

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

JOINT OPERATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL FLAWS IN GOLDWATER-NICHOLS

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ABSTRACT

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JOINT OPERATIONS: ORGANIZATIONAL FLAWS IN GOLDWATER NICHOLS

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986¹ (Goldwater-Nichols) was the most comprehensive change to military organization since the enactment of the National Security Act in 1947². It formed the basis of the department's structure and improved the chain of command between the Commander-in-Chief and the theater combatant commander. Among other things, Congress intended the reorganization to improve the unity of effort among service components by diminishing the power of each service chief and vesting more warfighting power in combatant commanders.³

The act's seven main objectives either improved management of the defense establishment or improved theater military operations. Four objectives focused on improving defense management: strengthening civilian authority, improving military advice, improving efficient use of defense resources, and improving management of joint officers. Three objectives focused on improving theater military operations: ensuring combatant commanders have authorities commensurate with responsibilities, increasing attention on strategy formulation and contingency planning, and enhancing effectiveness of military operations.

In the 20 years since Goldwater-Nichols, much of the national and strategic debate has been focused on improving defense management with better advice, better resource allocation, and better bureaucracies. Many still criticize the services' antiquated procurement processes, development of niche systems that lack interoperability, unnecessary bureaucracy in oversized headquarters, and a resource allocation process that is not supportive of joint operations. Most of the strategic debate has focused on the items that the legislative and executive branches' upper management could remedy with changes to law, resources, and policy. This strategic debate to improve defense management may have overshadowed the real task of directly improving theater military operations. Six of the seven Goldwater-Nichols objectives focused on processes in either Washington D.C. or in the combatant commander's headquarters. Only enhancing the effectiveness of military operations translates directly to the battlefield.

This paper demonstrates that Goldwater-Nichols has a design flaw which limits the services', in particular the Army and Air Force's, ability to effectively combine into an efficient joint organization. Though the act made improvements in defense management between Washington D.C. and the combatant commander, the act's prescription for joint operations is deficient. It failed to create an organizational structure that permeates from the strategic level to the tactical. Improving the bureaucracies within Washington D.C. and combatant commander's staff planning has not translated to improved battlefield organizations where the test of effective

joint warfare resides. Goldwater-Nichols failed to address the difficulty of creating joint organizations.

When the Air Force and Army combine forces to obtain a specific goal or undertake a long term operation, each comes into the joint relationship as a sovereign organization. For the purpose of this paper, a sovereign organization is one which has its own budget, hires and trains personnel, develops its processes and procedures, and otherwise sees itself as culturally unique from other organizations. Sovereign organizations enlist a wide range of organizational structures to accomplish their individual missions. Questions of control, hierarchy, centralized decision making, authorities, and coordination are all part of an organization's organizational plan.

This paper begins with an exploration of joint organizational doctrine created from Goldwater-Nichols, followed by a review of hybrid organizational theory, and ending with an examination of the actual Air Force and Army organization in support of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM.

Joint Organizational Doctrine

Using the Goldwater-Nichols Act as its directive, the Joint Staff developed doctrine to organize the joint force. Goldwater-Nichols moved campaign planning and execution authority to the regional combatant commander and away from the service chiefs. This called for establishing new organizational relationships to ensure unity of effort and improved effectiveness on the battlefield.

Joint Publication 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces*, is one of two "capstone" documents for joint doctrine. It specifies command relationships, authorities of commanders, policies to use those authorities, doctrine for command and control, and guidance for organizing joint forces.⁴ Within the document, the relationships between the President, Secretary of Defense, services, combatant commanders, and the Joint Staff are described. As an illustration, the Figure 1 shows an organizational chart per Joint Publication 0-2⁵ depicting the chain of command and control for a notional combatant command, also referred to as a unified command. The services provide forces that would integrate into a joint task force or functional component command. For simpler operations, there are also options to organize by service component. As the diagram shows, in a complex unified command structure, a service (indicated in gray) can be dispersed among numerous joint commands while operationally or tactically controlled by a joint force commander. The dispersed service members obtain logistical support from their service component command who receives support from its military department.

