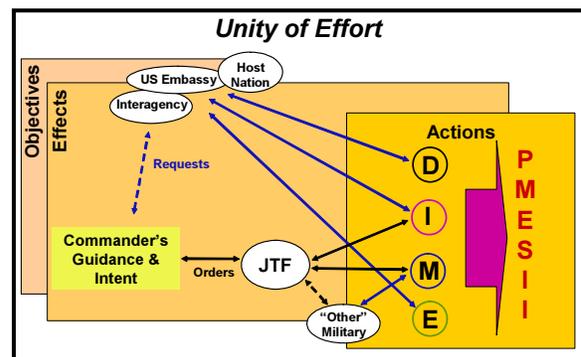
- 1) The commander and staff dialogue with national and international leaders and translate what they see, hear, and feel into solid, logical Combatant Command level campaign objectives. (the ends)
- 2) They collectively (with other stakeholders) define desired conditions of the “complex” environment (often expressed in terms of the desired effects on the systems of that environment – PMESII) to achieve objectives. (the ways)

<sup>5</sup> Unified Action: A broad generic term that describes the wide scope of actions (including the synchronization of activities with governmental and nongovernmental agencies) taking place within unified commands, subordinate unified commands, or joint task forces under the overall direction of the commanders of those commands. (JP 1-02)

- 3) Collectively working with our stakeholders, they develop a set of actions to attain those desired effects, and harmonize military actions with those of the stakeholders to attain the desired effects and achieve objectives. (the means)

Observations in this effects-based thinking:

- This effects-based thinking is not new. We'd argue that good commanders have always thought and led this way. Its underlying premise is the recognition of the intrinsic value of the 'art of war' and the value - the necessity - of mission type orders identifying the "what" in terms of desired effects versus the detailed "how." We've seen effects-based thinking misinterpreted by those who incorrectly want to over-engineer it and turn it into a bunch of equations, data bases, and check lists.
- Theater objectives: We find an enduring challenge faced by theater strategic level headquarters is the continual dialogue and translation necessary in determining and, when warranted, revising theater objectives. This takes a lot of effort and never ends. National and international positions and objectives change. Our theater-strategic headquarters recognize this and maintain dialogue to ensure they remain nested within these national and international objectives.
- Developing desired effects: With a common visualization of the complex environment we find that the military and other stakeholders are able to develop a common, shared set of desired (and undesired) effects to serve as a unifying basis for action to achieve theater and strategic objectives. One danger is developing too many effects. Like priorities, if every thing is important then nothing is important. We've seen a rule of thumb that 8-12 effects are about right for a campaign.
- 'Effects' is a noun, not a verb: We still see some initial confusion in the word – effects. Effects describe the state of the systems within the environment. We take actions to 'attain' these effects, i.e. a change in the environment. Our actions 'affect' the environment and bring about a desired 'effect.'
- Harmonizing actions: With a common set of desired and undesired effects, the commander can issue guidance and intent to his staff and components, and work with other stakeholders to accomplish fused, synchronized, and appropriate actions on PMESII systems within the operational environment to attain the desired effects and achieve objectives.
- Key to this effects-based approach is full participation of all of the players - military and other elements of national and international power- in a fully inclusive process of assessing, planning, directing, and monitoring actions.
- Development of objectives and effects normally occurs at the theater-strategic and operational level. We believe it is the essence of operational art. That said, effects-based thinking is relevant at all levels in terms of understanding the environment and the purpose behind operations.



#### **4. Commander-centric Leadership.**

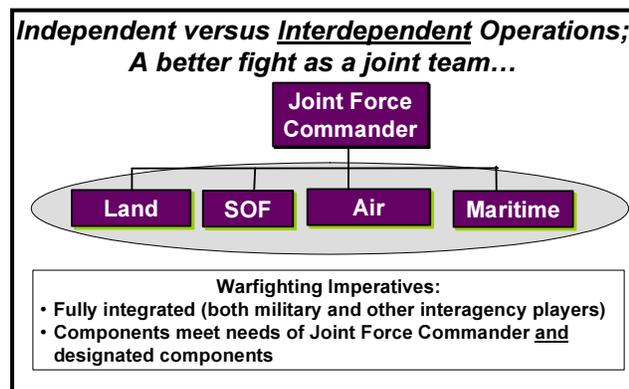
The commander's role in "command" - employing the "Art of War" - in this complex, unified action environment is critical, regardless of the technological and informational improvements in "control" -- the "Science of War." Without exception, we find that commander-centric organizations out perform staff-centric organizations. Staff-centric organizations lack clear commander guidance and intent enriched by the commander's experience and intuition. We offer several best practices gleaned from these operational commanders:

- Leadership "the more things change the more they stay the same..."
  - Commander's courage and character remain paramount.
  - Commander's vision / guidance and intent provide clarity in today's dynamic, ambiguous environment.
  - Mission type orders remain key to success. Rely on your instinct and intuition. Anticipate and seize opportunity. Work with and through your subordinate commanders. Continue battlefield circulation.
  - Commanders must maintain a broad perspective on the environment; it's more than a mil on mil conflict. Understand DIME on PMESII.
  - Be Commander-centric versus Staff-centric. Provide guidance to your staff, and help them. You'll get a better solution in a tenth of the time. Guard against the staff tendency to "over-control" the fight.
  - Be a learning organization before & during the fight, NOT after it.
- Commander Insights in the interagency and multinational world:
  - Personal relationships count in the joint, interagency, and multinational world. Build these relationships, and foster trust and confidence with your partners.
  - Be inclusive versus exclusive with your joint, interagency, and multinational partners in how you assess, plan, and make decisions.
  - Focus on unity of effort, not unity of command. Recognize the reality of different perspectives and goals of your partners. Strive to arrive at a set of common desired effects to promote unity of effort.
- Commander insights in the "joint" world:
  - Stay at the operational level. Set conditions for operational and tactical success. Delegate authority to subordinates to fight the tactical fight.
  - Instill a one team, one fight mentality. Build and reinforce trust and confidence.
  - Recognize the value of the 'horizontal' piece of warfighting. Establish supported/supporting command relationships between subordinates. Demand integration and promote interdependence. Condition/teach subordinates to plan and execute within a framework of 'access to others' forces' versus requiring 'ownership of those forces.'
  - Establish mission approval processes that allow you and subordinates to retain agility and speed of action. This will likely entail decentralization – some operational commanders have termed the phrase "uncomfortably decentralized" as the only way to be agile enough to take advantage of opportunities in today's battlespace.

## 5. Operational Design - Setting Conditions for subordinates.

As noted upfront, our operational commanders are leading the way in the move away from independent, stovepipe operations to interdependent operations. This interdependence is a mindset change from a 'vertical' focus on receiving and unilaterally accomplishing tasks from the higher commander to that of *working much more closely with your horizontal warfighting partners* as depicted by the oval in the adjacent figure. This interdependence is more than interoperability -the technical ability to work together. It is the recognition that the Armed Forces fight as one team of joint, interagency, and multinational partners – and depend on access to each other's capabilities to succeed.

This interdependence is a conscious decision that the Joint Force Commander (JFC) makes and implements through his directed reliance of each component on the capabilities of others to maximize their total complementary and reinforcing actions, while minimizing their relative vulnerabilities.



This section addresses our observations and insights on how our operational commanders are making this a reality in the field through their operational design of setting conditions for their subordinates' success. We find that they focus on five key elements in their operational design. These elements are interrelated; together they set conditions for success:

- An effects-based construct in which they say what needs to be done (effects), but not the specifics of how (discussed earlier).
- A task organization comprising both battlespace owners and functional task forces to take best advantage of all of the military force capabilities.
- A battlespace geometry that provides sufficient control measures in the terms of boundaries and fire control measures without over-controlling the fight.
- Command relationships that promote interdependence amongst the components, instill a one team one fight mentality, provide authorities commensurate with responsibilities, and build trust and confidence.
- Decentralized authorities that empower subordinates to operate within commander's intent and take advantage of unforeseen opportunities within the chaos of battle.

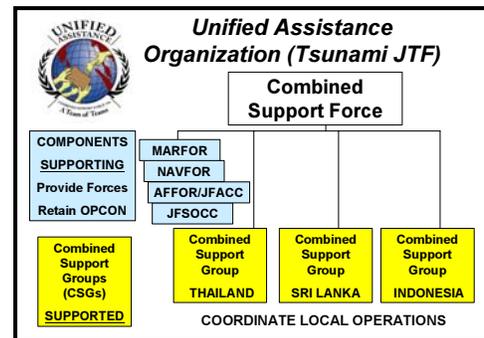
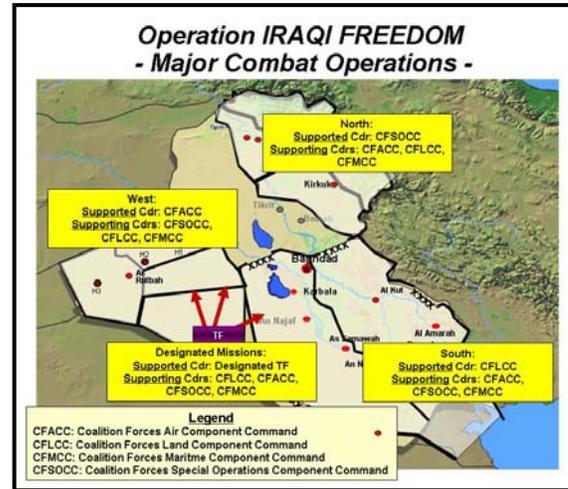
**Task Organization:** We've seen a huge evolution in how the joint force commanders are following the well known adage "Form follows Function" in task organizing their joint force and even naming their subordinate task forces. They've evolved beyond the traditional (and doctrinal) use of Service (e.g. ARFOR, NAVFOR...) and Functional (e.g. JFLCC, JFMCC...) components to tailored organizations of both battlespace owners and functional task forces to take best

advantage of all of the military force capabilities in accomplishing the mission. We're seeing three key insights in terms of the task organization:

