



Fire controlman installs radiation cover onto Phalanx close-in weapon system aboard USS *Russell*, January 29, 2020, Pacific Ocean (U.S. Navy/Sean Lynch)

# The Joint Force Needs a Global Engagement Cycle

By Gregory M. Tomlin

*Both revisionist powers and rogue regimes are competing across all dimensions of power. They have increased efforts short of armed conflict by expanding coercion to new fronts, violating principles of sovereignty, exploiting ambiguity, and deliberately blurring the lines between civil and military goals.*

—2018 NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

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Step into any joint or coalition operations center and you will find planners, intelligence analysts, and operators bustling between working groups and decision boards related to the synchronization of joint

fires. From developing target systems that support the commander's objectives, to validating and prioritizing individual targets, to assigning forces and assessing mission execution, the Joint Targeting Cycle (JTC) often



Lieutenant Commander Erika Schilling, left, and Lieutenant (Junior grade) Natalie Spritzer teach Helping Babies Breathe class to local Chuukese women and girls during largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in Indo-Pacific, Pacific Partnership 2019, in Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia, March 31, 2019 (U.S. Navy/Tyrell K. Morris)

drives the battle rhythm for combat operations. This process enables a staff to match available capabilities with desired lethal and nonlethal effects against an adversary, and it synchronizes intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) efforts with the deployment of ground, maritime, air, and cyber assets responsible for executing joint fires.

Since its inception after Operation *Desert Storm*, the JTC has been a critical methodology for integrating fires with other joint functions to achieve military objectives. Codified in Joint Publication (JP) 3-60, *Joint Targeting*, the six-phased cycle facilitates deliberate and dynamic targeting, regardless of time constraints, and provides the flexibility to conduct some phases concurrently.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, its success in Operations *Enduring Freedom*, *Iraqi Freedom*,

*Odyssey Dawn*, and *Inherent Resolve* has led some commanders to adopt the JTC to integrate other joint functions—particularly information—during planning and operations. This misconception has caused serious challenges by conflating the information and fires domains and forcing the distinct information function into the confines of the phases and tempo of a targeting cycle intended to generate air tasking orders and fire support plans.

Below the threshold of armed conflict, the Department of Defense (DOD) must be prepared to support whole-of-government efforts or operate unilaterally to counter disinformation by influencing foreign individuals and populations. Many information operations require the long-term, sustained delivery of strategic communications; others require immediate responses to inflammatory stories posted on social media platforms.<sup>2</sup> To

adequately integrate and synchronize the joint information function into *all* military operations, it is time to develop a Global Engagement Cycle (GEC) that will free information planners from the awkward and misaligned requirements of the JTC. This article proposes an expanded DOD definition for *engagement*, conceptualizes a new GEC for inclusion in joint doctrine, and argues for establishing a Joint Staff Global Engagement Division to lead the global integration of the joint information function into any military operation.

### Defining Engagement

As U.S. competitors exploit the information domain to gain a competitive advantage over the United States and its allies, the need to integrate information-related capabilities (IRCs), including cyber and electromagnetic spectrum

assets, into the joint force continues to grow. Joint doctrine defines an *IRC* as a “tool, technique, or activity employed within a dimension of the information environment that can be used to create effects and operationally desirable conditions.”<sup>3</sup> The proliferation of *IRCs* enables potential adversaries to jam terrestrial communications and deny access to global positioning satellites that are critical for navigation, surveillance, and the delivery of precision munitions.

