

Air Force pararescuemen assigned to 48th Rescue Squadron and French air commandos provide cover after moving simulated patient into Eurocopter EC-725 for aerial transport during personnel recovery scenario in southern Arizona, November 7, 2017, as part of Angel Thunder (U.S. Air Force/Andrew Lee)



Globally Integrated Exercises

Optimizing Joint Force C2 Structure

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Increased complexity among emerging challenges in the strategic environment requires adjustments in how the United States prepares for future challenges.¹ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr., recognizes not only the complexity of the environment, but also the challenges the joint force

faces responding to them.² A primary challenge, revealed in a brief examination of the joint force's history, is creating a clear approach toward global integration to enhance Department of Defense (DOD) strategic planning and execution. Taking on this challenge, the Chairman is creating a Globally Integrated Exercise (GIE) structure focusing

on combatant commander (CCDR) and higher authority integration. Despite a number of limitations, the CJCS GIE approach is the most proactive, effective, and innovative means to create the necessary planning and organizational changes to confront today's increasingly complex strategic environment.

The Approach

Without the benefit of a definitive legislative mandate and lacking command authority, the Chairman is utilizing the GIE to drive the joint force toward understanding the requirements for

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global integration.³ On January 12, 2017, General Dunford issued the 2017–2020 Joint Training Guidance (2017 JTG). CJCS Instruction 3500.1, *Joint Staff Joint Training Policy and Guidance*, transformed the emphasis in CJCS-sponsored joint force exercises. Unlike previous guidance focusing on exercising, and thereby developing functional capabilities (for example, cyber operations, targeting processes, fires, defeating antiaccess/area-denial networks, and interagency coordination), the 2017 JTG focuses on the “4+1” problem sets, cross-combatant command (CCMD) coordination, senior leader development, and global integration.⁴ Furthermore, in the 2017 JTG, General Dunford uses his training authorities to align training requirements to his vision of strategic complexity, a vision characterized by the 4+1 problem set in a transregional, multidomain, and multifunctional (TMM) environment.

Establishing essential characteristics for exercises, the Chairman directs that joint training must

- reflect the strategic environment and its respective challenges
- emphasize global integration across the 4+1 problem set
- span the range of military operations
- enable the joint force to innovate.

These characteristics, and the eight associated required elements, introduce a new level of sophistication and challenge for CCDRs to fully integrate the strategic considerations of the real-world 4+1 problem set into their exercise programs.⁵ Leading this effort, the 2017 JTG also directs that the

*Joint Staff will establish a training program designed to improve its ability to integrate global activities, resources, strategy, and risk management, and provide the best military advice. This program will involve a series of tabletop exercises, senior leader seminars, and wargames culminating in an annual event linked to a CCMD Tier 1 exercise that enables the Joint Staff to exercise internal strategic decisionmaking and global synchronization processes.*⁶

Case Studies: JCS Evolution

The United States has a history of adapting the force to address emerging challenges. Two landmark pieces of legislation reveal the innovative, iterative, and effective transformation of the national security organization toward enhancing unity of command and unity of effort. The first case study, the National Security Act of 1947, enacted as a response to experiences of World War II and in anticipation of the challenges by the coming Cold War, laid the foundation for today’s national security framework, establishing DOD, with a Cabinet-level Secretary, Central Intelligence Agency, and Joint Chiefs of Staff, among other changes.

The second case study, the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, aimed at improving interoperability or unity of effort among the military Services. It mandated jointness in officer management and established a Joint Staff led by an officer who was the senior military officer, independent of any Service, and answered only to the President and Secretary. These transformative pieces of legislation demonstrate the continuing effort to streamline and improve force management, information use, and decisionmaking in the national security structure to better address security challenges.

National Security Act of 1947.

Prior to 1941, the United States did not have a formal entity like the Joint Staff. The advent of World War II, however, brought change. Soon after Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill established the Combined Chiefs of Staff as the supreme military body for strategic direction of the Anglo-American war effort. To meet wartime demands, the United States informally established a JCS from the existing Service chiefs.⁷

The JCS quickly adapted and grew into a warfighting organization. Several committees, planning teams, and agencies, with the intent of tackling tough joint problem sets between Services and allies, developed almost immediately. Although the JCS held an unofficial role, it remained “directly responsible to

President Roosevelt.”⁸ Still, the JCS was not a statutory body, and its members were still under the command of separate Cabinet officials.

