

Insights and Best Practices

Focus Paper

JTF C2 and Organization

Second Edition

Deployable Training Division
Joint Staff J7

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Approved for public release

This is the Second Edition of the Insights and Best Practices Focus Paper on “*JTF C2 and Organization.*” It is written by the Deployable Training Division (DTD) of the Joint Staff J7 and released by the J7 Deputy Director for Joint Training.

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Scope. This focus paper highlights:

- 1st- JTF task organization and relevant command relationships.
- 2nd- Useful control measures and authorities.
- 3rd- Interagency and multinational aspects for a JTF.
- 4th- It does not deep dive into mission command, GCC C2 organizational options, interorganizational coordination, or insights in forming a JTF HQ. Those are addressed in other focus papers - see URL below.

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Terminology and Acronyms: Numerous military acronyms and organizational names are used in this paper. They are defined in the glossary to increase readability in the body of the paper for the intended readership. Recommend review of the C2 discussions in Joint Publication 1 and 3-0.

POC: js.dsc.j7.mbx.joint-training@mail.mil

Deployable Training Division, Joint Staff J7, Joint Training
116 Lake View Parkway, Suffolk, VA 23435-2697

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Releasability: Approved for public release

PREFACE

This paper shares insights and best practices related to organizing a JTF and determining command relationships to best accomplish the mission through coherent integration of capabilities. We pull these insights directly from the joint forces executing operations.

This paper may be beneficial to three main audiences:

- JTF senior leaders as they consider the JTF role, organization, and C2.
- JTF J3s and J5s as they guide the staff developing organizational structure and aspects of C2.
- Subordinate HQs and other mission partners to improve synergy of their actions.

Four considerations:

- Set conditions for the success of subordinates by sharing understanding and intent, gaining authorities and resources, prioritizing efforts, allocating resources, and planning for and managing transitions. Gain and share understanding of how the JTF's role and mission fits into the broader international, US Government, DOD, and Combatant Command approach.
- Build trust both within and external to the JTF. Transparency and mutual trust remain central to the concept of interdependence and effectiveness. Be inclusive versus exclusive with both your military and non-military partners.
- Establish a task organization and related battlespace geometry that depict authorities and responsibilities to support the concept of operations across the JOA.
- Develop clear command relationships (COMRELS) with military partners both internal and external to the JTF to achieve unity of command and reduce risk to the mission and force. COMRELS should not depend solely on personal relationships, and should continue synergy, reduce confusion, and mitigate risk as rotational forces transition in and out of the AOR or JOA. Unity of effort with other agencies is an essential complement to unity of command.

This and other focus papers summarize observations and insights on joint force HQs shared by the Joint Staff J7 Deployable Training Division. The DTD gains insights on operational matters through regular contact and dialogue with CCMD and operational level commanders and staffs as they plan, prepare for, and conduct operations and exercises. They incorporate these insights in functionally-based focus papers, refine them through senior flag officer feedback, and then share them with the operational force, and joint lessons learned and joint doctrine communities. Four related focus papers to this paper are "*Geographic Combatant Command C2 Organizational Options*," "*Mission Command and Cross-Domain Synergy*," "*Interorganizational Coordination*," and "*Forming a JTF HQ*." These papers are found on the site noted on the inside front cover.

Please share your thoughts, solutions, and best practices to DTD's POC, Mr. Mike Findlay, as you think, plan, and work your way through these challenges.



ERIC E. AUSTIN
Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps
Deputy Director J7, Joint Training
Joint Staff J7

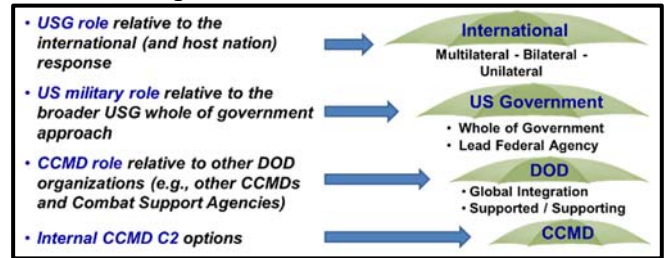
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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY. JTFs provide the means to closely integrate forces in the mission area. CCDRs often establish a JTF to focus on an emergent complex mission set. This provides freedom of action for the CCDR to continue AOR-wide focus and shaping while also supporting the JTF.