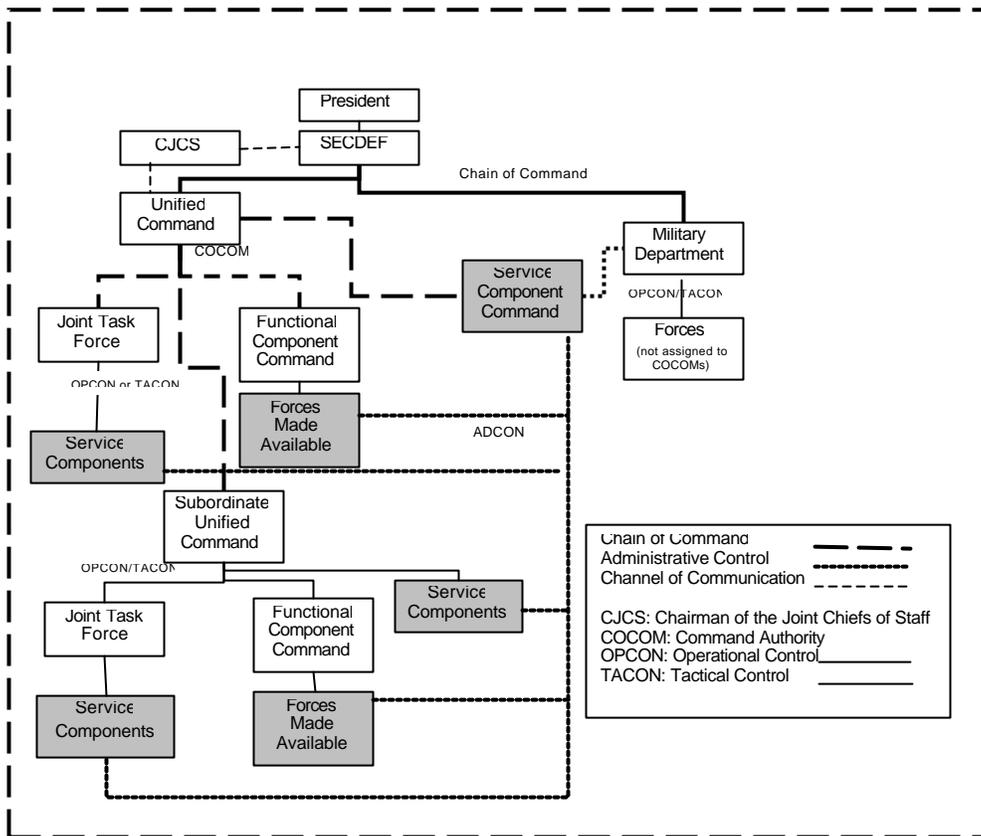


Figure 1 Combatant Command Organization

Goldwater-Nichols solidified the combatant commander's relationship with the President and Secretary of Defense as a key tenant of joint force operations. The act improved the President and Secretary of Defense's ability to dictate national strategy to a single commander, improving unity of command from the Commander-in-Chief to the field. This improvement removed civilian authorities from coordinating between the services by instilling that function with the combatant commander.

The commander has combatant command authority as authorized by Title 10 USC Section 164. That authority cannot be delegated or transferred. The variation of allowed organizational structures illustrates Congress's deference to the combatant commander by allowing the greatest flexibility to organize the force. Joint force commanders have the ability to organize their assigned forces to best perform their assigned mission.⁶

The joint publication on unified action states, "command is central to all military action, and unity of command is central to unity of effort." A critical aspect of joint operations is unity of effort through unity of command. In order for the commander to carry out assigned responsibilities, operational and tactical control over assigned forces should be vested in that commander. Unity of command is accomplished when all forces operate under the direction of a single commander who can then position and employ forces in pursuit of a common purpose.⁷ Command and control is the most important function carried out by the joint force commander. The lack of command and control can lead to a disorganized and undisciplined fighting force. Successful command and control synchronizes and integrates the joint force for unified action.⁸

Joint organizational doctrine is neither descriptive nor restrictive. It allows the combatant commander a tremendous amount of latitude to organize as he deems necessary. As seen in Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, organizational structure and span of control can become unwieldy. As the combatant commander creates sub-organizations to delegate span of control, further investigation is needed to determine if the lower echelon forces are organized to allow efficient joint operations and the promise of joint warfare to emerge.

Challenges to Inter-Organizational Operations

Having the best trained soldiers and airmen is not enough. They must be organized with unity of effort to improve effectiveness. Military strategy is the proper balance of objective, doctrine and resources.⁹ Those resources must be organized to provide the best chance for strategy and doctrine to be executed. People-centric organizations such as the Army and Air Force champion the power of the individual soldier or airman, and the power of effective organization can sometimes be lost. Organizational debates can be marginalized as bureaucratic or overly managerial since most believe that it is the people that matter most in organizations.¹⁰ How they are organized is secondary. Though people are critically important to any organization's success, the organization and the individual's position within that organization greatly influence a person's performance. Individuals can predict their probability of success by examining their authority and resources with which to act.¹¹

Joint forces can be evaluated similarly. Joint task force commanders may predict their own success by evaluating the resources and span of control they have to execute their missions. If the organizational structure is not supportive of the mission because required forces are neither assigned nor controlled by the joint force commander, the synergy of joint force employment can be diminished.

How complex coordination is accomplished across a large organization faced with difficult problems is the most important aspect to understand about an organization.¹² For joint forces, how that complex coordination is accomplished is critical to evaluating the force's effectiveness. The success of an organization is not only a function of its organizational chart. The relationships between the "lines and boxes" in an organizational chart can improve efficiency and control which improves unity of effort.

Hybrid organizations are arrangements between two or more sovereign organizations that combine resources, policies, and structures to create a new entity. They are at the same time a new, single organization and a product of their original sovereign organizations.¹³ Due to a number of factors, many organizations use hybrid organizations to improve their effectiveness and are usually formed when independent organizations join forces to improve efficiency and flexibility.¹⁴

In joint operations between the Army and Air Force, the services combine to better integrate land and air warfare tactics and effects. As a combatant command, the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) and its subordinate commands are hybrid organizations formed predominantly from the Army and Air Force. Each time CENTCOM uses forces and equipment from the services to fight and win wars, it creates a hybrid organization.

The provided forces from the Army and Air Force are reorganized under CENTCOM and take on new organizational nomenclatures to describe themselves. While they are controlled operationally and strategically by the CENTCOM leadership, they do not lose their original organizational identity. The maintenance of identity within sovereign organizations is illustrated by individuals soldiers who wear "US Army" nametapes on their uniforms, organizations that fight using service training and doctrine techniques, and logistical supply chains that originate from the sovereign organizations. CENTCOM is fighting wars in Afghanistan and Iraq using two such ad hoc organizations, Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan (CFC-A) and Multi-Nation Forces Iraq (MNF-I), respectively.

Hybrid organizations are difficult to organize. But a well organized hybrid can realize the expectations of its partners to tackle challenges that neither alone could perform. When organizing under a hybrid organizational structure, there are four main issues that must be addressed.¹⁵ Failing to address them could result in degraded operations or even failure.

First, a hybrid organization must articulate its *purpose*. One can assume that all sovereign organizations share a common goal when they form a hybrid, but in most cases the sovereigns do not share a "common environment or domain" and come into the venture with differing cultures and operating principles. The purpose of the organization is usually broad in

order to satisfy both partners, but many times the broad purpose is not helpful in reconciling the sometimes limited interests of each.¹⁶

When the Air Force and Army formed to create the bulk of CENTCOM, the purpose of CENTCOM was to win the Global War on Terror which the Air Force and Army had no disagreement. At the CENTCOM command structure's highest levels, the senior leaders of each service are in agreement on the purpose of the hybrid organization. But at lower levels, such as the tactical level, purpose could be a source of conflict since Army and Air Force lower-echelon commanders do not share a "common domain." This lack of common purpose can lead to differing views of the mission's purpose or methods to execute it.

Second, *boundary definitions* must be established. Hybrids need to understand where the new organization starts and the sovereign organization stops.¹⁷ In addition to understanding the relationship between themselves and their environment, each must also understand the relationship with each other. Although Goldwater-Nichols codified this relationship by reinforcing the combatant commands and removing the services chiefs from actual warfighting duties and decisions, questions of boundary definition arise when CENTCOM further sub-organizes those forces, especially if the CENTCOM commander reorganizes along service lines.