- Clear designation of battlespace commanders (e.g. JFLCC, JFMCC, RC South, MND-N).<sup>6</sup>
- Use of functional task forces (e.g. special operations, counter IED, Medical, Engineer) operating throughout the joint operations area.
- Dual-hatting Service force commanders as operational commanders (battlespace or functional TF commanders) to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

Insights:

- Clear designation of battlespace commanders. Our joint commanders still primarily organize to fight along a geographic orientation. At the combatant command level, we're seeing the continued use of JTFs given geographic joint operations areas (JOAs). We're also seeing the traditional organization along a JFLCC, JFACC, and JFMCC orientation for major combat operations giving these components geographic AOs, particularly at the Combatant Command level. GEN Franks organized his joint force by land, maritime, and air components focused on those 'domains.' He went a step further in his organization, and empowered his Special Operations component with an area of operation in the north, and his Air component with an AO in the west. We're also seeing a common task organization, especially at the JTF level in land-centric operations, using geographically-based components directly subordinate to the joint commander (e.g. the regional commands in Afghanistan, MNDs in Iraq and Bosnia, and CSGs in the Unified Assistance operation – see figure).
- Use of functional task forces (e.g. special operations, counter IED, Medical, Engineer). This is a significant evolution. We've seen almost every joint force commander establish functional task forces in addition to battlespace commanders to conduct specific mission sets required throughout the joint operations area. Often, the forces capable of performing these specific missions are low-supply/high-demand forces, and the expertise and C2 capabilities necessary for their employment may not be resident in each of the

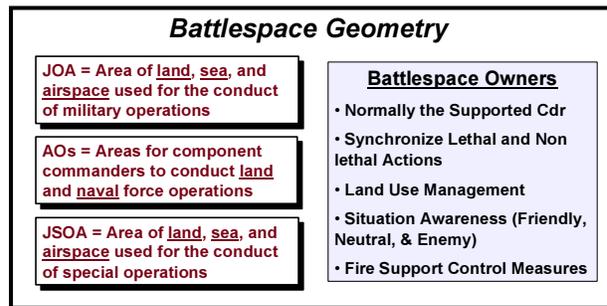


<sup>6</sup> JFLCC – Joint Force Land Component Command  
 JFMCC – Joint Force Maritime Component Command  
 RC South – Regional Command controlling the southern AO (used in Afghanistan)  
 MND-N – Multinational National Division Controlling the Northern AO (used in Iraq and Bosnia)

battlespace headquarters (e.g. an MND). We discuss how the joint force commander promotes interdependence amongst the battlespace owners and these functional task forces in succeeding sections on battlespace geometry and command relationships.

- Dual-hatting Service force commanders to increase efficiency and effectiveness. We're seeing very few cases of separate and distinct service force command headquarters within the joint task forces. In almost every case, the joint commander opts to dual hat either himself or his subordinates as service force commanders. The joint commanders are also using their authorities to consolidate selected Service Title X responsibilities for more efficient use of resources.

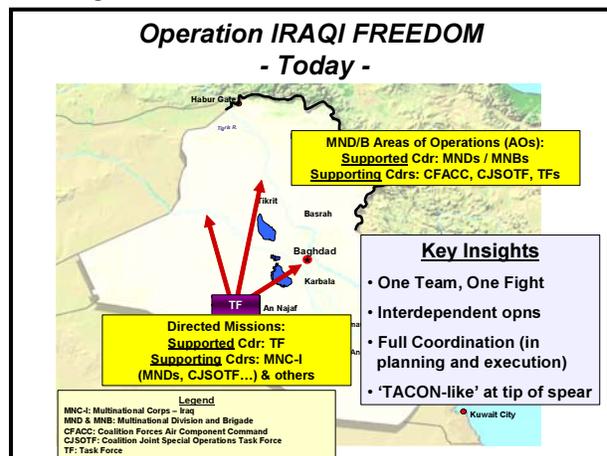
**Battlespace Geometry:** As noted above, we see joint commanders laying out the battlespace in terms of 'areas of operation' and identifying battlespace owners. They then empower these battlespace owners with the requisite authority commensurate with their responsibilities as battlespace owners.



Insights:

- Today's battlespace is very complex. Many players are operating in the battlespace owners' joint operations area and the areas of operation. The battlespace owners need the 'support' of these other players even though they may not 'own them'. We've seen a huge evolution in this area in which the battlespace owners are increasingly more comfortable with these other 'non-assigned' players in their battlespace while still recognizing and fulfilling their authorities and responsibilities noted in the figure.

- Delineation of battlespace together with supported/supporting command relationship provides sufficient control measures without overly restricting the commanders. We're seeing less reliance on boundaries as the primary means to control the fight. Commanders are increasingly using horizontal linkages means such as supported/ing command relationships (discussed below), situational awareness tools, liaison, and commander crosstalk rather than fragmenting battlespace with unnecessary boundaries.



- One continuing challenge in this battlespace geometry is the potential for other players, i.e. those military forces not assigned to the battlespace owner and other interagency players, to not keep the battlespace owner apprised of their activities

and movements. We've heard several joint commanders and subordinates emphasizing the need for these other players to keep the battlespace owner informed. These players must recognize the battlespace owner authorities and responsibilities as they all work to accomplish the mission.

**Command relationships:** We've seen joint commanders spending a lot of time ensuring they get command relationships right up front. Their instincts are right on target. We've found that getting the command relationships right up front is absolutely critical to success.

We see them using OPCON, TACON, and Support command relationships to allow for both unity of command of habitually organized forces (primarily OPCON and TACON authorities), and access to the capabilities of other forces (primarily Support authority).

OPCON provides for "ownership" of the forces. It allows the commander to task both "what to do" and "how to employ." It requires expertise in planning and employment. It remains the preferred command relationship over forces that the commander will continuously own and employ, and for which he and his staff have the expertise and capability to command and control.

***Supported / Supporting***

"Support is a command authority...

The support command relationship is, by design, a somewhat vague, but very flexible arrangement.

...The establishing authority is responsible for ensuring both the supported and supporting commander understand the degree of authority granted." Joint Pub 0-2

TACON, a subset of OPCON, also provides for 'ownership' of the forces. It allows for local direction and control for accomplishment of a specific mission.

We often see supporting commanders 'providing' forces TACON to a supported commander. While most normally attribute this 'forces provided TACON' to air sorties provided by the Navy or Marines TACON to the JFACC, another, very effective use is the supporting commander horizontally providing ground or SOF forces TACON to a supported commander. The key significance is that it's the supporting commander directly delegating the TACON authority. This TACON is not directed from the higher commander in the form of a FRAGO, but rather delegated horizontally between supporting to supported commander. This TACON authority provides for unity of command at the tip of the spear – at the tactical level. We see this delegation of TACON, or in some cases a direct support relationship, as a best practice.

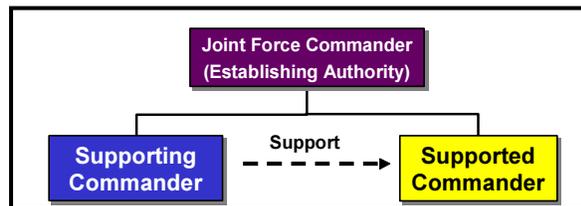
Support. We have learned in OEF and OIF that the support command relationship is probably the most powerful command relationship in terms of gaining access to additional capabilities. It provides the authority and basis for interdependence, and may be the most appropriate in today's operational environment. This support relationship in essence makes the supporting commanders responsible for the success of the supported commander. They can't simply provide some forces and

walk away from the challenge. Rather, it requires them to stay involved with the supported commander and continue to aid and assist him as he conducts operations.

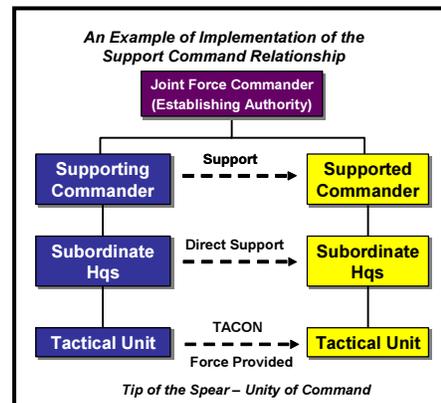
This support relationship allows for the horizontal integration discussed upfront in this section. The support command authority is increasingly being used to provide a supported commander access to capabilities that he doesn't own. The flexibility of this support command relationship is one of its greatest advantages. It supports decentralized execution within mission type orders and commander's intent. There will normally be multiple, concurrent supported and supporting commanders - thus there is a need for clear priorities being established by the establishing authority.