*IRCs* can also propagate disinformation through social media, seeding international doubt about the motives behind U.S. policies, the presence of forward-deployed U.S. forces, and the value of alliances, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).<sup>4</sup> Those who do not seek a direct confrontation with the United States, or who lack the conventional military means to achieve their objectives, will develop alternative methods to dominate through the information domain. This is evident in China’s current military strategy that directs the People’s Liberation Army to gain control of the “information sphere” and in the Russian defense strategy that requires its military forces to gain supremacy in any “information confrontation” that could occur in times of war or peace.<sup>5</sup>

In describing the seven joint functions, JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, explains that a commander’s mission requirements will limit the use of the fires function, while the information function applies to all military operations.<sup>6</sup> Although fires involve the use of lethal and nonlethal military force, the term *joint fires* does not include direct fire weapons because those systems fall under the joint function of movement and maneuver. The U.S. Army’s Fires Center of Excellence does not teach Soldiers how to employ Abrams tanks or Bradley fighting vehicles, nor does the U.S. Air Force Weapons School instruct future weapons officers on how to best position machine guns around an airbase. Rather, these schools provide curricula on indirect fires.

The preponderance of joint fires involves cannon and rocket artillery, precision munitions from aircraft, and missiles launched from naval vessels to

change the function of a target. While the dichotomy between direct and indirect fires appears evident, parsing which *IRCs* constitute joint fires can be nebulous. The best method for determining whether to categorize an *IRC* as a joint fires capability would be to confirm whether planners intend to use it to affect a target. Joint doctrine defines a *target* as an “entity or object that performs a function for the threat considered for possible engagement or other action.”<sup>7</sup> With targeting enabling the joint force to prioritize targets and match the appropriate response to them, *IRCs* provide the flexibility to affect some targets without causing physical damage. For example, in lieu of influencing terrorists to surrender by destroying an Islamic State training camp with an artillery barrage, a commander might airdrop leaflets describing the overwhelming capabilities of coalition forces.

In other military operations, a commander may use *IRCs* to affect individuals and populations who *do not* perform a function for an adversary. Indeed, many information operations do not affect targets catalogued in the Defense Intelligence Agency’s Modernized Integrated Database (MIDB)—an extensive collection ranging from individual terrorists to chemical weapons production facilities to the order of battle for conventional forces. In Afghanistan, for example, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) would not classify a women’s rights organization in Kabul as a threat, yet coalition forces would still want to co-opt the activists to expand their efforts beyond the capital city to advance education and employment equality in rural areas. Without cataloguing the women’s group in the MIDB or adding a scheduled bilateral meeting to the air tasking order, the joint force still has a responsibility to synchronize this deliberate information operation with its other lines of effort and assess the outcome’s contribution to the commander’s desired endstate.

Outside of hostilities, information operations enable the joint force to engage with nonadversaries: in peacekeeping

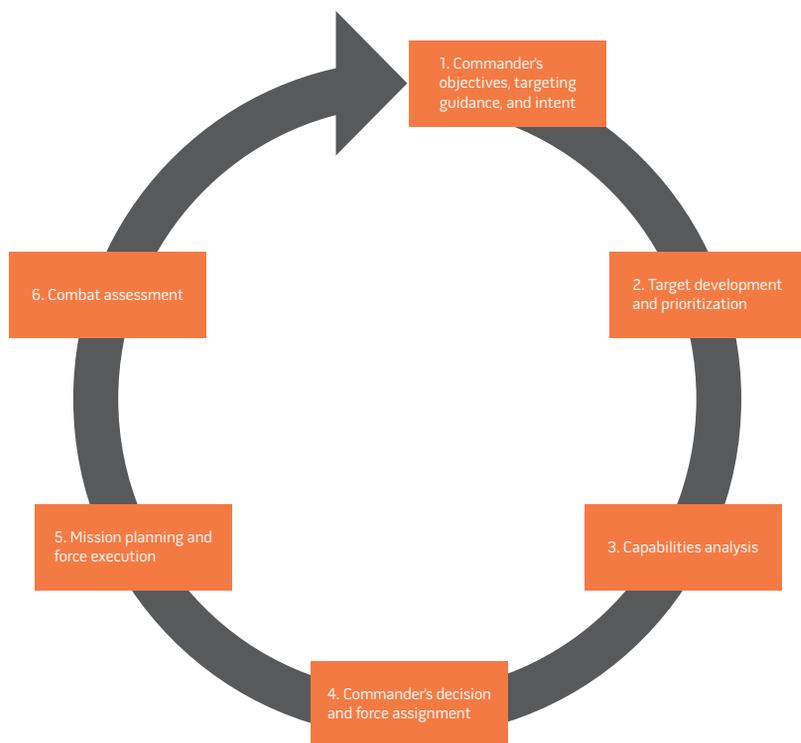
to influence a host-nation population to obey the rule of law, in humanitarian operations to inform internally displaced people where to find food and medical care, in peacetime to counter disinformation about U.S. troops stationed overseas. Unfortunately, the DOD dictionary limits the definition of *engagement* to “an attack against an air or missile threat [or] a tactical conflict, usually between opposing lower echelons maneuver forces.”<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless, from the squad leader to the combatant commander, no Servicemember who receives an order to conduct a key leader engagement believes for a moment that he or she must carry out an assassination.