How the partner's resources are to be used also must be decided as a boundary issue. Identification of available resources is important as well as the obligations that go along with the use of those resources. When sovereign organizations supply resources to a hybrid, they are of course very interested in how their resources will be used and how those decisions would be made.¹⁸ The provider will always have a vested interest in the methods and applicability of their resources to hybrid problems. For example, the Air Force is very interested in how and against which targets its combat aircraft are employed.

Organizational culture can be the most important boundary to establish if an effective hybrid is to emerge. Personnel bring cultural identities, stories, and artifacts with them to the new organization which can prevent cohesion in the hybrid organization. Transcending old identities and forming new ones within the hybrid organization can be difficult to achieve but is critical to enabling the partners to combine for the good of the hybrid.¹⁹ Creating a joint culture from distinct services is complex and extensively discussed at all levels of the defense establishment on how to improve cultural cohesion.

Boundary definition in a new hybrid therefore establishes the use of resources, the decisions that expend those resources, and affects the cohesion of the new organization

through cultural identity. Successfully establishing the boundaries of a hybrid greatly improves the likelihood of achieving the hybrid's purpose.²⁰

Third, *value creation* must be addressed. Hybrids are formed when a sovereign organization cannot solve an important problem. The formation of a hybrid improves the advantage against competitors and therefore creates value for each. All hybrids create value in ways that neither could have done alone. It is the pursuit of improved value that forces the sovereign organizations to solve differing views on operations and production as they become more interdependent on each other for success.²¹ The Army joins forces with the Air Force in both theaters to improve its competitive advantage over the enemy.

Breakdowns in the hybrid can occur if the interdependencies are not managed effectively. The "lack of familiarity with the other firm, distrust, and misunderstanding" are common problems that must be overcome. Identification of those breakdown points during the formation of the hybrid can improve the chance of success.²² Anecdotal evidence suggests that the services don't understand and are unfamiliar with each other. This can lead to the distrust which must be overcome for greater effectiveness.

Lastly, *hybrid stability* is critical to success. In unitary organizations, personnel establish their expectations within a framework of an evolved system of rules, roles, and other established practices. They understand how to coordinate work, gain resources, and effectively estimate the quality of work to meet the organization's expectations of them. In effect, they have learned to navigate their company's waters. In a new hybrid, a history of practices and norms do not exist which can create instability.²³ The lack of common systems, roles, rules, and practices can lead to stress among hybrid members.

A stabilizing force within many hybrid organizations is a common sector or economic process. Coming from a similar sector or background improves the likelihood that the hybrid can find common roles and rules to incorporate into the hybrid. Also, some hybrids have a common stabilizing force such as the courts or a trade union that can provide stability through over-watch or regulatory functions.²⁴ For the services, the stabilizing force is Congress, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Staff. Those organizations provide stability and pressure to conform through laws, policies, and joint doctrine, respectively. Also, services of a similar medium are more stable. This can be seen when the Army and Marine Corps join forces due to their similarities in land warfare tactics and procedures.

Responses to Inter-Organizational Challenges

Organizations use four basic types of arrangements to form hybrid organizations: mergers and acquisitions, license agreements, joint ventures, and supplier arrangements. Issues of purpose, boundary conditions, value creation and stability will affect those arrangements to varying degrees.²⁵ Due to the nature of the service organizations and combatant command structure, all four basic types are not analogous to joint operations. Mergers/acquisitions do not represent basic arrangements for joint organizations since the combatant command does not fully acquire the services. The services do not use licensing agreements as in the business world as rights of one company that are bought and used by another.

Joint ventures are very difficult to characterize since they are the most complex. As the sovereign organizations combine to form the joint venture, clear separations do not exist. In the case of the services, each provides forces to the unified command but maintain logistical support to those forces. Joint ventures have complex arrangements caused not only by the relationship between each other but also with their parent organization.²⁶ As Army and Air Force organizations merge on the battlefield, the relationship between them is further complicated by the relationship each has with its parent service.

Joint venture partners retain some of their organizational sovereignty (culture, doctrine, tactics, etc.) and can maintain a separation from the hybrid which may lessen cooperation. Some processes are directed by the parent organization. In the military, this can be seen with service doctrine. To make matters more complex, hybrid relationships are constantly up for discussion as requirements of the hybrid change.²⁷ For example, as CENTCOM expanded from Afghanistan to begin the war in Iraq, the four main issues of hybrid organization should have been evaluated once again.

A far simpler hybrid arrangement is the *supplier arrangement*. It can be described as a hybrid organization providing a specific good or service within certain time parameters. The hybrid organization has interdependence between the sovereign organizations since one organization usually fits into the other's production process.²⁸ Supplier arrangements also allow the supplier to maintain full independence yet also interact with the buyer in the production process. The key aspect of the arrangement is that the supplier creates value for the buyer while improving its own while also maintaining independence from the buyer.²⁹

In the case of the Army and Air Force, their relationship in a joint organization could be characterized as the Air Force being the supplier and the Army as the buyer. The Air Force provides the service of air support which fits into the Army's production process of land

operations. This allows the Air Force to create value for the Army while maintaining its own identity and independence.

As sovereign organizations combine to form a hybrid organization, *trust and control* must also be addressed if a satisfactory organization is to emerge. Das and Teng (1998) called the combination of multiple organizations “strategic alliances” where cooperative arrangements are created to achieve the strategic goals of the partners.³⁰ Because strategic alliances require the partners to coordinate their actions to achieve a shared objective, satisfactory cooperation is vital to their success. In order to be successful, the partners have to maintain a high level of confidence in the other partner. This sense of confidence comes from the independent sources of trust and control.³¹

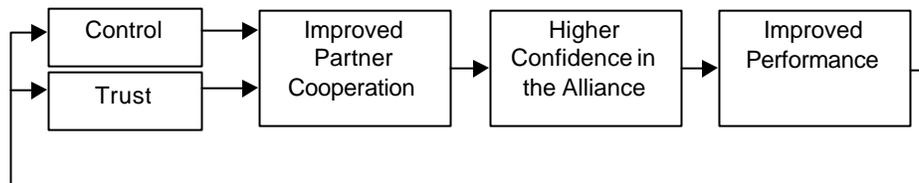


Figure 2: Trust and Control in Strategic Alliances

Trust and control act together and independently to develop better cooperation in a strategic partnership. When trust and control are *complementary* (zero sum game), a higher amount of trust tends to create less need for control. When trust and control are *supplementary* (additive), both act independently to improve confidence in the strategic alliance. Strategic alliances are supplementary (additive).³² An increase in trust does not necessarily reduce the need for control, but an increase in either will increase the overall confidence in the alliance. For the Army and Air Force, confidence in each other is critical to improved joint operations. The development of both trust and control is critical to a successful combination of forces.