#### Insights:

- The establishing authority is the higher joint commander – it may be a Combatant Commander, a JTF commander, or even at the SecDef level in the case of certain GWOT or STRATCOM activities. This higher commander defines the support command relationships amongst his subordinates in terms of who is supported and supporting, the respective degree of authority, and overall priorities – especially where there are limited resources supporting numerous operations – SOF and Air are good examples of some limited resources. He is also the referee, the tie breaker – when subordinates cannot work out the necessary balance of access to capabilities. Some establishing authority best practices:
  - Giving clear direction to subordinates in terms of priorities and intent to allow subordinates to work horizontally with each other in accomplishing tasks.
  - Set conditions for and demand crosstalk amongst supported and supporting commanders to build and reinforce the necessary horizontal personal relationships, and trust and confidence.
  - Challenge your subordinates to 'self regulate' their apportionment of capabilities to one another through horizontal crosstalk. This crosstalk amongst your components will allow them to arrive at the optimal apportionment of capabilities to accomplish both their assigned tasks and support the designated supported commanders.
  - Staying involved when necessary to arbitrate / resolving conflicting understanding of priorities.
- Supported Commander. The supported commander is given access to supporting capabilities and has the authority to provide general direction, designate and prioritize missions, targets, or objectives, and other actions for coordination and efficiency (to include requesting liaison and directing of reporting requirements). Some supported commander best practices:
  - Identify needs to supporting commanders. This is a continuing, not one time, activity.



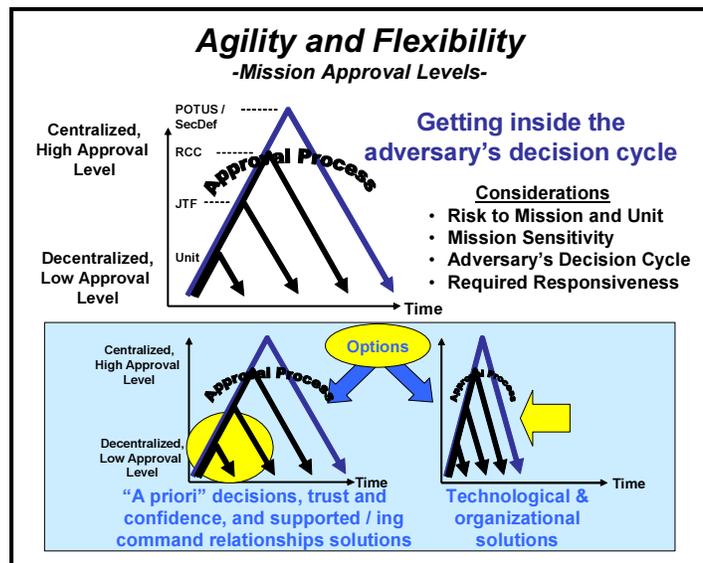
- Request liaison from supporting commanders to help coherently integrate supporting capabilities in the operation.
  - Bring lack of support first to supporting commanders, and if necessary to establishing authority for resolution.
- Supporting Commander. The supporting commander is responsible to both ascertain and satisfy the needs of the supported commander within the priorities directed by the establishing authorities. Some supporting commander best practices:
    - Recognition of your role in ensuring the success of the supported commander. We see those believing and following through on the ‘one team one fight’ view set the conditions for success.
    - Understand and respect the authority of supported commander. Recognize that your support to another supported commander may have even a higher priority than a mission for which you have been tasked.
    - Take time in ascertaining supported commanders’ requirements and understanding the overall priorities in apportioning your forces to accomplish both your assigned tasks and those of other supported commanders.
    - Send liaison to supported commanders to assist them in planning and in ascertaining your requirements.
    - Direct appropriate command relationships to your subordinates to ensure you (and your subordinates) fulfill your supporting responsibilities. You, as the supporting commander, can ‘provide forces or capabilities’ in a ‘direct support’ or even ‘TACON’ relationship to a respective supported commander to ensure his success.



Administrative Control (ADCON). Defined as “The direction or exercise of authority over subordinate or other organizations in respect to administration and support,”<sup>7</sup> ADCON normally includes the organization of Service forces, control of resources and equipment, personnel management, unit logistics, individual and unit training, readiness, mobilization, demobilization, discipline, and other matters not included in the operational missions of the subordinate or other organizations. ADCON for the numerous Service Title X responsibilities remains an important authority and responsibility. This is another area in which we’re seeing the Combatant Commanders, JTF commanders, and Service Component Commanders focusing on to make administration and support as efficient and effective as possible. It is further discussed later in the logistics section.

<sup>7</sup> Definition from JP 1-02

**Decentralized authorities.** Our commanders have made great strides in developing the decentralized authorities to allow their subordinates to operate within the adversaries' decision cycle. They recognize the reality that the higher one needs to go in the chain of command to receive mission approval for an operation, the longer it will normally take. Fleeting targets may be lost. The ability to rapidly take advantage of chaos in the environment is lost. Initiative can be lost. Additionally, complicated mission approval processes take both time and effort – and take staffs and commanders away from the operations at hand to work through mission approvals.



Mission Approval. The figure portrays the challenges and means to operate inside the adversary's decision cycle. The vertical axis addresses the mission approval level – with all the various levels of command culminating with the President at the top. The horizontal axis is time – the time to request and gain mission approval. So, what we see is the higher one goes along the y-axis (i.e. centralized / higher approval level), the longer it takes to gain mission approval and the more likely you will miss targets of opportunity.

At the bottom of the figure we depict two options that we've seen out in operational headquarters to shorten the time required to gain mission approval.

The left option focuses on decentralizing mission approval levels – pushing them down into the lower left quadrant... Here we see the value of mission type orders and a priori decisions.

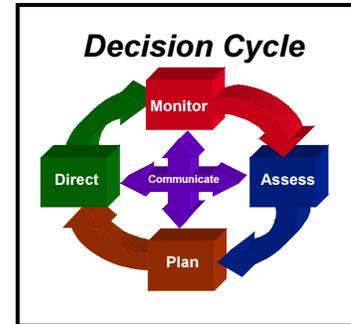
The right side addresses streamlining the processes, especially where mission approval can't be delegated. Here we see the value of technological and organizational solutions.

Insights:

- Delegate authorities to the point of being 'uncomfortably decentralized' in order to get inside the adversary's decision cycle.
- Gain agility and flexibility through horizontal collaboration in which supporting commanders work directly with supported commanders, provide capabilities and delegate authorities to take advantage of emerging opportunities within the chaos of battle.

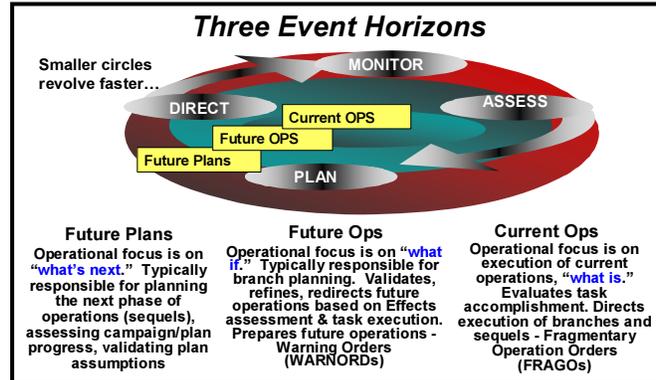
## 6. Decision cycle.

The decision cycle assists the commander in understanding the environment and in focusing the staff to support critical decisions and actions. We see every command using a cycle similar to the one depicted here. They all assess how they're doing, conduct planning based on this assessment to achieve desired effects and objectives, direct tasks to subordinates and request / recommend actions to stakeholders, and monitor operations and the environment to support assessment. They communicate throughout this cycle, both within the headquarters and with higher, adjacent, and subordinate commands.



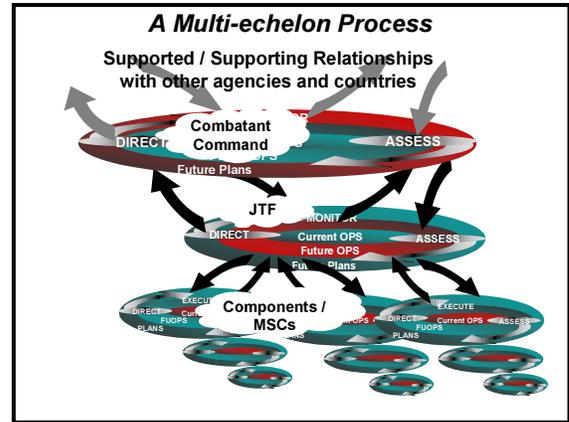
We have observed that inclusion of stakeholders in this decision cycle is critical for achieving unity of effort. We will further describe this cycle after touching on event horizons and how the headquarters interact in terms of their decision cycle with its higher, adjacent, and subordinated headquarters.

**Three event horizons:** We find that the joint headquarters function on three general event horizons – current operations, future operations, and future plans. We find each event horizon moves (spins) at different rate in terms of how it goes through the key aspects of the decision cycle. Each event horizon also requires supporting battle-rhythm events supporting its planning, execution, and assessment.



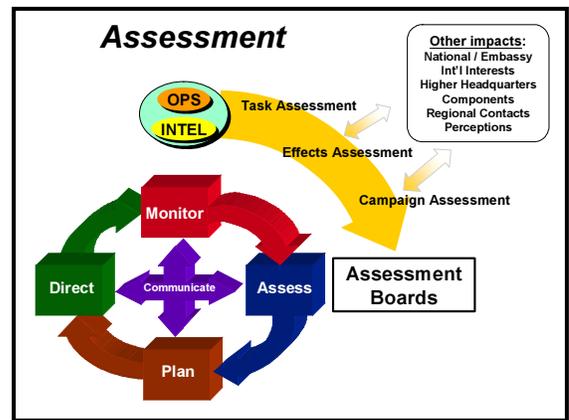
- The current operations event horizon focuses on the 'what is,' and can rapidly progress through the decision cycle – sometimes minutes for quick breaking events. Current operations produce a larger volume of orders including administrative fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) & small tactical FRAGOs (e.g. change in priorities). These kinds of activities generally do not require full staff integration. It does, however, require some limited planning capability.
- The future operations event horizon focuses on the 'what if,' and normally moves slower with more deliberate assessment and planning activities resulting in such things as major FRAGOs directing major tactical actions (e.g. named operations) and troop movements within theater (e.g. mvmt of a brigade from one MND to another). It generally requires full staff integration.
- The future plans event horizon is focused on the 'what's next,' interacts heavily with higher headquarters planning efforts, and moves very deliberately through the decision cycle. It focuses on activities such as development of OPLANs and FRAGOs to Campaign Plan and Policy directives or Major troop rotations. These kinds of activities normally require full staff integration.