JTFs plan and operate as one team with their joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partners. Each depends on the other to succeed in today’s complex security environment. This is de facto interdependence: the dependence on access (versus ownership) to each other’s capabilities to succeed in assigned tasks. This interdependence is a quantum mindset change from a *vertical* orientation - receiving and accomplishing tasks directed by the higher commander - to working more closely with *horizontal* Joint and Service partners, and other US agency and multinational partners.

Key Insights:

- **Gain and share understanding** of how the JTF fits into the broader whole of governments, transregional, CCMD, and multi-domain efforts. The JTF may lead the operation or be in a supporting role. Anticipate and plan for extensive up and out dialogue/engagement to align efforts. Request and leverage external assistance through the CCMD HQ.



- **Build relationships and trust** within and external to the JTF. Transparency and mutual trust remain central to the concept of interdependence and effective joint operations. Credibility and trust increase the JTF Commander’s freedom of action in terms of mission sets and delegated authorities.
- **Anticipate C2** up-front to minimize unnecessary subsequent changes, changes that can disrupt burned-in C2 arrangements. However, change C2 when necessary. Evolving C2 with the least amount of change permits more corporate-level focus on the enemy, problem, and mission.
- **Craft the task organization and battlespace geometry.** The task organization will likely include geographically-oriented forces (e.g., functional land component) and functional task forces (e.g. special operations) that conduct assigned mission across the JOA. Battlespace geometry provides the architecture for effective operations while COMRELS provide the linkages that enable synergy.
- **Codify COMRELS** to achieve unity of command of the force and unity of effort with partners.
 - ✓ Understand and clarify the support command relationships and priorities of support with external organizations: the CCMD components, other CCMDs, and CSAs. We’ve seen confusion when these horizontal supported/supporting COMRELS and overarching CCMD-level priorities of support are not clear. Empower and leverage quality liaison officers.
 - ✓ Clarify your authority over OPCON or TACON forces with the CCMD and parent units in terms of ADCON, tasking, positioning, prioritization, mission approval authorities, further delegation of TACON or support command relationships, and force protection.
 - ✓ Leverage the Support COMREL to achieve internal synergy. Condition/teach subordinates to plan and execute within a trust-based, horizontally-focused framework of access to others’ forces rather than requiring the ownership of the forces. Specify supported commanders’ authorities and supporting commanders’ responsibilities. Designate battlespace owners as Supported Commanders to empower them to achieve unity of command in their operational areas. Provide clear priorities so subordinates can allocate efforts between supporting others and their own tasks.
 - ✓ Ensure clear responsibilities for force protection. C2 and force protection are interrelated. Establish single commanders responsible for defense at each location and single surface/ground force commanders for each operation. Clarify JTF authorities for use of Theater response forces.
- **Decentralize** mission approval authorities to empower subordinates and key HQ leaders to make decisions at the appropriate level to take advantage of fleeting opportunities and retain the initiative.

2.0 SETTING CONDITIONS FOR THE PAPER: CJCS PERSPECTIVE AND A TERMINOLOGY FRAMEWORK.

CJCS Perspective. “Great power competition that is global in nature and encompasses all domains has emerged as our central challenge. State and non-state actors present increasingly complex challenges in areas and domains which the United States was once unchallenged. The character of war has changed. Any fight that we’re going to be in will likely be transregional and will probably cross all domains. Sea, Land, Air, Space, and Cyber.”

“Our *decisionmaking processes and planning constructs must be flexible* enough to deliver options at the speed of relevance. This begins with developing a common understanding of the threat, providing a clear understanding of the capabilities and limitations of the Joint Force, and then establishing a framework that enables senior leaders to make decisions in a timely manner. Underpinning our ability to keep pace with the speed of war are adaptive and creative leaders. In today’s complex and dynamic environment, the Joint Force depends on leaders who *anticipate change, recognize opportunity, and adapt* to meet new challenges. The character of war in the 21st century has changed, and if we fail to keep pace with the speed of war, we will lose the ability to compete.”