Not all hybrids require the same amount of confidence. The amount of confidence required of the partners is directly related to the amount of equity, or assets, placed in the new organization. The greater the non-recoverable assets placed in the alliance, the greater the confidence that must be held by each partner.³³

Joint ventures have the greatest input of assets to the alliance; therefore they require both a high level of trust and a high level of control since each partner has a high asset investment.³⁴

When one partner has an equity stake in the other, the majority partner will require a moderate level of confidence and a resultant lower amount of trust or control. In non-equity alliances, where neither partner has assets tied up with the other, a lower level of trust and control is required. For a joint venture to be successful, a high amount of trust and control is required since both partners have accepted a high risk to themselves by infusing higher amounts of non-recoverable assets if the venture fails.³⁵ For comparison, the supplier partnerships in the hybrid literature would be equivalent to the non-equity alliance in the trust and control literature.³⁶

		Control Level	
		High	Low
Trust Level	High	<i>High confidence in partner cooperation</i> <u>Joint Ventures</u>	<i>Moderate confidence in partner cooperation</i> <u>Minority equity alliances</u>
	Low	<i>Moderate confidence in partner cooperation</i> <u>Minority equity alliances</u>	<i>Low confidence in partner cooperation</i> <u>Nonequity alliances (supplier arrangements)</u>

Figure 3 Confidence Requisite Level In Different Alliance Types

A corollary to this theory could be developed. If confidence is low between partners, and choices can be made on the type of alliance to create, non-equity alliances such as supplier arrangements would be the plausible outcome for partners with long-standing yet low confidence relationships. Because some organizations are forced to combine as strategic alliances, a sovereign organization may want to limit its risk within the new hybrid since confidence in the new partner is low. Since supplier arrangements do not involve equity in each other's organizations, these non-equity alliances allow the new hybrid to form while improving autonomy and reducing risk to its partners.

In a bureaucracy, executives place a high priority on maintaining *autonomy*. Examples of military turf wars are common in our military history for over 100 years. For example, the Army has had a long-standing conflict with the Air Force over the close air support role. The 1948 Key West agreement precluded the Army from procuring fixed-wing aircraft over 5,000 pounds. The Air Force had a lower priority on close air support when compared to strategic bombers and ballistic missiles. To overcome this limitation, the Army began to purchase helicopters to perform the role of close air support of advancing soldiers.³⁷

Wilson (1989) argues that the turf wars between the services are merely attempts to match mission with jurisdiction. In the case of close air support, Army officers are not attempting to obtain fixed wing aircraft simply because they like the idea of owning them. They want them because experience has taught them that friendly planes supporting infantry must be coordinated with extreme precision. Conversely, the Air Force was not avoiding providing adequate close air support but merely balancing competing missions of strategic bombers within their jurisdiction.³⁸

The best time to match mission with jurisdiction is when the organization is created. In doing so, there are six rules of thumb: seek out tasks that are not performed by others, fight organizations that seek to perform your tasks, avoid tasks that are not at the heart of your mission, be wary of joint or cooperative ventures, avoid tasks that produce hostile constituencies, and avoid previously learned weak areas.³⁹

Executives avoid joint ventures (such as a police interagency task force on organized crime) to avoid sharing responsibility for mission mistakes caused by the bad judgment of other task force members not controlled by the executive's organization.⁴⁰ In the case of joint warfare and the loss of autonomy by the services, the Army and Air Force predictably resist attempts to enter into truly joint ventures. The services prefer clear mission tasks and independence to perform them. Autonomy must be maintained.

In summary, the four main issues of purpose, boundary conditions, value creation, and stability all act upon joint organizations. Creating an ad hoc joint warfighting organization from sovereign and long-standing organizations such as the Army and Air Force is complex and problematic. Numerous obstacles must be cleared and a tremendous amount of work needs to be accomplished to craft a successful organization before the first bullet is fired or the first bomb is dropped.

In addition to the hybrid organizational issues, the issue of trust and control in hybrids must also be addressed. Personnel in newly formed joint organization have been culturally and doctrinally raised in their parent organization. This makes it especially difficult to create confidence in the other partner especially when the cost of failure is so high. In the military, lives are at stake. There is a natural inclination for an organization to maintain existing relationships and control of resources which is problematic to forming joint organizations.

Lastly, organizations prefer to maintain their autonomy rather than lose it to a hybrid or joint venture organization. It is a common reaction for leaders to retain their autonomy and increase the control of resources than to rely on others to "be there" when needed or explain the other's mistakes due to poor decisions or use of resources.

Goldwater-Nichols Revisited—Application to Current Operations

Goldwater-Nichols failed to consider the structural challenges to creating a hybrid organization. The act consolidated power for warfighting to the combatant commander. It improved the joint organization at the strategic level with improved regional campaign and contingency planning. It improved the oversight and teamwork to acquire more interoperable weapon systems. But, it failed to effectively describe how joint organizations would form. The act did not ensure the military was organized to ensure unity of effort and unity of command. At the highest levels, the combatant commander has unity of command, but a more detailed examination of the remaining structure used to organize almost 200,000 American forces reveals an organizational divide. At the lower levels of the CENTCOM structure, little is organized for joint operations.