Some nonlethal engagements involve one-on-one dialogue based on preplanned messages to provide clarity and build trust during the conversation. Similarly, engaging the masses through press conferences and social media requires the development of talking points connected to strategic communications themes. This process depends on advanced planning to identify whom to engage, to craft meaningful messages intended to influence someone’s thinking or behavior, and to assess whether an engagement achieved the desired military endstate.

In light of the practical use of the word *engagement* by the joint force, it is time to expand the doctrinal definition of the term beyond its current lethal description by codifying a complementary nonlethal definition, as proposed here: “An attack against an air or missile threat; a tactical conflict, usually between opposing lower echelons maneuver forces; a nonlethal action, usually employing information-related capabilities, to influence the decisionmaking of an individual or audience not considered to be a threat at the present time.”

Introduction of this definition into joint doctrine would provide the joint force, at any echelon, with the flexibility to either employ *IRCs* in support of the joint fires function or retain them in a separate line of effort for the joint information function. The proposed nonlethal engagement terminology would clarify how information

**Figure 1. The Joint Targeting Cycle from JP 3-60, *Joint Targeting***



operations could influence individuals and audiences not associated with an adversary, and the joint force would gain confidence in its ability to employ IRCs to support the achievement of operational and strategic objectives outside of the Joint Targeting Cycle.

### The Limits of the JTC

Depending on the military operation, the tempo of the Joint Targeting Cycle can be too robust or, conversely, too slow to develop, execute, and assess nonlethal engagements. Information operations to deter disenfranchised youths from joining the Islamic State may take years, while a salacious allegation against U.S. forces posted on social media demands a response that cannot wait for the next day's Joint Targeting Coordination Board. Before outlining the proposed Global Engagement Cycle, it is worthwhile to consider why JTC requirements make that process problematic for synchronizing the nonlethal engagement line of effort for the joint force (see figure 1).

As with all other facets of the joint planning process, targeting begins upon receipt of the commander's guidance, including operational objectives, authorized actions against targets, and any delegated responsibilities for target validation and engagement. The commander's targeting guidance serves as the basis for selecting target systems and articulating desired effects to achieve an endstate. Targeting guidance does not always apply to information planners because of its focus on accomplishing a series of tactical tasks in one specific phase of a larger campaign. Typically, a staff publishes an execution order to achieve one objective and, while subordinate units initiate movement, the staff regroups to publish a fragmentary order with details for achieving the next objective. IRCs may contribute to accomplishing the immediate objective but other information operations require the commander to articulate strategic-level guidance for how to shape messages over the entirety of the campaign. Furthermore, the delegated target validation and engagement authorities may not apply to the employment of certain

IRC, particularly special access cyber and electromagnetic spectrum programs requiring authorization from the President and/or Secretary of Defense.