Selected definitions from JP 1 for common understanding:

- **Command.** Command is central to all military action, and unity of command is central to unity of effort. Inherent in command is the authority that a military commander lawfully exercises over subordinates including authority to assign missions and accountability for their successful completion. Although commanders may delegate authority to accomplish missions, they may not absolve themselves of the responsibility for the attainment of these missions. Authority is never absolute; the extent of authority is specified by the establishing authority, directives, and law.
- **Command and Control:** The exercise of authority and direction by a properly designated commander over assigned and attached forces in the accomplishment of the mission.
- **Command Relationships (COMRELS):** The interrelated responsibilities between commanders, as well as the operational authority exercised by commanders in the chain of command; defined further as COCOM, OPCON, TACON, or Support.
- **Coordinating authority** is the authority delegated to a commander or individual for coordinating specific functions and activities involving forces of two or more joint force components, or two or more forces of the same Service... The commander has the authority to require consultation between the agencies involved but does not have the authority to compel agreement... Coordinating authority is a consultation relationship between commanders, not an authority by which command may be exercised. Assignment of coordinating authority is based on the missions and capabilities of the commands or organizations involved.
- **Joint Force Commander (JFC):** A general term applied to a combatant commander, subunified commander, or joint task force commander authorized to exercise combatant command (command authority) or operational control over a joint force.

“At the end of the day, a **Higher HQ must provide value added** to its subordinates in things like intelligence analysis, ISR, fires, key leader engagement, and synchronization.” - *Senior Flag Officer*

“I was taught to use the concept of “command and feedback.” You don’t control your subordinate forces every move; you clearly state your intent and unleash their initiative. Then, when the inevitable obstacles or challenges arise, with good feedback loops and data displays, you hear about it and move to deal with the obstacle. Based on feedback, you fix the problem.” - *Gen Jim Mattis*

- **OPCON**: The authority to perform those functions of command over subordinate forces involving organizing and employing commands and forces, assigning tasks, designating objectives, and giving authoritative direction necessary to accomplish the mission.
- **Support Relationship**: Support is a command authority. A support relationship is established by a common superior commander between subordinate commanders when one organization should aid, protect, complement, or sustain another force. The support command relationship is used by SecDef to establish and prioritize support between and among CCDRs, and it is used by JFCs to establish support relationships between and among subordinate commanders.
- **TACON**: The authority over forces that is limited to the detailed direction and control of movements or maneuvers within the operational area necessary to accomplish missions or tasks assigned.
- **Unified action**: The synchronization, coordination, and/or integration of the activities of governmental and nongovernmental entities with military operations to achieve unity of effort.
- **Unity of Command and Unity of Effort**. Unity of command means all forces operate under a single commander with the *requisite* authority to direct all forces employed in pursuit of a common purpose. Unity of effort, however, requires coordination and cooperation among all forces toward a commonly recognized objective, although they are not necessarily part of the same command structure. During multinational operations and interagency coordination, unity of command may not be possible, but the requirement for unity of effort becomes paramount. Unity of effort - coordination through cooperation and common interests - is an essential complement to unity of command. Unity of command requires that two commanders may not exercise the same COMREL over the same force at any one time.

Battlespace and Battlespace Owner (BSO): Not joint doctrinal terms – however used in this paper due to their common usage by operational commanders and understanding across the force. Battlespace is somewhat equivalent to an area of operations (AO). It is normally used in a land/surface context. A BSO is normally associated with the commander designated as the supported commander and responsible for operations within that battlespace (land/surface AO).

The C2 function encompasses a number of doctrinal tasks noted in JP 3-0 listed below. This paper focuses on the highlighted functions (other focus papers *in italics* address the remaining functions):

1. Establish, organize, and operate a joint force HQ. (*See Forming a JTF HQ Focus Paper*)
2. **Command subordinate forces.**
3. Prepare, modify, and publish plans, orders, and guidance. (*See Design and Planning Focus Paper*)
4. **Establish command authorities among subordinate commanders.**
5. Assign tasks, prescribe task performance standards, and **designate Operational Areas.**
6. **Prioritize and allocate resources.**
7. **Manage risk.** (*partially in the discussion of COMRELS. See the focus paper on assessment and risk*)
8. Communicate and maintain the status of information across the staff, joint force, and with the public as appropriate.
9. Assess progress toward accomplishing tasks, creating conditions, and achieving objectives. (*See Assessment and Risk Focus Paper*)
10. Coordinate and control the employment of joint lethal and nonlethal capabilities. (*See Integration and Synchronization of Joint Fires Focus Paper*)
11. **Coordinate, synchronize, and when appropriate, integrate joint operations with the operations and activities of other participants.**
12. Ensure the flow of information and reports to higher authority. (*See Knowledge and Information Management Focus paper*)