The focus on joint operations has been placed disproportionately at the highest level of the defense establishment without enough guidance on how to create a better joint operation on the battlefield. As Figure 4 depicts, Goldwater-Nichols focused on improving joint operations at the strategic level of the defense organization. By failing to articulate how joint organizations would be implemented, the military's attempt to organize a joint force succumbed to traditional obstacles to forming vibrant hybrid organizations. They have implemented predictable organizations that reduce the services' risk by maintaining each service's autonomy. The lack of Goldwater-Nichols and joint doctrine to implement a more viable joint structure has placed undue pressure at the tactical level to overcome faults that have permeated from the strategic level of organization.

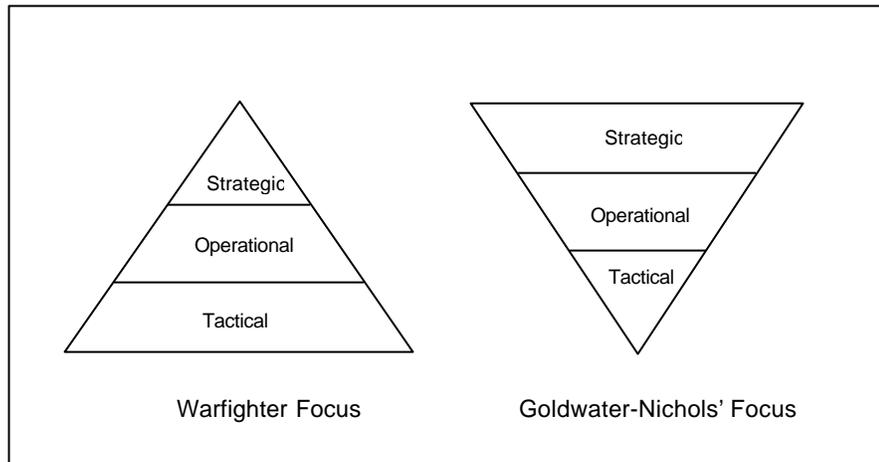


Figure 4: Focus On Organization Levels

Using the Air Force as an example, it is useful to show how the services can vary force employment principles in response to the particular environment which they operate. Air employment leads to differing practices than would be expected of land or sea employment. The strategy required to operate in their respective medium drives their structure.

Air Force doctrine states that the use of airpower is better applied from a functional standpoint and not a geographic one. Air is a homogenous medium unlike the land which is constrained by terrain and topography. The Air Force views air power as unconstrained by time and space relative to land or sea power. It plans and organizes itself to provide flexibility and efficient support across large areas to include the entire Earth.⁴¹ Predictably, Army organizational doctrine is geographically-based as the Army defends and occupies land areas.

The Air Force believes in the centralized control of air assets to include planning from centralized air operations centers. Decentralized execution by forces in the field then allows the greatest flexibility to the joint forces commander.⁴² The air operations center is a high-tech computer-based center using satellite and radar technology to track and control thousands of aircraft, sorties, and targets. These provide command and control of all air assets with only one air operation center per area of operation. How the area of operation is defined is critical to understanding Air Force organizational doctrine. Air Force doctrine maintains that this centralized control of all air assets is the best way to support the combatant commander, a strategic-level commander. In essence, all air assets and forces required to support those weapon systems are controlled from a staff located in Qatar.

The air operations center in the CENTCOM area of operations is located on the Arabian Peninsula in Qatar adjacent to Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf region. From that location, the air component commander can perform his responsibilities to command and control air operations. This air operations center was operational during Operation DESERT STORM and has remained in continual operation ever since due to continuing operations in the area. Due to technological advances, the air operations center could be located as far away as the United States.

Joint doctrine establishes air component commanders, along with land and sea component commanders, to provide integrated, combined, and coordinated efforts for land, sea, and air areas of operation. In the case of air control, the Combined Forces Air Component Commander (CFACC) is the functional commander of all airborne aircraft (Air Force, Navy, and Marine) required to service the joint air operations area and is responsible to the CENTCOM commander for an integrated approach. The CFACC can come from any service, but unless the force is predominantly a sea operation, the Air Force commander is usually appointed the

CFACC. The CFACC is responsible for the air campaign planning, air operations, and the daily air tasking order which coordinates all air operations. In CENTCOM, the senior Air Force officer is the CFACC.

In the Iraq and Afghanistan area of operations, there is only one Commander Air Force Forces Commander (COMAFFOR)⁴³. The COMAFFOR is responsible for the logistical and administrative support of the Air Force's aircraft and personnel. A COMAFFOR could be appointed for each area of operation who would then report to the local joint force commander. The COMAFFOR carries out headquarters duties with an administrative staff, or A-staff. The A-staff is heavily weighted to perform personnel, administration, and logistics functions.

The Air Force presents combat forces to the combatant commander with an air expeditionary task force (AETF). In CENTCOM, the Air Force has established the 9th AETF, with its headquarters in Qatar. The AETF commander has operational responsibility for assigned Air Force aircraft and personnel. Under the AETF, there is an Air Expeditionary Wing located in each Afghanistan and Iraq to support those areas. Each AEW commander is responsible for warfighting by carrying out assigned missions with the aircraft and personnel within their command. The 9th AETF Commander exercises both operational and tactical control of both aircraft and personnel within CENTCOM.⁴⁴

CENTCOM centralized all Air Force operations under one commander. The three-star Air Force general officer is "triple-hatted" as the COMAFFOR, 9th AETF Commander, and the CFACC. Since the AFFOR commander, AETF commander, and CFACC are the same person with three separate duty responsibilities, it made sense to co-locate the A-staff, task force staff, and air operations center together in Qatar. The staffs existed since Operation DESERT STORM in the early 1990's and grew with each additional operation: Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (Afghanistan theater) in Oct 01 and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (Iraq theater) in Mar 03.

In the case of the multiple campaigns within the CENTCOM area of operation, the senior Air Force officer exercises ADCON, TACON, and OPCON over all Air Force personnel assigned (Figure 5). This control extends over all Air Force personnel regardless of where they are located within CENTCOM. From a practical standpoint, if one is in the Air Force and assigned to CENTCOM, one's chain of command leads back to Qatar. Specifically in Afghanistan and Iraq, the airmen assigned within the two countries are controlled and directed through a chain of command that bypasses the area of operations task force commanders and goes back to Qatar.