This decision cycle nests with other echelon headquarters' decision cycles across all three event horizons as depicted in the adjacent figure. It's continually interfacing with the higher headquarters' decision cycle (which is normally more deliberate and slower moving), with adjacent units, and with subordinate unit decision cycles (which will likely be moving more rapidly).



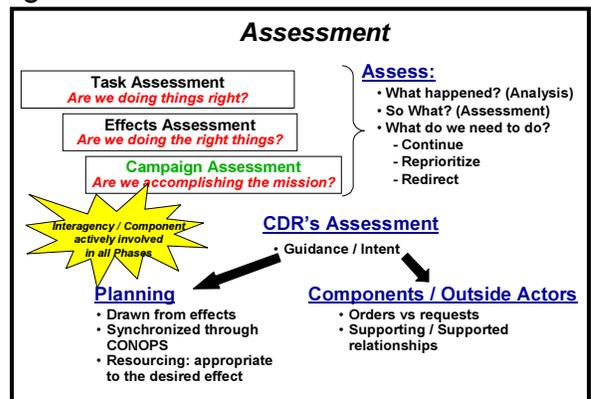
**Insights on the elements of the decision cycle:**

**Assessment:** Assessment is an important best practice whose need is reinforced time and again in operational headquarters. These headquarters all recognize that they cannot precisely 'model' the behavior of the complex environment nor 'predict' results. They all use assessment to measure how they're doing (see the three areas of assessment – task, effects, and campaign assessment on the adjacent figure) and then adjust (following commander's guidance and intent) to stay on course.



**Insights:**

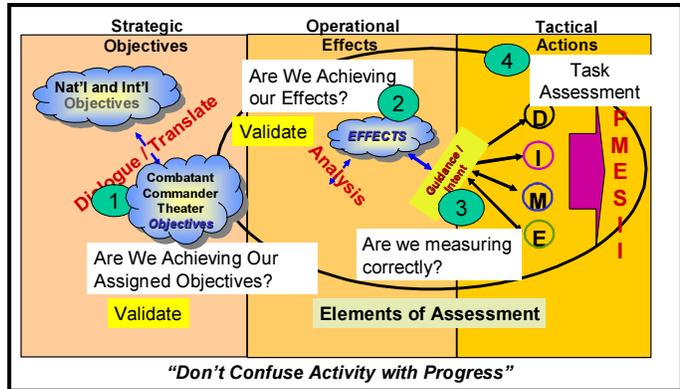
- The danger in over-engineering assessment. A balance is needed between a quantitative and qualitative approach to assessment. Assessment, especially effects and campaign assessment, is tough, and in many cases subjective. Because of the difficulty in measuring progress on attainment of effects or campaign objectives, we've seen some staffs over-engineer assessment, building massive quantifiable briefings that do not always logically or clearly support a commander's assessment requirement nor assist him in developing guidance and intent. They too often focus on assessing activity versus progress toward achieving the commander' objectives. Quantitative indicators should only serve as a start point for commanders' and staffs' subjective assessments based on observation and experience. We've seen as a best practice a balance of quantitative and



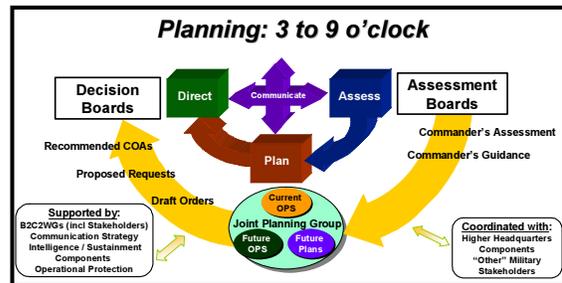
qualitative input to assessment with the commander using numerous venues (including battlefield circulation and discussion with commanders and stakeholders) to gain his personal assessment. These commanders balance a possible staff tendency toward a 'science of war' solution, limit the amount of time and effort their staffs put into quantifying assessments, and recognize their command role in applying their experience, intuition, and own observations in an 'art of war' approach to assessment.

- Recommendations based on assessment: Another staff challenge is developing and making recommendations to the commander on 'what needs to be done' based on assessments. Often, just developing the 'what happened' and the 'so what' of assessment *exhausts* the staff and they don't get to the most important aspect – recommending 'what needs to be done.' An observed best practice is always providing recommendations at all levels of assessment – task, effects, and campaign.
- Frequency and command level of assessments: Task, effects, and campaign level assessments have different levels of focus for tactical, operational, and theater-strategic headquarters, and have different frequencies of formal assessment. We've observed that tactical and operational level headquarters routinely conduct task assessments using friendly measures of performance answering 'are we doing things right.' These assessments normally occur fairly frequently and are a focus area within the current operations staff area. Operational level headquarters, most of the JTF headquarters we observe, focus their efforts on effects assessment, answering 'are we doing the right things' to achieve our desired effects. Because the assessment process needs to support the commander's decision cycle, the frequency of formal assessments needs to match the pace of campaign execution. In places where we are conducting sustained operations, formal effects assessments normally occur monthly, and drive future operations activities. In faster paced operations, this might occur more often. Theater-strategic headquarters normally focus on campaign assessment answering 'are we accomplishing the mission' (achieving our objectives), and occur quarterly or semi-annually. We see joint headquarters recognizing this differentiation, and focusing their efforts on the appropriate assessments, at the right frequency, while minimizing redundant assessment workloads on subordinate headquarters.
- Stakeholder involvement: Every command we've visited extensively reaches out to stakeholders and other venues in arriving at their assessments. Without exception, these stakeholders' perspectives enrich the assessments. In many cases, the stakeholders have not traditionally conducted these types of assessments, may not always understand the benefits, and may be leery to 'commit' to a position. But upon recognizing the value of involvement in the assessment process, they share their perspectives and enrich (and influence) the process.
- Periodic validation of the basis of assessments – objectives, effects, and actions: We noted earlier that we can't predict outcomes in the complex environment we operate in today. Likewise, we don't always initially develop the precise objectives, effects, or actions necessary to achieve the desired outcomes. We've

seen joint headquarters periodically revalidate their developed objectives, effects, measures of effectiveness (MOE), and measures of performance (MOP) based on this observation. This is different from the assessment process discussed to now. It is a review of our basis for operations, our assumptions, and our systems perspective. Like the assessment process discussed above, this review / validation is also conducted at different levels and different frequencies. Obviously, revalidation of the objectives occur at the level at which they were developed – normally the theater-strategic or above level. Review of the desired and undesired effects primarily occurs at the operational level, while review of MOE and MOP to determine if we are measuring the correct trends and actions and using the correct metrics occur at the operational and tactical level. These reviews / revalidations keep the units on course by taking into account both higher level direction, adversary actions, and other changes in the security environment.

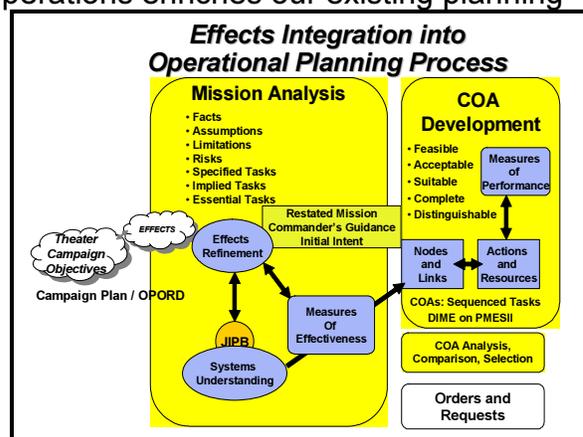


**Planning:** Planning occurs from the 3 to 9 o'clock position on the decision cycle. Planning efforts are based on assessment and resultant commander's guidance. A best practice that we have seen in the field, especially in headquarters like CFC-K, MNC-I, & CJTF-76, is incorporating effects-based thinking into the existing operational planning process. Incorporating this thinking into the operational planning process does not represent a departure from the existing doctrinally-based process. It simply constitutes a way to broaden the types of things we think about when approaching planning problems. Two overarching insights we've gained in planning are:



- An effects-based thinking approach to operations enriches our existing planning process.
- Commander involvement in the planning process enhances and focuses effort.

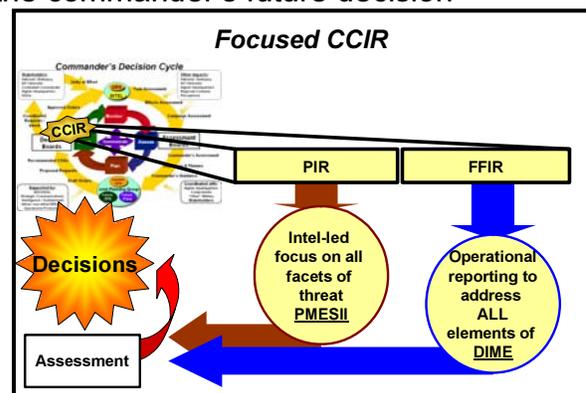
The adjacent figure identifies six areas (noted in blue) in which an effects-based thinking approach to operations enriches the existing planning process. The left side of the figure depicts the theater objectives derived from the translation of



national-strategic guidance, and the developed effects.