3.0 JTF ORGANIZATION.

The mission assigned to a JTF requires execution of responsibilities involving a joint force on a significant scale and close integration of effort. The establishing authority dissolves a JTF when the purpose for which it was created has been achieved or when it is no longer required. A JTF may be established on a geographical area or functional basis when the mission has a specific limited objective and does not require overall centralized control of logistics.

Insights:

- The adage “Get your C2 right up-front” remains valid; however, we find that C2 and COMRELS often evolve. A key consideration is getting initial C2 (including the organization) right to allow for flexibility and adaptability. Continue to reassess and evolve C2.
- Develop the task organization to support the concept of operations; form follows function. Operational commanders are crafting their task organization establishing both battlespace owners and functional task forces, aligned within a logical battlespace geometry to support their concept of operations. Commanders are not simply defaulting to a JTF task organization comprised solely of service forces components and functional components (e.g. land/JFLCC, air/JFACC, maritime/JFMCC, and special operations/JFSOCC).
- Simplicity. Every commander applies the principle of simplicity to the framework of the mission, concepts of operation, task organization, span of control, associated COMRELS, and control and coordination measures. They all realize that their HQs, their subordinates, the many mission partners, and the rotational forces need to easily understand how the JTF operates. The JTF HQ and subordinates also need to understand each other’s roles so they can better work together without duplication / confusion of efforts.
- The HHQ to a JTF is normally the CCMD. The CCMD provides the JTF both the authorities and force structure – both joint forces and coalition forces. JTFs take the initiative interacting with the CCMD and the Theater Components to determine required forces, how they will be attached or provided, and the appropriate OPCON, TACON, and Support command relationships.
- Functional Components. Most JTFs normally establish some joint functional components. In many land-centric JTFs there may only be a JFLCC. The JFMCC or JFACC forces may often be retained at the Theater-level under the CCMD in a supporting command relationship to the JTF. A maritime-centric JTF may organize similarly with a subordinate JFMCC.
- Task Forces. Subordinate task forces provide simplicity and agility for the JFC and are common to almost all JTFs. They can be aligned to terrain or function. In some cases functional TFs may operate across AOs and even JOAs. The two most common task forces are the SOJTF - a Special Operations JTF and the Air Expeditionary Task Force (AETF). Other task force examples are Counter-IED, ISR, Medical, and Engineer. These functional JTFs are purposely built to perform specific functions and have the necessary C2 expertise. We find transparency and collaboration between these functional

Organization Examples

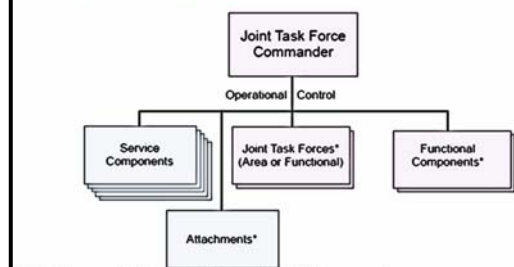
In the past 15 years we’ve observed a myriad of JTF-like organizational structures. Just in CENTCOM alone:

- MNF-I: with a training component, operational force, and SOF component.
- MNC-I: Geographically organized with Multinational divisions.
- ISAF: with a training component, operational force, and SOF component.
- IJC: Geographically organized Regional Commands.
- CJTF-OIR: Organized with a Land and SOF Component.

All had coalition and interagency mission partners.

All of these demonstrate the requirement to organize the force to support the mission and concept of operation – not just through a fixed mechanical structure based solely around joint functional components.