With the impending threat of communist expansionism in the post-World War II strategic environment, President Harry S. Truman moved to streamline the national security system, pursuing what he called “unification.”⁹ The resulting National Security Act of 1947 reshaped the U.S. national security framework and created some of the most important national defense institutions. It eliminated the Cabinet rank for the Service departments, making them subordinate to the Secretary of Defense. It also created the authority for and definition of combatant commands (called unified commands).

For the JCS, in particular, the act provided the “statutory standing, with a list of assigned duties, and it became a corporate advisory body to the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council.”¹⁰ Despite the act’s intent to provide unity of effort, it remained incomplete because it did not provide a single voice to represent the Services’ warfighters. The Service secretaries, although subordinate to the Secretary of Defense, remained the principal warfighters—building, training, and fighting their forces accordingly, and independently.

Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986.

Thirty-nine years after the 1947 National Security Act, Congress, again seeking to improve unity of effort, profoundly reshaped the national security structure. Goldwater-Nichols was a groundbreaking bill that significantly altered the organization and operation of DOD and its military components.¹¹ The impetus for Goldwater-Nichols was the recognition that inter-Service rivalries were creating command and control challenges for CCDRs and the Secretary. The system resulting from the 1947 act allowed counterproductive inter-Service rivalry to persist. These rivalries manifested themselves in myriad ways, and peacetime activities (such as procurement and creation of doctrine) were tailored for each Service in isolation. Similarly,

wartime activities of each Service were largely planned, executed, and evaluated independently. These practices resulted in division of effort, an inability to profit from economies of scale, and inhibited the development of modern warfare doctrine.¹² This contributed to significant underachievement of DOD capability and placed national security at risk. All the specific provisions of the bill were aimed at solving one problem: “the inability of the military Services to operate effectively together as a joint team.”¹³

The bill’s development, a result of almost 5 years of effort and analysis by Congress and the Pentagon, focused on improving interoperability among the Services at an operational level. The act made a number of significant structural changes to DOD, increasing the powers of the Chairman and the CCDRs, while removing the Service secretaries and chiefs from the operational chain of command. By requiring joint education and duty assignments, Goldwater-Nichols has, in the intervening years, created a force comprised of officers trained and experienced in joint operations. Ultimately, Goldwater-Nichols went beyond unity of effort to unity of command.

The Challenge

Today, 30-plus years after the enactment of Goldwater-Nichols, there is a growing movement to reexamine the national security structure in light of the increasingly complex and different strategic environment.¹⁴ Both Armed Services Committee chairmen, Senator John McCain (R-AZ) and Representative Mac Thornberry (R-TX), have voiced concerns about how well Goldwater-Nichols is performing.¹⁵ In the Senate, the Armed Services Committee held hearings in mid-2016. It heard from a variety of commentators, gathering information about the current structure and improvements that could be made.¹⁶ Comments ran the gamut of suggested reforms, from ending CCMDs and transforming DOD into three major commands (Global Strike, Defense, and Presence) to transforming CCMDs to threat-focused (rather than regionally focused) commands.¹⁷ These

suggestions reflect an interest in transforming DOD structure from regionally based, with regional CCMDs, to threat-based. Other recommendations retain the regionally based structure but seek to create an apparatus to enhance globally integrated operations. What is needed, proponents argue, is “an organization that thinks and acts both globally and jointly”—but they differ on who should lead the organization, with recommendations running from the Chairman, Joint Staff J5, a civilian within DOD (such as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy), to a new organization altogether.¹⁸ All these ideas share one common characteristic: there is no precedent or experience to judge the potential to enhance global integration. What is needed then is a mechanism to evaluate how DOD would enhance globally integrated operations.

Globally Integrated Exercises

That mechanism is GIE. To execute the Chairman’s direction in the 2017 JTG, the Director of Joint Force Development (J7) is developing the GIE program.¹⁹ The program serves two functions: to assess and align Joint Staff processes as the global integrator and to “create opportunities for [senior leaders] to increase their understanding and experience for globally integrated operations and strengthen their ability to work effectively with the Joint Staff, CCMDs, Services, interagency, and Allies and partners, to address global integration/TMM threats.”²⁰ Ultimately, the intended endstate is to develop mechanisms to enable the Joint Force and Joint Staff/Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) to operate at the speed of war.