The other task forces, functional commands and service commands have coordinating ability to obtain support from the Air Force. Joint force commanders within CENTCOM do not directly control, operationally or tactically, Air Force assets or personnel.

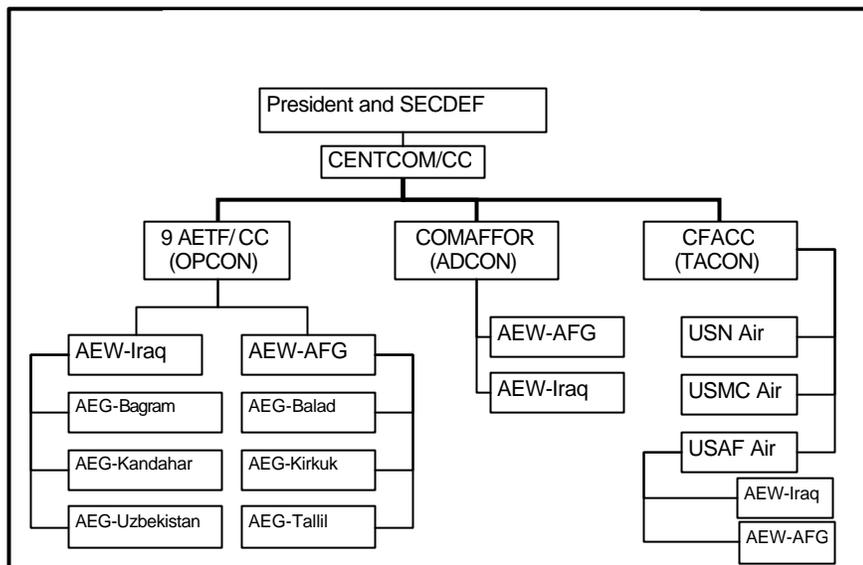


Figure 5: Air Force Organization in CENTCOM

In addition to forming the Air Force component, the CENTCOM commander formed a joint command one in Afghanistan and Iraq to fight within each theater of operation. The two subordinate joint commands are Combined Forces Command-Afghanistan (CFC-A) and Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I). CFC-A is the command responsible to prosecute the effort in Afghanistan. MNF-I is responsible for the war effort in Iraq. In both instances, the command headquarters are located in their respective theaters and populated with a core manpower pool from the Army. CFC-A is led by an Army three-star general officer. MNF-I is led by an Army four-star general officer. The remainder of the headquarters is staffed from each of the services plus coalition forces to create what appears to be a joint warfighting headquarters.

Joint warfare is team warfare. The engagement of forces is not a series of individual performances linked by a common theme; rather, it is the integrated and synchronized application of all appropriate capabilities. The synergy that results from the operations of joint forces according to joint doctrine maximizes combat capability in unified action.⁴⁵

Each commander is responsible for their unified war effort. It is a common principle that with the responsibility to make decisions and levy combat requirements comes the authority and

resources to do so. From a layman perspective, one would accept the premise that all United States forces assigned to the Afghanistan or Iraq theater are under the command of the CFC-A and MNF-I commanders, respectively. That premise is not as straightforward as it may seem.

Excluding coalition and special operations, the bulk of forces in CFC-A and MNF-I are from the Army. Those units have been formed into task forces while deployed and report to the CFC-A and MNF-I commanders. CFC-A's operational command is Combined Joint Task Force-76 (CJTF-76) led by an Army two-star general. The MNF-I's operational command is Multi-National Corps-Iraq led by an Army 3-star general. The CJTF-76 and the MNF-I commanders each have the responsibility for direct warfighting.

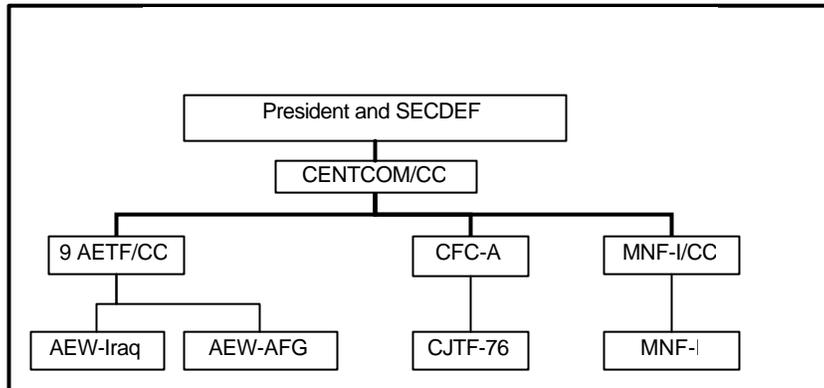


Figure 6: Warfighting Organization in CENTCOM

A layman would assume that the CJTF-76 and MNC-I joint force commanders control all United States forces to execute their respective missions. In both theaters, the Marine Corps does fall within each command's tactical control creating a more synergistic land component command. The Navy is not commanded by CJTF-76 nor MNF-I since both of those commands are land locked. The Navy component forces report to a single Naval Forces commander. Thousands of airmen are assigned within Afghanistan and Iraq along with dozens of aircraft. Those airmen and aircraft support the CJTF-76 and MNF-I commands but are organized under an Air Force organization controlled from Qatar.

To integrate a full-spectrum joint air operation with Army and Navy aircraft, CENTCOM created a CFACC. From an airpower perspective, the combined air operations center (CAOC) in Qatar is a joint operation coordinating all fixed-wing aircraft within the entire region. The Air Force's organizational focus is to control air assets and airspace, integrate Navy and Marine air assets, and control CENTCOM's entire theater of air operations. The CAOC provides excellent

command and control of air assets with full spectrum insight into sorties, targets, and munitions for all services supporting the air campaign.

A deep-structure examination of CENTCOM reveals the organization is blurred regarding how much is organized jointly. In Afghanistan and Iraq, the Air Force has established air expeditionary wings. Within each wing is an air expeditionary group (AEG) headquartered at each base camp to support based aircraft. An AEG is comprised of approximately 1,000 airmen who fly, maintain, and launch the aircraft. A large portion of the AEG's 1,000 personnel are combat support such as engineering, communications, and services personnel.