Target development and prioritization incorporate a variety of intelligence disciplines to build target systems, their components, and individual targets. Entities validated as targets appear on the Joint Integrated Prioritized Target List (JIPTL), and advanced target development continues through the capabilities analysis phase of the Joint Targeting Cycle: mensuration of the target location (its latitude, longitude, and elevation), weaponeering calculations to match the best capability with the target, and a collateral damage estimation of potential lethal effects. Although essential for employing precision munitions, this capabilities analysis format is not conducive for determining how best to influence a diffused virtual audience through the information domain. Moreover, the limiting factor of target selection for nonlethal engagement remains the omission of nontarget entities from the JIPTL approved by the Joint Targeting Coordination Board. Information planners need an independent board to prioritize the individuals and groups who cannot be catalogued in the MIDB and to select the most appropriate IRCs to engage them.

In combat operations, the timing of the commander's decision to engage targets and assign forces to execute joint fires aligns with the battle rhythm to publish the daily air tasking order. In the Air Tasking Cycle, joint planners overlay targets from the JIPTL with available munitions and aircraft for a 24-hour period, which enables bomber and fighter squadrons to publish orders for mission execution. The need to publish an order early enough for forces to prepare for operations requires a disciplined staff process that drives the nomination and validation of targets for the next 48 and 72 hours.

Each 24-hour iteration of the Air Tasking Cycle serves a valuable purpose, but not for many of the deliberate shaping operations in the information domain, where it is unrealistic to

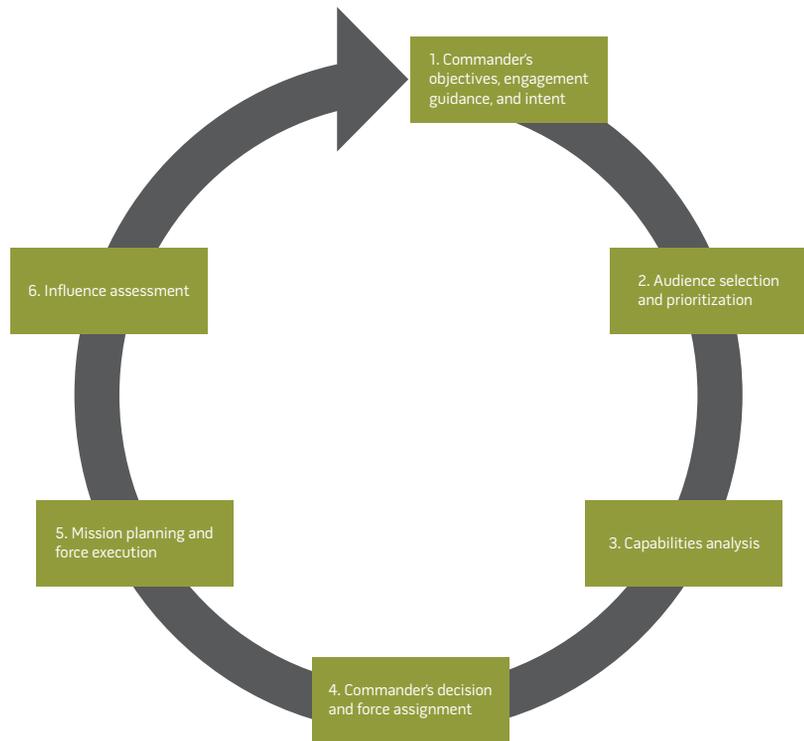
influence someone’s thinking or behavior in just 1 day, or even 3. An IRC could momentarily deceive an adversary about the location of the joint force’s main effort during a ground offensive, and that would constitute a joint fires task to achieve an effect on a specified target. However, when influencing Islamic State terrorists to surrender, nonlethal engagements may require months or years of sustained messaging through the employment of multiple IRCs before the joint force can observe a decrease in the number of voluntary fighters.

Assessing how well mission execution changed the function of a target will either complete the JTC or inform its next iteration. The combat assessment phase involves three specific steps: the intelligence analyst’s battle damage assessment of physical and functional damage, the operator’s munitions effectiveness assessment (“Did the weapon function properly?”), and, as required, the recommendation to reattack the target. As with capabilities analysis, the combat assessment phase can be problematic for information planners. Many nonlethal engagements are never intended to cause physical damage to a target or target system. Every information operation requires an assessment, but not one based on the 24-hour cycle that the Joint Targeting Coordination Board depends on to select new targets for the next day’s air tasking order.