Because the GIE provides CCDRs and higher-level authorities the ability to exercise the joint force as a whole in time, space, and purpose while evaluating global risk, it addresses two major strategic-level concerns.²¹ First, the inability of the joint force to execute as a whole undermines the Secretary and Chairman’s responsibility to provide the President and National Security Council

with the best military advice. Second, the strategic leadership’s capacity for timely military decisionmaking, which General Dunford argues is unable to “frame decisions and act in a timely manner,” must be improved by making some “fundamental changes . . . to our organizational construct.”²²

The GIE structure envisions two types of exercises differentiated by the level of Joint Staff and joint force participation. Type 1 exercises “would involve Joint Staff developing events to rehearse DOD leaders against national strategic objectives with whole-of-government/whole-of-society focus.” In these exercises, Joint Staff and OSD leaders would be the “primary training audience with participation by all relevant combatant commands.”²³ Type 1 exercises would be Joint Staff led, with interagency senior-leader participation. Type 2 exercises are similar except that they will be CCDR led, with two or more CCMDs and the Joint Staff as the primary training audience, exercising a 4+1 challenge.²⁴

In both constructs, the Joint Staff will be a primary training audience, and the scenarios, constructed from the real-world strategic and political environment, will involve the 4+1 challenges in a TMM environment. The lessons learned from these exercises will provide the Chairman with a body of evidence from which he can advise the Secretary about how best to execute globally integrated operations. By doing these events on no less than an annual basis, across the range of military operations and at different stages of the conflict continuum, the Chairman will establish the necessary conditions to experiment with different approaches toward achieving global integration. The current goal is for a Type 1 exercise, with all (or most) of the CCMDs, in fiscal year 2020.²⁵

Lessons learned from the first GIE event that occurred in October 2017, where the Joint Staff and OSD participated in a U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Strategic Command exercise, demonstrated challenges in staff processes, structure, and tools, which are now being reviewed and addressed at the flag/general officer level.



Soldier assigned to 1st Battalion, 501st Aviation Regiment, transmits information via field radio during Exercise Combined Resolve VIII, at Hohenfels Training Area, Germany, June 8, 2017 (U.S. Army/Michael Bradley)

Limitations

Working as limitations to the Chairman’s approach is the existing process for exercises that are, first and foremost, a series of exercises by a single CCMD and focused on three things:

- exercising existing theater operation plans and operation plans in concept form
- CCMD staff processes
- component training objectives (which generally revolve around the warfight).

While these are not unworthy exercise objectives for the commands involved, this format routinely lacks the critical dialogue with a higher authority, or other interested same-tier actors. There are few exercises with multiple CCMDs involvement and even fewer with real-world strategic policymakers involved,

but the vast majority of CCMD exercises are limited to a single command and its components and, necessarily, provide no opportunity to conduct globally integrated operations.

The second limitation is capacity. A fully globally integrated exercise will require participants to step away from their assigned duties to engage in the exercise. These are busy people and organizations that do not have the bandwidth to perform their normal duties on top of participating in time-consuming exercises. This challenge will, inevitably, limit the scope and tempo of the program. The ideal, and the goal, is an annual global exercise involving all, or most of, the CCMDs, exercising a 4+1 crisis scenario along with senior interagency partners and allies.

A third, perhaps more fundamental, limitation is the role of the Joint Staff in

the chain of command. Under law, the Chairman is responsible for “formulating policies and technical standards, and executing actions, for the joint training of the Armed Forces.”²⁶ This is broad authority within the sphere of joint training and includes the requirements set forth in the 2017 JTG. Regarding global integration, the law provides, in

*matters relating to global military strategic and operational integration—[the Chairman is responsible for] (A) providing advice to the President and the Secretary on ongoing military operations; and (B) advising the Secretary on the allocation and transfer of forces among geographic and functional combatant commands, as necessary, to address transregional, multi-domain, and multi-functional threats.*²⁷



Amphibious assault exercise during Cobra Gold 2018, at Hat Yao, Thailand, February 16, 2018 (U.S. Marine Corps/Olivia G. Ortiz)

The Chairman, then, has a critical role regarding the deployment of forces to achieve global integration, but is not the decisionmaker. Indeed, as General Dunford frequently points out, there is only one “global integrator” within DOD, the Secretary of Defense.²⁸

Recommendation

The limitations in the GIE construct should not dissuade its utilization. Like any new concept, it requires the necessary time, space, and iterations to meet the Chairman’s intent. As noted, there is no shortage of recommendations for tackling the globally integrated operations challenges. The risk to these potential recommendations, while likely well informed, is that they remain untested. Placed into a military planning context, choosing one of these potential recommendations is similar to pursuing a course of action without analyzing it.