As an example, the Air Force has cargo aircraft permanently assigned at one of the major installations in southern Iraq. Those aircraft are controlled and assigned missions from the CAOC in Qatar. There are over 1,000 airmen assigned at that location responsible to support the assigned cargo aircraft, all transient aircraft, the airfield infrastructure, and all assigned Air Force personnel. Taking the engineers as an example to illustrate the Air Force's chain of command, the engineers work for the AEG commander who is responsible for the Air Force operations at that location. The AEG commander works for the AEW commander in Balad Air Base, Iraq who works for the 9th AETF commander in Qatar, who works for the CENTCOM commander in Tampa, FL. The line of command does not pass through the MNF-I or MNC-I commanders, who are the CENTCOM commander's responsible commanders for operations in Iraq.

From the casual observer visiting the southern base in Iraq, it would appear to be a joint operation with coalition, Air Force, and Army personnel all living and working on the same installation. But in actuality, the Army and Air Force organizations on the ground have no formal organizational relationship, except they both belong to CENTCOM. They are merely co-located at a forward location.

The CJTF-76 and MNF-I commands could more appropriately be named "Land Component Commands." At the headquarters, a visiting observer would see numerous members from all services working on the staff. But many non-Army service members are merely working on Army requirements. For example, the engineer cell provides policy and guidance to Army units and does not interact with assigned Air Force engineers within the area of operations. So the headquarters appears to be joint, but the service involvement predominantly fills Army personnel shortages. There is a staffed Air Force contingent working within the headquarters to coordinate requirements back to the CAOC. Those personnel are on the joint manning document for the headquarters and controlled by the joint force commander, but their role is one of coordination—they have no authority to direct action.

The installations throughout Iraq and Afghanistan similarly appear to be jointly organized, but in fact are not organized for effective operations. Sustaining and operating a large, forward deployed main-operating-base is a complex operation. The installation in southern Iraq houses over 10,000 combined personnel comprised of military personnel, contractors, and local nationals. In the case of installation support, cooperation is needed between the Army and Air Force to solve installation-wide issues ranging from environmental compliance to orderly land development. Unfortunately, there is no formal organizational relationship between the combat support functions within the Air Force and their host Army combat support functions. The Air Force works for those in Qatar, and the Army for those in Baghdad. The combat service support functions within the Army and Air Force units have to rely upon personal acumen, professionalism, and cooperation to ensure the mission is accomplished. They are using personal and professional skill to overcome organizational deficiencies.

At the tactical air power level, the Air Force relies on an Air Liaison Officer (ALO) program to coordinate tactical air attacks and requirements. For example, ALO's are embedded within Army infantry organizations and coordinate specific attacks from Air Force aircraft. In general, this program is a success, with a direct tie between the Army ground unit and their air support overhead. But for the most part, it is tactical *coordination* of aircraft and not *command*.

Conclusions

In keeping with the adage "all politics is local," one could argue that "all joint operations is tactical." To judge whether a force is joint or not one can look at how functions and missions are coordinated and controlled.

Much of the on-going joint operations debate is at the strategic level. The debate centers on better defense management and interoperable weapons system acquisition. The defense establishment focuses on how they can better support the combatant commander, but it usually stops there. The effectiveness of the discussion could improve if the defense establishment and Congress believe that "all joint operation is tactical." Aversion to losing autonomy, the difficulty of instituting a supplier arrangement for air power, and the overall lack of support to the lowest echelon of joint operations is hampering solutions to the joint interoperability problem. This problem should be examined from the bottom up not just from the top down.

The most important relationship in joint operations may not be between the President and the combatant commander, but between an infantry battalion commander and an A-10 squadron commander. If there is no command relationship between those tactical commanders, can commanders espouse to have unity of effort and unity of command? When

developing strategic goals, failing to understand that those effects are carried out at the tactical level puts the success of the strategic plan at greater risk of less than optimal results. Organizations must be designed to strengthen members' ability to perform complex coordination. Current joint organizational doctrine does not do that.

The preceding analysis illustrates that the Air Force would like to establish a supplier arrangement in joint operations. It would like to retain full autonomy for controlling its resources and outputs and "be on time, on target" when the Army or other service needs air support. The Air Force has opted to organize itself to control its critical task: air control and force employment. But ground operations at their installations have suffered due to the lack of relationship with their Army hosts. Air operations at the tactical level may also be impacted due to the non-existence of command relationships during planning and execution.

Efficiency gained by centrally controlling air assets has created two problems on the ground. First, the costly self-dependence for logistical support as evidenced at numerous airfields in Afghanistan and Iraq. There is an inherent cost of self support at each location instead of relying on the Army host to provide more efficient combat service support. Second, the joint task force commander's lack of control over tactical aircraft reduces unity of effort and unity of command. During theater planning and execution, the task force commander has to rely on the Air Force in a supplier arrangement. This relationship may work on a small scale, but much more process improvement should be in place before it becomes useful in more complex operations.

The Air Force should fully integrate into the CFC-A and MNF-I commands in Afghanistan and Iraq and delegate tactical control (TACON) of in-theater aircraft and personnel to the joint task force commander. By allowing TACON of ground personnel and tactical aircraft to the joint task force commanders and removing the long-distance command structure, the joint task force organizations will be better able to implement the joint task force commander's intent. Improved effectiveness may be realized further by delegating tactical control of combat service support personnel resulting in improved operation planning, installation support, and an overall improved hybrid organization.

At the joint task force headquarters, the Air Force should reassess the manpower they supply to ensure those personnel are available and trained to provide adequate control of the Air Force personnel and equipment within the joint task force structure. If the joint task force commander "owns" the tactical aircraft sorties and personnel day-to-day, he can better execute his mission. Excess sorties and manpower can be offered back to the CFACC for other missions within the CENTCOM theater. This may be a compromise position that allows the Air

Force to centrally plan the most efficient use of air power while integrating the joint task force commander's tactical control over air assets for their bigger picture planning and execution.