Insights:

- They fully bring the stakeholders into their planning from the very beginning of mission analysis, through course of action (COA) development to orders development. Commanders have found that extensive consultation with stakeholders in visualizing the environment, development of guidance and intent, and decisions on courses of action pay big benefits in arriving at optimal plans and subsequent success in achieving objectives.
- During mission analysis a broader viewpoint enabled by a systems perspective enhances the traditional JIPB process. We find that the staffs and commanders, together with stakeholders, are continually refining desired and undesired effects as they better understand the environment provided by this systems understanding. Measures of effectiveness (MOE) are difficult to develop in this networked, complex environment. A best practice is starting the development of MOE up front during mission analysis, and continually refining those MOE throughout the planning process.
- An enhanced JIPB assists in the determination of key nodes and links which will likely be the focus for actions by the military and stakeholders. Courses of action (COAs) normally address the arrangement of actions against these key nodes and link to attain desired effects.
- We find that Measures of Performance (MOP) are developed concurrently with COA development and selection, and finalized upon COA selection and orders development.
- Commanders Critical Information Requirements (CCIR) are also developed during the planning process to support the commander's future decision requirements. We've seen a close correlation between these CCIR and developed MOE and MOP. Often these CCIR will support commander decision requirements to either stay the course or changing the plan (in terms of either a branch or sequel). Often these CCIR will be answered in task, effects, and campaign assessments.



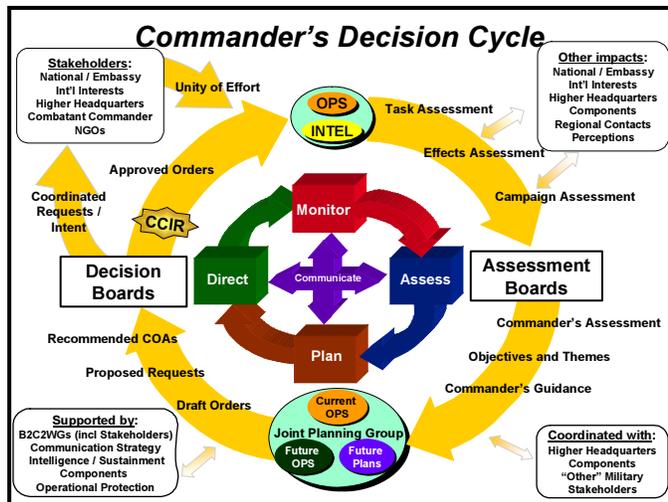
**Directing:** Directing occurs from the 9 o'clock to 12 o'clock position on the decision cycle. We find three key activities occurring in this 'directing' function.

- The commander provides mission type orders to subordinates specifying objectives and desired and undesired effects, the arrangement of required actions, and required assets and command relationships that will enable mission accomplishment.
- The commander requests necessary support (in terms of actions) from other stakeholders necessary for the attainment of desired effects. A key insight: these actions will have been developed earlier in conjunction with the stakeholders

through continuous collaboration within an inclusive mindset discussed earlier and should come as no surprise to the stakeholders. Operational headquarters emphasize this best practice of early and continuous collaboration with stakeholders.

- The command issues a collection plan that allows for subsequent assessment activities recognizing that adjustments will be required within this complex environment.

**Monitoring:** Occurs in conjunction with assessment from the 12 to 3 o'clock position. Joint headquarters monitor the environment consisting of friendly, adversary, and nonaligned actors to gain information for assessment, and provide feedback to higher headquarters (in support of their information requirements) and subordinates in terms of necessary mission approval requirements and branch or sequel taskings.



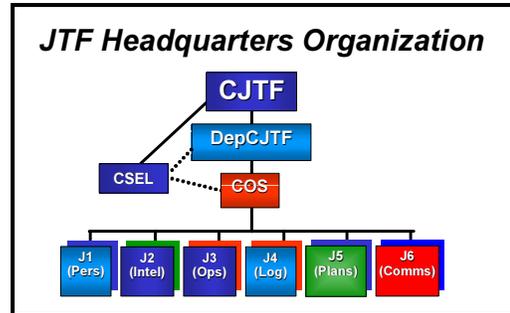
**Insights:**

- Current operations is the focal point for monitoring and relevant reporting to the commander.
- An inclusive mindset with stakeholders assists in ensuring a broader monitoring function. Liaison with these stakeholders pays big dividends.
- Liaison elements can assist in situational understanding, but should not be the 'conduit' for subordinate unit reporting. These liaison elements, assist the current operations monitoring primarily by surfacing their commanders' issues, and will likely spend most of their time in the planning area where they can provide their respective components' perspectives and ideas to enhance planning. Current operations desk officers should be responsible for maintenance of communications and reporting with subordinate and adjacent commands.
- Common awareness of CCIR, together with MOP and MOE, is essential for current operations personnel. We find that proactive attention to maintaining this awareness is necessary.
- Notification criteria and channels should be clearly understood to prevent stovepiping of information or inadvertent failures in notification.
- Staff battle drills based on likely contingencies should be developed and rehearsed to minimize confusion during actual crises.

**Communication:** Communication, both within the staff and externally with other headquarters and stakeholders is key to effective planning and execution. All of the joint headquarters we visit focus command level attention on how they communicate – both the 'pipes,' systems, tools, and processes. We discuss this more in the information management section.

## 7. JTF Headquarters Organization.

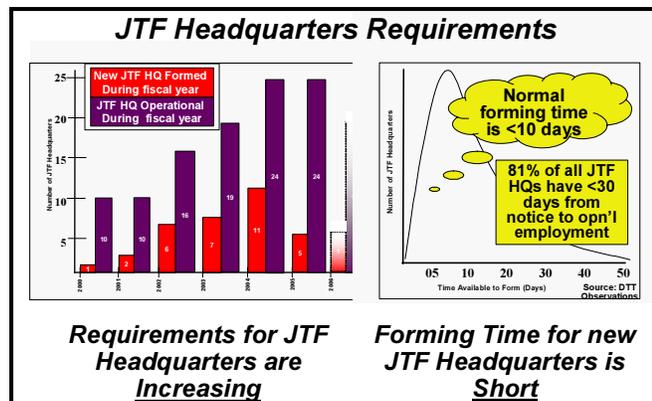
We're seeing the formation and continued employment (rotations) of more joint headquarters than ever before. The staffs of these headquarters are faced with daunting challenges in managing information, sharing understanding, and supporting the decision cycle both within their headquarters and with higher, adjacent, and lower headquarters and the 'DIME' stakeholders.



This section initially addresses insights on the formation and the continuing readiness requirements of rotating headquarters. It then goes into depth on two key insights in how today's joint headquarters are organizing and crafting their battle rhythms to meet these challenges.

### Insights on newly forming JTFs:

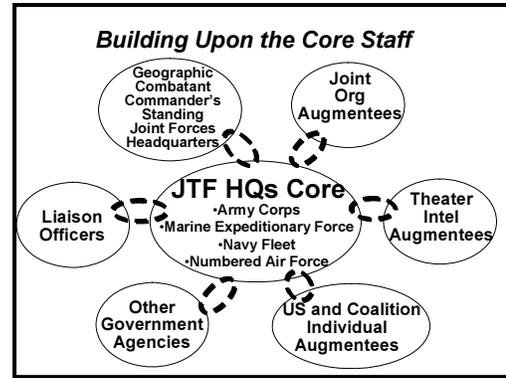
It is common knowledge; we're in a time of high OPTEMPO. We're seeing the common practice by Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs) to stand up JTFs to conduct required operations as they arise. Insights on challenges for newly forming JTF hqs:



- Not all JTFs are the same. They all have different missions. Their operational mission requirements should drive the JTF headquarters' organization and manning.
- Inclusion: The uncontrolled tendency for newly formed JTF hqs is to 'simply survive' the almost overwhelming challenges in forming, deploying, planning, and providing direction to subordinates. That said, we've seen a best practice of reach-out to partners (particularly our interagency and multinational partners) and the various supporting DoD agencies and commands early on in the formation of these headquarters – both through commander interaction and exchange of liaison elements – all with the intent of inclusion.
- The JTF hqs personnel will work in the 'DIME' arena. This has implication for training, required expertise, and organizational considerations addressed further below.
- Manning will be a challenge. The joint manning document development, validation, and fill process is tedious and slow. The designated Service or Theater SOC hqs will normally provide the 'core' of the joint headquarters and be augmented in accordance with mission requirements. This augmentation will come in the form of both joint plug enablers and individual augmentees from within theater and CONUS. The 'core' headquarters must be prepared to 'go it

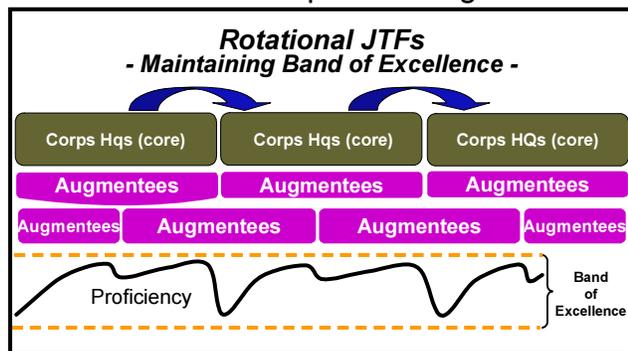
alone' initially with key support by the GCC's SJFHQ and individual augmentation from within the Theater (both GCC hqs and component hqs personnel).