Any potential changes to optimize the joint force structure, or roles and

responsibilities, is not advisable without first testing them in a globally integrated exercise. Because the GIE introduces real-world strategic and operational challenges in an exercise environment, the lessons learned not only will uncover how CCDRs work best with one another, but also, through several iterations, create a shared understanding, as well as developing the processes, structures, and tools necessary to achieve global integration. Using the strategic exercises to develop methodologies to accommodate the requirement for globally integrated planning and operations creates an opportunity to help steer the joint force through this transition.

The Chairman’s GIE approach is the most deliberate, effective, and innovative means to drive the necessary planning and organizational joint force changes to confront today’s increasingly complex challenges. Although limitations exist in the current construct, it remains the ideal leadership laboratory to foster the

growth and innovation required to create and examine the necessary connective tissue across combatant commands, the interagency community, and with the Office of the Secretary of Defense. As the GIE series develops under CJCS stewardship, it will require buy-in, patience, and dedicated participation from the Joint Staff and combatant commanders to reorient the joint force. The timeline, with exercises programmed over the upcoming years, is aggressive but necessary to demonstrate to Congress that another reorganizational piece of legislation is not required or that a best solution has been exercised and found effective. JFQ

Notes

¹ Valerie Strauss, “The Difference Between ‘Complex’ and ‘Complicated’—and Why It Matters in School Reform,” *Washington Post*, August 8, 2014, available at <www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2014/08/08/the-difference-between-

complex-and-complicated-and-why-it-matters-in-school-reform/?utm_term=.fba311ad182e>.

² Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Notice (CJCSN) 3500.01, *2017–2020 Chairman’s Joint Training Guidance* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, January 12, 2017), 1. General Dunford’s vision of this complexity is reflected in his view that future conflicts will be “increasingly transregional, multidomain, and multifunctional [TMM] as potential adversaries’ interests, influence, capabilities, and reach extend beyond single geographic areas and domains.”

³ Joint Staff J7, Joint Force Development, *Globally Integrated Exercise Framework*, information paper, August 23, 2017. *Global integration* is defined as the “arrangement of cohesive joint force actions in time, space, and purpose, executed as a whole to address transregional, multidomain, and multifunctional challenges.” See also CJCSN 3500.01, 2–3.

⁴ CJCSN 3500.01, 2. To confront the current challenges in the strategic environment, the Chairman reoriented joint force planning priorities through the adoption of the “4+1” problem-set paradigm, around which military planning for the four primary countries of concern—Iran, North Korea, Russia, and China—and the “+1” violent extremist organizations is focused. The 2018 National Defense Strategy prioritizes “long-term competition with China and Russia,” while deterring and countering North Korea, Iran, and violent extremist organizations. Accordingly, what was previously called 4+1 is now commonly referred to as “2+3.”

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2–5. The instruction outlines that “eight overarching required elements are operational areas that need focused attention within joint training programs to achieve desired effects within the joint operational and informational environment.” These requirements are transregional joint training, multidomain joint training, multifunctional joint training, partner integration in joint training, contested environments in joint training, conventional and special operations forces’ interoperability in joint training, joint force leaders in joint training, and countering weapons of mass destruction in joint training.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5–6. The instruction states, “Reorienting from a regional construct to one that addresses our priority strategic challenges through a global lens enables the joint force to be better positioned to advance national interests.” Emphasis added.

⁷ “Origin of Joint Concepts,” Joint Staff, available at <www.jcs.mil/About/Origin-of-Joint-Concepts/>.

⁸ *Organizational Development of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1942–2013* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, 2013), 3, available at <www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/History/Institutional/Organizational_Development_of_the_JCS.pdf>.

⁹ Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Long War: A History of U.S. National Security Policy Since*

World War II (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 267; William Inboden, “The National Security Act Turns 70,” *War on the Rocks*, July 25, 2017, available at <<https://warontherocks.com/2017/07/the-national-security-act-turns-70/>>.