Joint doctrine has not adequately addressed the boundary definitions required of joint organizations. The services continue to operate with unclear lines of authority. Many do not understand where the service organization stops and the joint organization begins. There are major boundary problems created by the use of resources. In well defined hybrids, resource usage is clear and the methods for usage are understood by both parties. Also, cultural issues must be addressed. The service members do not transcend old identities and then become a joint warfighter. They carry those identities to the fight. For the Air Force, they have solved this problem by creating what looks like an Air Force within CENTCOM. The AFFOR in theater reports to only the CENTCOM commander in Tampa. The actual warfighting commanders at CFC-A and MNF-I do not have Air Force personnel working for them.

Lastly, the concerns over trust and control have not been addressed. Examples are plentiful of degraded mission performance and increased stress on members due to the lack of organizational relationships. Confidence in the alliance can erode at all levels without superb personal relationships and successes that have been before facing a severe resource competition. Without a formal organization to adjudicate disagreements, personal relationships will not always overcome competition for those resources. A true joint venture requires high trust and high control. The service organizations in Iraq and Afghanistan do not have that.

Maintaining autonomy is an ever-present factor that must be addressed. The Air Force has remained autonomous by matching its mission (air control) with its jurisdiction (CENTCOM's area of operations). They have successfully obtained missions that are not performed by others, have fought organizations that seek to perform (or control) its tasks, they have avoided tasks that are not at the heart of their own mission, and have successfully avoided joint ventures. Inherent difficulties exist when creating a hybrid organization from long-standing sovereign organizations such as the Army and Air Force. Those difficulties were avoided, or at least minimized, when CENTCOM organized its force along service lines to fight the Afghanistan and Iraqi campaigns. CENTCOM did not fully integrate the services into subordinate joint commands.

It is time to reexamine the Goldwater-Nichols organizational construct for joint warfare. Joint warfare as envisioned by Congress and the Secretary of Defense creates a force that is not organizationally achievable without major system overhaul. It isn't plausible for the services to "provide forces" to the combatant commanders and those forces become "joint" on the

battlefield for 120- to 365-days while throwing out all service affiliation to create a superior joint team. It is not only implausible, but our current operations show it is not practiced either.

The defense establishment must continue to improve weapon system interoperability, remain on course with combatant command theater planning, and continue to improve the joint procurement systems within Washington D.C. At the strategic level, service components should be accepted as the basis for the best joint command organization, and then develop better organizations to take that into account. Better strategic organizational structures can improve tactical successes and thereby improve overall strategic success. More focus is needed to create interoperable service entities by improving upon command relationships such as delegation of tactical control. Using the momentum of Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, the military establishment should place the services back in position of warfighting primacy and devalue to term “joint” to mean “interoperable.”

Goldwater-Nichols is flawed—wars are fought by the services and not by “joint warfighters.” The idea that separate \$100 billion per year organizations like the Army and Air Force can integrate in an ad hoc hybrid organization in an expeditious and temporary manner to conquer America’s enemy’s is not feasible. Accepting the fact that long-standing organizations with separate cultures and missions must overcome the difficulties of hybrid organizations, trust and control, and struggles over autonomy will place realism in the system and focus time and effort to create interoperable services instead of the false expectation that effective joint organizations can flourish under the current framework.

Endnotes

1 Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, Public Law 99-433, 99th U.S. Congress, October 1, 1986.

2 Center for Strategic and International Studies (Principal Authors Clark A. Murdoch, Michele A. Flournoy, Christopher A. Williams, Kurt M. Campbell), *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols, Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era, Phase I Report*, Washington D.C., pg 14 (March 2004).

3 Ibid.

4 Joint Publication 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)*, Joint Chiefs of Staff, i. (2001).

5 Ibid., Figure I-2, Chain of Command and Control, I-7.

6 Ibid., xvi.

⁷ Ibid., III-1.

⁸ Ibid., III-13.

⁹ Arthur F. Lyke, Jr., "Toward and Understanding of Military Strategy," *Military Strategy: Theory and Application* (Carlisle Barracks, PA; U.S. Army War College, 1989), 6-7

¹⁰ James Q. Wilson, *Bureaucracy, What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It* (USA: Basic Books, 1989) , 24

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Bryan Borys and David BI Jemison, "Hybrid Arrangements as Strategic Alliances: Theoretical Issues in Organizational Combinations," *The Academy of Management Review* 14, (April 1989): 235.

¹⁴ Ibid., 235.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 237.

¹⁷ Ibid., 238.

¹⁸ Ibid., 240.

¹⁹ Ibid., 241.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 242.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 243.

²⁵ Ibid., 244.

²⁶ Ibid., 245.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 246.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ T.K. Das and Bing-Sheng Teng, "Between Trust and Control: Developing Confidence in Partner Cooperation in Alliances," *The Academy of Management Review* 23, (July 1998): 491.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 491.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, 500.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, Table 2, 500.

³⁷ Wilson, 186.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 187.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 188-191.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 190.

⁴¹ Air Force Doctrine Document 2, *Organization and Employment of Aerospace Power*, 17 Feb 2000, pg.1 "Airmen view the application of force more from a functional than geographic standpoint and classify targets by the effect their destruction has on the enemy rather than where the targets are physically located."

⁴² *Ibid.*, 6

⁴³ All Air Force personnel assigned to CENTCOM are commanded and controlled through an Air Force component organizational system. The Air Force Forces commander (COMAFFOR) maintains administrative control. Administrative control (ADCON) is the oversight and processes required to manage the administrative functions such as pay, performance reports, emergency leave, and other administrative functions for any airman within the CENTCOM area of responsibility. Basically, ADCON executes the processes and procedures that are inherently Air Force which no joint force can provide.

⁴⁴ Operational and tactical control of the personnel and aircraft are exercised through the 9th Air Expeditionary Task Force commander. Operational control (OPCON) is the true power to employ a military member, or a piece of equipment such as an airplane, as the commander deems necessary anywhere and anytime within the commander's area of responsibility. It includes permanently moving and basing the personnel or equipment anywhere within the task force commander's area of responsibility. Tactical control (TACON) is the temporary control that an organization has over a person or equipment. TACON allows a commander to provide immediate and usually local direction in order to ensure mission success. A good example is brigade commander who is provided an engineer company for a specific mission on a specific day. The brigade commander can provide orders to the engineer company commander to perform a breaching or bridging maneuver in support of that particular mission.

⁴⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States*, Joint Publication 1, (2000), III-3