### A New Global Engagement Cycle

The structure of the Joint Targeting Cycle provides a familiar and appropriate framework to design a new Global Engagement Cycle (see figure 2). Not intended to duplicate the established process for integrating joint fires, this proposed methodology would synchronize nonlethal engagements by requiring specific information function inputs from commanders, planners, and the joint force. By recognizing nonlethal engagements as a distinct line of effort, a headquarters could update its battle rhythm with the six phases of the GEC and establish working groups and coordination boards to select, validate, and prioritize audiences to engage with IRCs.

**Figure 2. Proposed Global Engagement Cycle**



To initiate the cycle, information planners would draft the commander’s nonlethal engagement guidance to specify how to use the information function to support the joint force’s short- and long-term objectives. This would ensure that the staff understands the commander’s expectations for achieving certain tasks in the information domain during the current phase of the operation and what tasks would require the entirety of the campaign to accomplish. Both are critical for expectation management, as time constraints determine the frequency of working groups to develop audiences, decision boards to validate IRC employment, and assessments of mission execution. Engagement guidance should specify message themes to incorporate or avoid, especially when considering inter-agency or coalition partner information operations in the same operations area. Guidance should authorize IRCs for nonlethal use and delegate responsibilities for audience validation and engagement.

Similar to the electronic target folders created in the MIDB during target development, the GEC audience selection

and prioritization phase would provide planners with a standardized template for cataloguing individuals and groups for the joint force to consider influencing. The information operations community would need to develop a format for entries, identify an agency to maintain the database, and agree to who should have access to the material. Drawing from all-source intelligence, each entry should provide the name and location of an audience (individuals as well as groups), explain the audience’s relationship to a larger population or social network, and identify its current opinions toward U.S. policy.

An individual audience could be the chief of defense forces for a country who is known to be the most trusted member of a prime minister’s cabinet and who personally supports the presence of U.S. forces in his country. A group audience might transcend the boundaries of a geographic combatant command by including thousands of anonymous members of an Internet chatroom advocating for the dissolution of NATO. As mercurial as this type of audience may be, with

individual members joining and leaving the chatroom at any time, online forums remain viable groups for the joint force to influence in order to achieve a desired peacetime endstate to strengthen solidarity for the Alliance.

Capabilities analysis for nonlethal engagement involves two components: developing messages and selecting the best IRC to influence an audience. To prepare culturally suitable language that would gain credibility with an audience, message development requires collaboration among intelligence, information operations, public affairs, civil affairs, and legal specialists. Matching IRCs with an audience requires staff members to understand the capabilities available to the joint force, including special access cyber and electromagnetic spectrum assets.

Returning to the chief of defense forces example, the staff may determine that the best way to influence the individual would be for the U.S. geographic combatant commander to develop a personal relationship over a series of key leader engagements at conferences, office calls, and social events. Each engagement would require talking points to facilitate a dialogue intended to influence the defense chief's views on a specific topic. In contrast, an information campaign to deter disenfranchised youth from joining terrorist organizations may require multiple IRCs and minimal face-to-face conversation. For example, while an offensive cyber attack could shut down Boko Haram's recruitment Web site to prevent Nigerians from accessing it through their smartphones, a more effective means to influence youth in Chad could be radio broadcasts if Internet access is not as widely available in that country.

Once the commander authorizes a nonlethal engagement and assigns forces, subordinate units complete final preparations to employ IRCs. Joint targeting requires refinement of each target, and so should nonlethal engagement mission planning involve refinement of orders from a higher headquarters. Just as a joint terminal attack controller on the ground must verify a target location before requesting a pilot to drop a precision munition, determining how to engage

an audience must be refined at echelon. The joint force cannot deliver the same platitudes to the citizens of Venezuela and Syria and expect to achieve separate objectives for U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) and U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM). Rather, USSOUTHCOM planners must find ways to inform Venezuelans about the U.S. commitment to representative government, while USCENTCOM's staff needs to develop ways to deter Syrians from supporting the Islamic State.