¹⁰ Peter J. Roman and David W. Tarr, “The Joint Chiefs of Staff: From Service Parochialism to Jointness,” *Political Science Quarterly* 113, no. 1 (1998), 92.

¹¹ Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, Public Law 99-433, 99th Cong., October 1, 1986, available at <http://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/dod_reforms/Goldwater-Nichols-DoDReordAct1986.pdf>.

¹² Ronald H. Cole, “Grenada, Panama, and Haiti: Joint Operational Reform,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 20 (Autumn/Winter 1998–1999), 57–74.

¹³ Justin Johnson, “2017 NDAA: Define the Goldwater-Nichols Problem Before Trying to Solve It,” Heritage Foundation, Washington, DC, July 12, 2016, available at <www.heritage.org/defense/report/2017-ndaa-define-the-goldwater-nichols-problem-trying-solve-it>.

¹⁴ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2017 (NDAA 2017), Public Law 114-328, 114th Cong., December 23, 2016, 1–2, available at <www.congress.gov/114/plaws/publ328/PLAW-114publ328.pdf>. The NDAA 2017 Executive Summary notes that the intent of Goldwater-Nichols was to ensure that the Chairman remain outside the chain of command in order to “guard against over-centralization of military power” in the Chairman’s office and maintain civilian control of the military. The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), however, believes that today’s environment undermines decisionmaking timeliness when all decisions must come from the Secretary of Defense. To mitigate this concern, the NDAA 2017 vests the Chairman with some, although not command, global integration authorities. The Executive Summary is available at <www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/FY17%20NDAA%20Bill%20Summary.pdf>.

¹⁵ Colin Clark, “‘First, Do No Harm’: SASC Begins Goldwater-Nichols Review,” *Breaking Defense*, November 9, 2015, available at <<https://breakingdefense.com/2015/11/first-do-no-harm-sasc-begins-goldwater-nichols-review/>>.

¹⁶ NDAA 2017 Executive Summary, 1.

¹⁷ Shawn Brimley and Paul Scharre, “CTRL + ALT + DELETE: Resetting America’s Military,” *Foreign Policy*, May 2014, available at <<http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/05/13/ctrl-alt-delete/>>; Kelly McCoy, “The World the Combatant Command Was Designed for Is Gone,” *War on the Rocks*, October 7, 2016, available at <<https://warontherocks.com/2016/10/the-world-the-combatant-command-was-designed-for-is-gone/>>.

¹⁸ Chad Pillai, “Reorganizing the Joint

Force for a Trans-Regional Threat Environment,” *Real Clear Defense*, January 4, 2017, available at <www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2017/01/05/reorganizing_the_joint_force_for_a_trans-regional_threat_environment_110581.html>; Sydney J. Freedberg, Jr., “Joint Staff Must Boost Global Coordination; No New Powers Needed: J5,” *Breaking Defense*, April 27, 2017, available at <<https://breakingdefense.com/2017/04/joint-staff-must-step-up-global-coordination-no-new-powers-needed-j-5/>>.

¹⁹ Joint Staff J7, Joint Force Development. J7 was directed to focus globally integrated exercises (GIE) on “address[ing] the higher-level collaboration of the Joint Staff with [the Office of the Secretary of Defense] and coordination among [combatant commands], reflect[ing] the strategic environment and its respective challenges [and] emphasize[ing] global integration across the 4+1 challenges.”

²⁰ *Ibid.* GIE is intended to be “an exercise program designed to ensure the joint force is able to effectively operate as a true integrated force against TMM threats, and provide a full range of flexible and responsive options to decision makers.”

²¹ Joint Staff J7, Joint Force Development.

²² Joseph Dunford, Jr., “Gen. Dunford’s Remarks and Q&A at the Center for Strategic and International Studies,” Washington, DC, March 29, 2016, available at <www.jcs.mil/Media/Speeches/Article/707418/gen-dunfords-remarks-and-qa-at-the-center-for-strategic-and-international-studi/>.

²³ Joint Staff J7, Joint Force Development.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *U.S. Code*, Title 10, Subtitle A, Part I, Chapter 5, § 153, “Chairman: Functions,” (3), available at <www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/10/153>.

²⁷ *Ibid.* This language was added to § 153 by the NDAA 2017. The addition of this responsibility for the Chairman is likely the first legislative initiative, as Congress seeks to improve the Department’s globally integrated operations capabilities.

²⁸ Dunford.