- Key billets: Upfront, the commander will need to pursue getting some key billets filled with the right people. Some of these are: Deputy Commander, Chief of Staff, Foreign Political Advisor, Cultural advisors (a new best practice seen in current JTFs), Command Senior Enlisted Leader, Information Management Officer (IMO), HQ Commandant, and Coalition embedded staff.
- Different Service cultures. We've continually observed what many would call common knowledge – that our Military Services do have different cultures. The various Service augmentees will come to the JTF hqs with their Service viewpoints and understanding in terms of expectations on their staff duties and responsibilities. We find that the Services also have unique skill sets in terms of being more suited for 'filling' the different staff principal positions. Example: USA and USMC seem to be great CofS and J3s, and USAF and USN have unique J6 skill sets. Obviously, this is not sacrosanct, the type of mission and source of the 'core' headquarters and commander will likely weigh in the type of Service 'flavor' to the staff.
- There are numerous enablers (e.g. joint communications support element (JCSE), joint public affairs support element (JPASE), information operations, etc) available to assist in the JTF hqs stand up and performance. These enablers may not always be pushed to the JTF hqs; the JTF leadership may need to request their support.
- Reachback has both benefits and limitations. The JTF headquarters needs to balance a forward deployed concept and its challenges in terms of footprint, size, fidelity, and feasibility of support, with that of potential reachback and its limitations in terms of situational understanding and responsiveness.



**Insights on continuing (rotational) JTFs:**

Rotational JTFs such as MNC-I and CJTF-76 also have unique challenges. The continuing rotation of personnel, combined with unit rotations can impact on overall headquarters proficiency. We normally see a period of decreased proficiency both immediately after 'core' headquarters rotations and during periods of high individual augmentee turnovers. Insights:

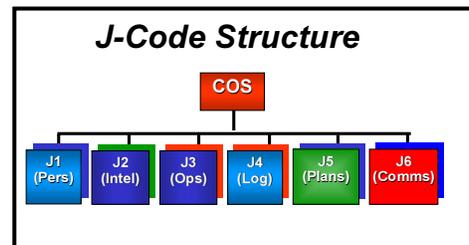


- Without exception, one of the best means of minimizing a decrease in proficiency of an incoming rotational

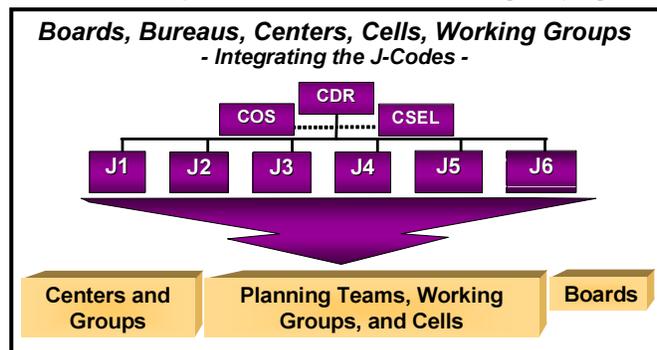
core headquarters is through the proactive involvement of the in-place organization. We're finding that the in-place headquarters are fully sharing their insights, experiences, and lessons learned to their follow-on headquarters. They're supporting both preparatory academic training and exercises. They're also fully supporting pre-deployment site surveys and visits.

- Individual training: This is still relatively weak. A relatively small percentage of individual augmentees, and even members of the 'core' staff, take advantage of the many resources available for increasing their proficiency prior to deployment. There are on-line resources, technical training courses in GCCS, intelligence systems, and information systems such as Information Workspace, and web portals, and short term resident courses for individual augmentees such as the course at Joint Warfighting Center. JTF leadership can identify these kinds of programs as prerequisites to their Geographic Combatant Command headquarters for subsequent dissemination to force providers for necessary preparation of augmentees prior to deployment. The operational headquarters have also instituted an on-site reception and training program for augmentees.
- Predeployment training of 'core' staff. We've observed that the ongoing Joint Warfighter Center mission rehearsal exercise (MRX) series and Service programs successfully support the unit commander's training program in getting the unit to 'high walk – low run' level of readiness prior to deployment. A continuing shortfall in the program is lack of identification and participation in the training of individual augmentees who will subsequently deploy and be part of the JTF staff, recognizing that a number of augmentees will already be in theater supporting the current operational headquarters. This prevents the JTF staff from fully training as a team prior to deployment. We see a best practice in commanders and key staffs continuing to work to ensure augmentees are identified and participate in predeployment training.

**Staff Organization Insights:** This section shares insights and best practices on how the staffs are organized to support the decision cycle and commander decision making.



- J-Code structure: We still find the J-code structure as the preferred basic staff structure. It provides a common reference point on where expertise and staff oversight (e.g. intelligence or logistics) exists on the staff, allows for easy cross talk with external organizations, and effectively supports other staff integrating structures such as functional boards, cells, and working groups that support the decision cycle.
- Boards, Bureaus, Centers, Cells, and Working Groups (B2C2WG).



We've seen the extensive use of B2C2WGs in every joint headquarters. These functional integrating structures provide the forums for bringing together the various expertises of the staff focused on specific problem sets to provide coherent staff recommendations to the commander. They make staff coordination more routine, increase cross-functional integration, facilitate monitoring, assessment, and planning, provide venues for command decisions, and allow for the management of current operations, future operations, and future plans. These boards are physical venues but also support virtual collaboration and participation with other stakeholders and headquarters.

- We observe a continuing challenge in the staffs on balancing the potentially large number of B2C2WGs necessary for *full* staff analysis and integration with the limited number of personnel on the staff, time available, and other competing scheduling requirements for the principals and leaders. A number of chiefs of staff of the various joint headquarters have forced discipline on the numbers of B2C2WGs by requiring the staff proponent to defend the need for the B2C2WG in terms of what it brings to the decision cycle (in terms of specific inputs, outputs, and recipients of that information). Several chiefs of staff use the '7 minute drill' outlined in the adjacent figure to vet B2C2WGs. The 7 minute drill is a means by the staff proponent summarizes the purpose for the appropriate B2C2WG, its linkage to other B2C2WGs, and its support to decision making requirements.

<i>Seven Minute Drill</i>	
1.	Name of board or cell:
2.	Lead J code:
3.	When / where does it meet in Battle Rhythm?
4.	Purpose:
5.	Inputs required from:
6.	When?
7.	Output / Process / Product:
8.	Time of delivery:
9.	Membership codes:

**Battle Rhythm:** Battle rhythm is a continuing focus area in every joint headquarters we visit. These headquarters must not only operate within their own decision cycle across the three event horizons, but they must also interface with higher headquarters, stakeholders, and adjacent headquarters, all while supporting their subordinate headquarters with timely direction and information.

**Insights:**

- Implication of three event horizons. A challenge in every headquarters is orchestrating the battle-rhythm events for each event horizon ensuring that they also support pertinent information requirements of the other event horizons. Many headquarters attempt to minimize the total number of meetings by organizing battle rhythm events by function – e.g. an assessment, planning, or information operations meeting, and

<i>Battle Rhythm Considerations</i>	
<u>External Factors</u>	<u>Internal Factors</u>
• Higher Headquarters' battle rhythm	• Commander's battlefield circulation
• Coalition considerations	• Shift change
• Time zones	• Staff updates and time for preparation
• Complexity, Intensity, and Duration of operations	• Components or MSC requirements
• VIP Visits	• Three event horizons
• Enemy actions	– Current Ops – "What is"
• Targeting / Air Tasking Order cycle	– Future Ops – "What if"
• Media / News cycle	– Future plans – "What's next"
• Theater bandwidth (VTCs)	• Two processes
	– Planning process
	– Decision cycle

then further setting the agenda of that meeting to satisfy any needed actions for all three event horizons. This both reduces the requirement for the leadership to attend three separate meetings, and reduces the time demands on the supporting staff officers.

- Interaction with other headquarters. We've stressed inclusion throughout this insights paper. However, this inclusion comes with a price in terms of time – both staff time and commander time. That said, we normally have seen that this inclusion pays off. We've seen headquarters use well informed, empowered liaison elements and virtual collaboration means (e.g. video teleconferences, information work space, conference calls) as some of the ways to reduce the time demand implications. We also find that every joint headquarters recognizes and fully accommodates the precedence of certain battle rhythm events with higher headquarters and key stakeholders – even when those schedules change. This flexibility and willing accommodation demonstrate these headquarters' recognition of the value of inclusion and unity of effort.
- Time management. The operational commanders and their staff all recognize several related facets of time management: time for staff preparation and coordination of analysis and recommendations, decision making forums, battlefield circulation, sleep, physical fitness and stress relief, command atmosphere, and creative thought. They all guard the commander's and principal's time to give them time to circulate and think, vice filling their schedule with meeting after meeting. We've seen this time management as one of the chief of staff's primary responsibilities.

## 8. The Military Element of Strategic Communication – the Need for a Communication Strategy to get out the Commander’s Message.

The military element of strategic communication is very important. The ability for the military commander to promulgate information influencing and informing selected audiences in today’s complex environment is a critical element to successful operations. We see them developing ‘communication strategies’ fully nested with higher national-level strategic communication objectives to get their messages out to the various target audiences using all of their capabilities.