### The Tempo of Nonlethal Engagements

Engagement in the information domain cannot occur without an assessment through face-to-face conversation or the use of ISR assets to determine the audience's reaction to messages. When the commander's nonlethal engagement guidance includes a timeline for achieving objectives, the staff can synchronize collection assets required to assess how well an IRC influenced the thinking or behavior of an audience. Measures of effectiveness should be quantifiable, such as a decrease in the number of followers of an anti-NATO Twitter account, or an increase in favorable host-nation opinions of the presence of U.S. forces in their country.

By acknowledging that nonlethal engagement and assessment may take longer than a yearlong deployment to influence an audience (let alone the artificially accelerated tempo of a 2-week exercise), the staff should extend the assessment phase well past the traditional turnaround time required for the combat assessment of a precision munition strike against an adversary's chemical weapons production facility. Indeed, assessments in the information domain often depend on numerous intelligence sources monitoring the attitudes and behavior of an audience on multiple occasions, especially when determining the secondary and tertiary effects of a nonlethal engagement on a larger population or social network.

The Global Engagement Cycle would liberate information planners from the rigid 24-hour process critical for the timely publication of air tasking orders.

Adoption of the cycle would not exempt information planners from supporting the joint targeting process, since cyber, electromagnetic spectrum, and information operations specialists must continue to participate in target development working groups and Joint Targeting Coordination Boards to explain how IRCs could achieve desired effects on targets. However, the commander must provide information planners with the flexibility to develop audiences and assess nonlethal engagements over an entire military campaign and in peacetime. Instilling confidence in a strategic approach to nonlethal engagement would help to change the current DOD culture that instinctively associates the information function with the fast-paced planning, execution, and assessment of joint fires.

While the desire to influence an audience's thinking or behavior may involve years of nonlethal engagements and assessments, many scenarios necessitate a response from the joint force within 24 hours. Information planners should consider ways to conduct dynamic nonlethal engagements by conducting some phases of the Global Engagement Cycle concurrently or external to established decision boards. Although nonlethal engagement may start within minutes of the release of a fake story on the Internet, the staff must apply the GEC dynamically to select appropriate audiences, develop coherent messages tied to strategic communications themes, assign IRCs for mission execution, and articulate measures of effectiveness for the post-engagement assessment.

For example, an anonymous report on WhatsApp that falsely accuses the U.S. Air Force of killing dozens of civilians in an airstrike on a Kandahar hospital is likely to elicit an emotional international outcry, especially if the account includes gruesome photos of deceased women and children. To prevent a violent mob from attacking the U.S. Embassy in Kabul and protect U.S. military advisors operating across the country, ISAF cannot wait for the next day to respond. Available capabilities to refute this disinformation may involve coordinating

with social media companies to remove a viral post from their platform, a cyberattack against the online profile of the originator of the story, sharing intelligence about the hospital with city leaders in Kandahar, or a robust public affairs presence through social media and press conferences.

## A Global Integrator for Information

Due to IRCs' reach beyond regional boundaries, it is no longer feasible to rely on each combatant command to synchronize its own nonlethal engagement in isolation from one another. As Peter Singer and Emerson Brooking argue in *Like War: The Weaponization of Social Media*, competitors in the information domain have already influenced international opinions and values formerly taken for granted. Computer bots generate fake news stories on popular blogs, and offices filled with state-funded trolls malign public figures in other countries by derailing conversations in reputable chatrooms.<sup>9</sup>

From questioning who shot down a Malaysian airliner over Ukraine in 2014 to influencing public discourse in another country's democratic elections, the ubiquity of disinformation has sown doubt in traditional democratic norms, news sources, national governments, and alliances. Countering these challenges before the next armed conflict erupts depends on implementing a Global Engagement Cycle to establish credibility with foreign audiences in advance, so that those same audiences would be more trusting of U.S. and coalition information sources before the cacophony of disinformation grows exponentially.