The challenges of engaging this environment are exasperated by the growth in information technology. This growth enables near instantaneous worldwide transmission of information via diverse means such as television, radio, internet, blogging, cellular and text messaging technology. In many cases, these mediums are business-oriented competing for market share with reporting accuracy and journalistic standards being jettisoned in lieu of speed in order to get their message to the market before their competition. Additionally, our adversaries are asymmetrically empowered by the availability of these mediums, the breadth of the audiences they can engage, and their unbridled ability to push inaccurate information to these audiences.

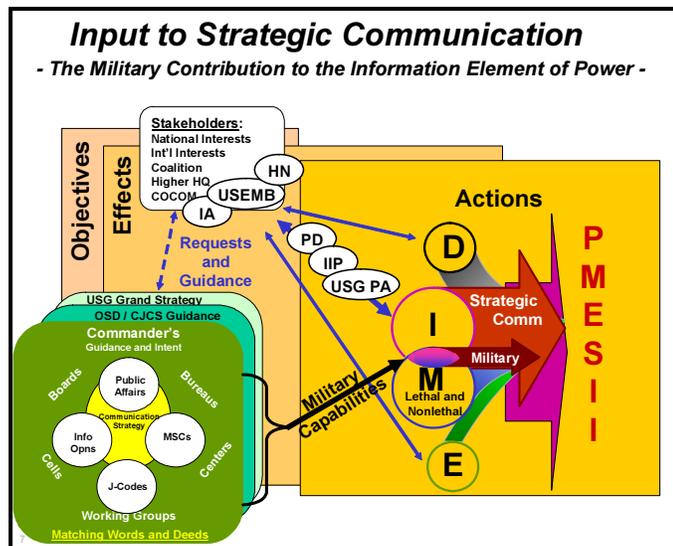
**Communication Challenge**

- Coordinated
- Focused on Individual Audiences
- Support over-all USG Interests
- Credible

*“The longer it takes to put a strategic communication framework into place, the more we can be certain that the vacuum will be filled by the enemy and by news informers that most assuredly will not paint an accurate picture of what is actually taking place.”*

- Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld -

Commanders recognize that their efforts in engaging the numerous audiences in this environment are just one element of a broader strategic communication process which JP 1-02 defines as: “The transmission of integrated and coordinated USG themes and messages that advance US interests and policies through a synchronized interagency effort supported by Public Diplomacy (PD), Public Affairs (PA), and military Information Operations (IO), in concert with other political, economic, information and military actions.”



While military commanders directly control PA and IO assets and direct the “M” in DIME, they do not direct the PD actors. Because of this, we draw a distinction between a military commander’s communication strategy and the interagency nature of strategic communication.

## Insights:

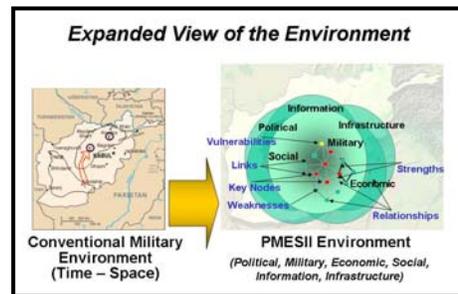
- As noted, it's essential to have an integrated process bringing together all means of communication and information delivery. This communication strategy must support the commander's overall strategy and be informed by the broader U.S. government strategic communication efforts. These communication strategies:
  - are commander driven
  - are proactive vice reactive in design
  - "match words with deeds." They synchronize the tactical actions of subordinates, not only what they do but how they do them, with the verbal themes and messages being sent by commander.
- The staff role in facilitating the communication strategy. We've seen most of the joint headquarters utilizing a working group process above the functional-level working groups (IO working groups, PA staff meetings, CMO groups), informed by the interagency stakeholders, to support planning across the current operations, future operations, and future plans event horizons. This eliminates independent informational campaigns and better integrates these 'non-lethal' actions within the existing military planning process. This staff integration also breaks through the doctrinal walls between the PA and IO communities while respecting the various audiences which they are resourced to engage.
- Delineation of roles for development of themes and messages for commander approval between the Commander's Info Opns staff and the traditional 'JPOTF' (Joint Psychological Operations Task Force). Bottom line: The staff is responsible for the development of proposed communication themes and messages that fully support the overall intent of the commander. The JPOTF is responsible to develop and disseminate supporting products to selected audiences as an action agent. We've seen a seam here in roles and functions. Traditionally, the JPOTF took on both a staff and a command role in both the development of themes and messages together with their dissemination. However, today's commanders recognize the need for their staffs to fully integrate both lethal and non-lethal actions to coherently support their intent. The staff, not the JPOTF, is responsible for the in-depth staff level coordination and development of proposed integrated themes and messages. We've seen a best practice in pulling some of the organic expertise resident in the JPOTF up to the JTF staff to assist in this themes and message development.
- Getting out the message - the action agents. Traditionally, we have relied on Public Affairs and Information Operations (principally PSYOP assets) to carry the message to the various target audiences. However, our operational commanders realize that everyone who has contact with the local population sends a message. They've expanded the 'action agents' to include senior leader engagements, civil-military operations, and any of the many activities of subordinate commands which interact with target audiences.

## 9. Intelligence Support.

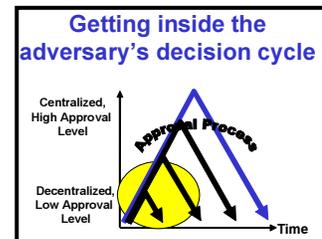
Intelligence is another area in which our commanders in the field have led the way in evolving our doctrine and TTP. This section addresses three key insights in this evolution of how intelligence is supporting operations:

- Expanding the view of the environment beyond a military threat only view.
- Decentralization of intelligence to support decentralized operations.
- Focusing on minimizing data storage delays to make intelligence more responsive.

**Expanding the view of the environment beyond a military threat only view.** As discussed earlier, the commanders have recognized the complexity of the environment this as much more than a military-only threat. While realizing that understanding this complex PMESII environment is beyond the capability of the intelligence staff, they have still tasked the intelligence staff with the responsibility of being the focal point, the coordinating staff, in bringing together this understanding. It requires a cross-staff and interagency and multinational approach to gain the respective expertise of this collective group.



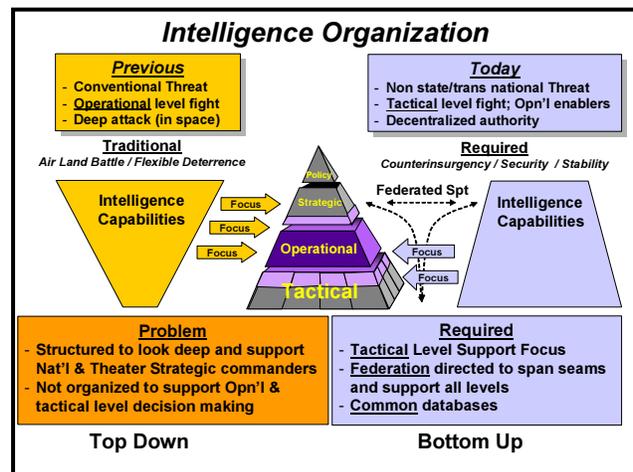
**Decentralization of intelligence to support decentralized operations.** The need for agility and flexibility to get inside the adversary's decision cycle was discussed in the earlier section of operational design in terms of decentralized mission approval levels. Our commanders and staffs have learned that the intelligence support for these more agile and flexible operations also had to significantly change.



Intelligence has evolved to support these decentralized operations. The cold war model that focused on large conventional threats supporting strategic decisions doesn't support today's operational and tactical level decision-making and execution.

Today's operations against non-state actors and transnational threats range from combat (often at small unit level), security, stability, and humanitarian support. Our intelligence organizations in the field are changing to support these kinds of operations:

- They've decentralized selected intelligence capabilities to better support the tactical level requirements.
- They've also better defined and strengthened their vertical and

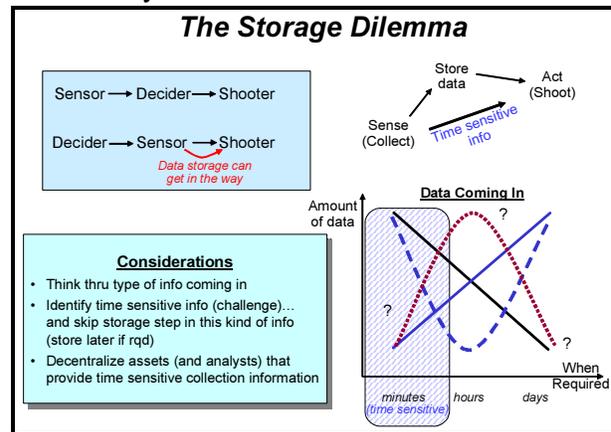


horizontal linkages with other intelligence capabilities to take advantage of their collection and analysis capabilities – what is called federation. They need these other organization’s capabilities for collection and both 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> order analysis and exploitation.

- They’ve worked hard on developing common databases to allow this crosstalk. This is tough work and something that they need help on, starting at the national level. We’re still not there.

**Focusing on minimizing data storage delays to make intelligence more responsive.** A related insight to agility and responsiveness is in minimizing the data storage delay between the sensor and shooter. We’ve seen the common challenge when you put the decider between the sensor and the shooter. It slows execution. We’ve seen how the warfighters have addressed the need to decentralize when they can, and make a priori decisions to take the ‘decider’ out from between the sensor and shooter. But data storage can still get in the way between the sensor and shooter.