As combatant commands reorganize their staff and battle rhythm to better integrate the joint information function, they will turn to the Joint Staff for cross-geographic and cross-functional command integration. In 2018, the Secretary of Defense designated the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) as the Global Integrator, responsible for "the arrangement of cohesive Joint Force actions in time, space, and purpose, executed as a whole to address

trans-regional, multi-functional challenges across all domains."<sup>10</sup> Within the Joint Staff Directorate for Intelligence (J2), the Targeting Division serves as the global integrator for joint targeting. This includes writing national targeting policy, federating target development between combatant commands and the Intelligence Community, and recommending enterprise-wide solutions to share target material. In contrast, when it comes to the joint information function, the Joint Staff Directorate for Operations (J3) does not possess a comparable division resourced to serve as the global integrator of nonlethal engagements.

Consider the success of Russia's information campaign directed toward Estonia in influencing a significant portion of the Russian-speaking minority to believe they are marginalized within the country. Polling indicates that some who trust Russia's RT and Radio Sputnik as credible news sources question the value of the European Union in improving their quality of life and believe that Estonia has more in common with the Russian Federation than NATO.<sup>11</sup> In response, the commander of U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) could direct his staff to develop a counterinformation campaign to bolster Estonian support for NATO. However, the geographic combatant command could not do this alone, and its staff should be able to turn to the Joint Staff for assistance in coordinating nonlethal engagement efforts with functional commands and interagency partners.

While USEUCOM could collaborate directly with the U.S. Embassy in Estonia, the Joint Staff is better situated to involve other parts of the Department of State in the planning process—namely, the Global Engagement Center and the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs. In addition to liaising with Intelligence Community partners that possess unique insight into the political, social, and economic systems in Estonia, the Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory studies the population densities of urban areas around the world, which could shape where the joint force directs its nonlethal engagements.

Should USEUCOM choose to use broadcasting or social media to influence Russian-speaking Estonians, the Joint Staff could collaborate with the U.S. Agency for Global Media, since this non-DOD entity may be better positioned to engage appropriate audiences through Voice of America's Russian-language service, the Polygraph.info fact-checking Web site, and Current Time TV.

## A New Global Engagement Division

If the Joint Staff J3 established a Global Engagement Division, it would not only serve as the interlocutor between the combatant commands and interagency partners but also integrate the commands' collective efforts to achieve a common endstate. The division could ensure that functional commands, such as U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM), do not develop audiences or conduct nonlethal engagements without synchronizing with the appropriate geographic command. Not only would this reduce staff work by ensuring that commands share their products with one another, but it also would prevent "information fratricide." This form of fratricide might involve USCYBERCOM shutting down a Web site in Estonia without realizing that a USEUCOM public affairs officer was actively participating on the site by posting favorable stories about NATO partnership exercises in the Baltic states.

To accomplish this level of integration, the CJCS should consider resourcing the Deputy Directorate for Global Operations J39 to establish a new Global Engagement Division. To function as the global integrator for nonlethal engagements crossing geographic boundaries and functional domains, the division could organize into three branches: operations and plans, automation, and doctrine and policy.

The most robust branch would need to be operations and plans, with each action officer assigned a combatant command portfolio. By participating via video teleconference in working groups and decision boards with the command's information planners, the

Joint Staff representative could clarify supported and supporting command roles for developing nonlethal engagements toward specific audiences. When a commander's objective or the complexity of an information campaign exceeds the capacity of one command to plan and execute, the Joint Staff action officer could recommend ways to federate audience and message development with other DOD components or advocate for allocating additional interagency or coalition partner IRCs to support nonlethal engagements.

For the operations and plans branch to serve a decisive role in advancing global integration, it would depend on the automation branch developing new computer applications or integrating into existing knowledge management systems. The MIDB for target entities provides a standard electronic target folder for every catalogued entity, and the automation branch might consider how the joint force would want to build and manage a national-level database of individual and group audiences for potential nonlethal engagement by any command.

Applying these future automation systems would require new joint doctrine—not only an expanded definition of engagement but also technical details about how to conduct the six phases of the Global Engagement Cycle. The doctrine and policy branch could lead the development of new CJCS instructions and manuals to codify how to select and develop audiences, the dichotomy between IRCs used in joint targeting versus nonlethal engagement, and post-engagement assessment standards. Not only could this branch update these documents based on extant practice, but it also could advocate on behalf of the nonlethal engagement community during Joint Staff–led revisions of overarching joint publications, including JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, JP 3-12, *Cyberspace Operations*, and JP 3-13, *Information Operations*.

## A Distinct Approach for Nonlethal Engagement

When the Secretary of Defense established information as the seventh joint

function in 2017, he directed DOD to consider the implications across doctrine, organizations, education, and personnel.<sup>12</sup> An expanded joint definition of engagement would allow commanders and planners to reframe how they develop and achieve nonlethal effects. Adopting the Global Engagement Cycle as an alternative to the Joint Targeting Cycle would provide a greatly needed methodology to address current inadequacies with how the joint force integrates the information function into all military operations. Information planners and IRCs remain critical to the Joint Targeting Cycle, but efforts to influence the thinking and behavior of nonadversarial audiences require a separate process to counter the revisionist powers and rogue regimes competing with the United States and its allies across all dimensions of power.

The joint force must build credibility with audiences in foreign countries before hostilities or crises arise, as U.S. competitors have already begun to aggressively engage in duplicitous and subtle ways to shape the information domain, short of armed conflict. USCYBERCOM will develop means to prevent near-peer competitors from dominating the information domain during named operations and crises. Geographic combatant commands will develop influence strategies as well, but they cannot develop a strategy in isolation. Countering Russian disinformation no longer remains USEUCOM's challenge exclusively, and violent extremist organizations recruit new terrorists from within U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's boundaries to conduct attacks within USCENTCOM's operations area and against the homeland. Just as the George W. Bush administration established the Office of the Director of National Intelligence to improve intelligence-sharing after 9/11, the joint force would benefit greatly from the Joint Staff establishing a Global Engagement Division to enhance collaboration between combatant commands and interagency partners. Investing in the integration and synchronization of nonlethal engagement efforts today helps to achieve national security objectives before

the joint force must resort to placing Servicemembers in harm's way. JFQ

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Joint Publication (JP) 3-60, *Joint Targeting* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, September 28, 2018), II-3.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory M. Tomlin, "#SocialMediaMatters: Lessons Learned from Exercise Trident Juncture," *Joint Force Quarterly* 82 (3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2016).

<sup>3</sup> JP 3-13, *Information Operations* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, November 20, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> "Special Edition: Countering Russian Propaganda," *Per Concordiam: Journal of European Security and Defense Issues* 7 (2016).

<sup>5</sup> *Challenges to Security in Space* (Washington, DC: Defense Intelligence Agency, January 2019), 14, 29, available at <www.dia.mil/Portals/27/Documents/News/Military%20Power%20Publications/Space\_Threat\_V14\_020119\_sm.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> JP 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, October 22, 2018), III-1.

<sup>7</sup> JP 3-60.

<sup>8</sup> JP 3-0 and JP 3-01, *Countering Air and Missile Threats* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, May 2, 2018).

<sup>9</sup> P.W. Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *Like War: The Weaponization of Social Media* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Jim Garamone, "Global Integration Seeks to Buy Leaders Decision Time, Increase 'Speed of Relevance,'" Defense Media Activity, July 2, 2018.

<sup>11</sup> Mridvika Sahajpal, Silviu Kondan, and David J. Trimbach, "Integration Policy & Perceptions in Estonia," *Foreign Policy Research Institute Baltic Bulletin*, May 7, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> James Mattis, Department of Defense memorandum, "Information as a Joint Function," September 15, 2017.