The data storage problem. A tremendous amount of information is collected to support the warfighter. It is collected by national, theater, operational, and tactical assets and by our interagency and multinational partners. So there is ample opportunity for inadvertent storage of time sensitive data to occur – and for “blinks” to occur in both the collection and the reporting between the sensor and shooter. Our operational commanders have found it is very difficult to prevent these blinks or data storage from occurring when intelligence support is centralized. The commanders and staffs have also found it difficult to decide on an ‘a priori’ basis of what is time sensitive versus what is longer dwell information, and then ensuring time sensitive information is rapidly disseminated.

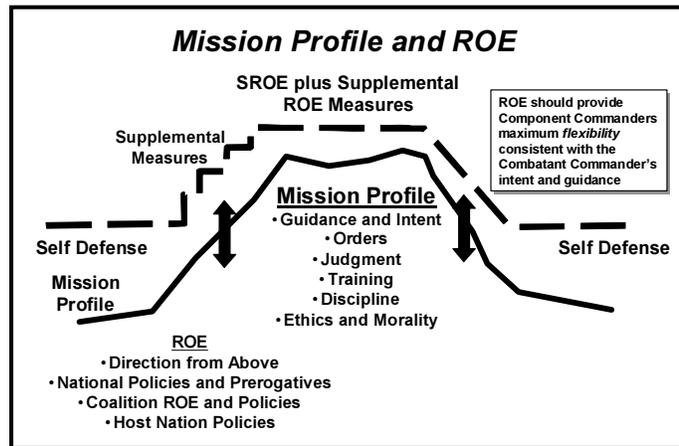
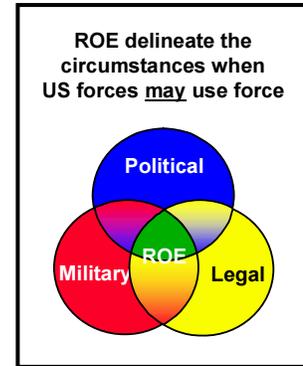


The fusion cell solutions. Recognizing this, the commanders have opted to form ‘fusion’ cells at the tactical level with the capability and manning to receive intelligence from all of these collection assets and processing centers. These tactical level fusion cells then screen the information for time sensitive kind of information to pass directly to the operator for action. We’re finding that operators are fully integrated, and in some cases, even in charge of these fusion cells. The fusion cells keep an unblinking eye focused on the critical information, waiting for the right piece of information necessary to act. This is greatly different from the more traditional centralized model, in which the higher headquarters’ large intelligence centers screens information, and then pick out and pass time sensitive information down to the tactical level – often too late for successful execution.

## 10. Legal Considerations & Rules of Engagement.<sup>8</sup>

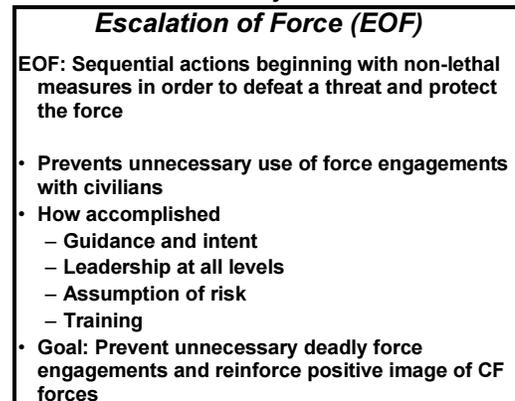
Next to timely and clear commander's intent and guidance, possibly the greatest aid a Joint Task Force (JTF) Commander can give to his component commanders is well coordinated, wargamed, clearly stated, and flexible ROE which stay ahead of operational events.

We see operational commanders proactively developing ROE as a "security umbrella" (noted by the dashed line in the adjacent figure) under which they may use force while crafting mission profiles (solid black line in figure) for the actual use of force. We see this concurrent development of ROE and mission profiles during planning. Escalation of force (EOF) is a recent term we're seeing used in Iraq to address those sequential actions in order to defeat a threat and protect the force without unnecessary use of force with civilians.



### Insights:

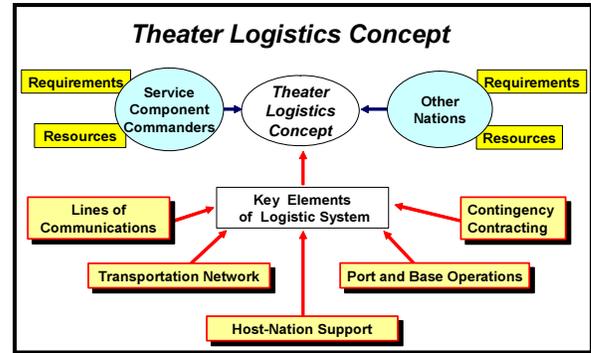
- ROE is Operator business. We see ROE development led by planners, assisted by the Staff Judge Advocates (SJAs). SJAs may not have the operational background to address all of the capabilities and limitations of a joint or coalition force.
- Understanding Coalition ROE is critical. Multinational forces will probably retain their own national ROE.
- Have a system in place to ensure timely dissemination, training, understanding, and implementation of ROE.
- Escalation of force (EOF) is about protecting the force and the civilian population. EOF does not equal ROE.



<sup>8</sup> Defined in JP 1-02 as "Directives issued by competent military authority which delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and / or continue combat engagement with other forces encountered." We find that the word "will" in this definition does not clearly describe ROE. We use the word "may" as this more clearly depicts the commander's discretion in use of force in terms of the mission profile and escalation of force.

## 11. Logistics.

We've seen joint commanders and staffs spending significant time and effort on joint logistics. These joint headquarters are continually focused on increasing efficient and effective logistics support for military operations within the Theater logistics structure.



These Theater logistics concepts lay out the roles and functions of the Service Component Commanders and other agencies, define the elements of the logistics systems, and identify other partner nation requirements and resources. The Theater will also have developed a common user logistics concept that lays out the respective Lead Service for the various services, materiel, and facilities based the dominant user and most capable Service.

We've seen the JTFs working in conjunction with the Combatant Command staffs to address the various challenges depicted in the figure.

<b>Common Logistics Challenges &amp; Best Practices</b>	
<u>Challenges</u>	<u>Best Practices</u>
• Logistics Authorities	• Planning, Clear DAFL and C2
• Limited Infrastructure	• Planning, HNS, JLOTS, LOGCAP
• Force Caps	• Planning, LOGCAP, HNS
• Multinational Rqmts	• Planning, ACSAs, Defined Responsibilities, inclusiveness
• Other Service & SOF rqmts	• Planning, Liaison, DCA, ISSAs, inclusiveness
• Blurring of Staff & Logistics Organizations responsibilities	• Clear delineation of planning vs execution responsibilities

### **Best Practices:**

- Take time to understand the Theater Logistics Concept, especially the specific responsibilities of the Combatant Command, Service Component Commands, TRANSCOM, and other agencies in supporting your operations.
- Ensure Lead Service responsibilities are clearly defined for the various services, materiel, and facilities. You may have delegated Directive Authority for Logistics (DAFL) to assist in defining these responsibilities, or you may have to work with the Combatant Command and Service Components to refine this.
- Understand and if necessary influence the Acquisition and Cross Service Agreements (ACSAs) that are the agreements with coalition partners for Support.
- Understand the Interservice Support Agreements (ISSAs). We've seen that ISSAs coupled with 'area support' concepts are very important in today's fully integrated environment.
- Understand and bring in or have the requisite expertise to oversee the Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP). This program will likely be used extensively within the JTF's Joint Operations Area.
- Request and use liaison officers from the numerous support agencies to ensure efficient and effective support.
- Define responsibilities between your J4 (decision making support) and your Joint Logistics Command (execution).

## **12. Information Management.**<sup>9</sup>

Information management (IM) continues to be one of the greatest challenges for our joint forces. As discussed earlier, we have unprecedented ability to transmit and receive data, and it is growing exponentially, in speed, volume, and timeliness. Our commanders and their staffs are working hard at managing this information to support decision making and mission execution.

### **Three key decisions shape how we manage information:**

- Determining the classification level at which most planning and execution will occur (e.g. Unclassified, SECRET NOFORN, SECRET Releasable to certain audiences, TOP SECRET, or Compartmented level). This decision will be based on several factors: what higher headquarters is using, the composition of the joint / combined force, and the degree of required unilateral planning and operations required. We find that once the primary 'classification level' is determined, 'writing for release' at that level helps ensure common situational understanding.
- Directing the primary means to share this information (e.g. over NIPRNET, SIPRNET, CENTRIXS, JWICS, physical means such as hardcopy, meetings, etc). This has significant ramifications in the multinational and interagency environment, the complexity and scope of the required networks, and the means to transfer information between networks.
- The processes and tools to store, manage, collaborate, and share information (e.g. CDNE, Fusion Net, IWS, based on their interoperability and ease of use). There is a plethora of tools available to the joint headquarters; the challenge is in determining which tools to use, realizing that too many systems often unnecessarily complicate and decrease information sharing.

### **Insights:**

- Information management is operator business. It supports decision making, and is too important to be relegated only to technical or communications personnel.
- Commander's Guidance and CCIR focus the staff and resources to provide fused information to support decision-making.
- The CofS has a key role in IM. The CofS is responsible for information management in the headquarters and directly overwatches IM within the command. He exercises his responsibility through an empowered information management officer (IMO) and IM organization.
- The best IMOs have an operator background (vice solely a technical communication background). These IMOs work with the staff and subordinate IMOs to both codify IM processes in an IM plan or SOP, and oversee and manage these IM processes in the organization.

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<sup>9</sup> Information management refers to the processes a command uses to receive, obtain, control, and process data into useful information.

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