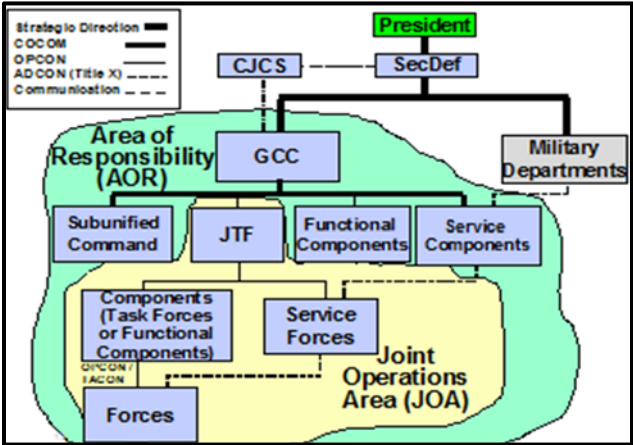
Joint Task Force Organizational Options



TF/JTFs, their HHQ, and the geographically-based (BSO) commanders is very important to ensuring effective employment to achieve both the geographically-based and JOA-wide mission sets.

- Service Forces. A JTF will always have some form of Service Force over which the assigned Theater Service Components retain ADCON (Title 10) responsibility as noted in the adjacent figure. These Service Force Commanders are often dual hatted with another role such as the JTF Commander, a Functional Component Commander, or Task Force Commander. This ADCON relationship must be clearly laid out.
- Multinational: We find that multinational (allied or coalition) partners are normally integrated into subordinate components of the JTF – in the functional components and TFs. They will often position their Senior National Representative and National Support Element at the CCMD, JTF, or at the subordinate level to accommodate their national authority responsibilities (See the next section for more on this topic).
- SOF: There are several means by which SOF may support a JTF depending on the scope of the JTF and SOF mission and situation. We find that SOF organizations are almost always coalition in nature.

Observation: Challenge
 Many JTFs do not clearly designate the Service Force Commanders. This confuses responsibilities with the JTF J4 taking on what may be more correctly Service Force roles.



- ✓ The Theater SOC may continue to directly execute full command of SOF as either the TSOC or Theater JFSOCC in a supporting or mutual support command relationship to the JTF.
- ✓ The TSOC in consultation with the GCC and JTF may establish and subordinate an existing SOC-FWD or JSOTF in a Support or TACON COMREL to the JTF.
- ✓ The GCC in consultation with SOCOM, the respective TSOC, and the JTF may establish a Special Operations JTF (SOJTF) or Joint Force Special Operations Component (JFSOCC) to provide unified direction over all SOF supporting the JTF. That SOJTF (or JFSOCC) will often be in a TACON or possibly Support COMREL to the JTF based on the global, regional, and CJOA mission aspects.
- JFACC. The Theater Air Force Service Component normally provides support to a JTF through a support command relationship with air assets remaining under the control of a Theater JFACC – which often includes coalition assets (as a CFACC).
 - ✓ The Theater JFACC concept optimizes airpower across multiple mission sets in an AOR and optimizes Air Force resources to operate full-spectrum Air Operations Centers (i.e., one AOC per CCMD). The Theater JFACC model retains the GCC’s agility and flexibility of airpower and allows for rapid shifting of airpower throughout the AOR. The JTF will need to work through how to best interact / leverage CCMD level apportionment, allocation, ISR, and targeting processes. The JACCE, ASOC, and joint individual augmentees can greatly assist in this.
 - ✓ The CFACC or Air Force Service Component provides an Air Support Operations Center (a C2 element as part of the TACS) and a Joint Air Component Coordination Element (JACCE) at the JTF level to provide senior general officer liaison to the JTF and better ascertain and coordinate airpower for the JTF. This JACCE is an important asset to the JTF. Leverage it to increase synergy with the JFACC.

4.0 MULTINATIONAL PARTNERS. We are and will continue operating together with our multinational partners. They have become an inseparable part of our way of operating in both peace and war. We normally think of multinational operations in terms of the United States leading, and focus on working through the necessary command relationships, caveats, and information sharing with our multinational forces. However, in some cases we could be a subordinate to another lead nation.

“I don’t care how operationally brilliant you are; if you can’t create harmony – vicious harmony – on the battlefield, based on trust across different military services, foreign allied militaries, and diplomatic lines, you need to go home, because your leaderships is obsolete.”
- Gen Jim Mattis

C2 often applies in multinational force (MNF) operations, subject to agreements made between the participating nations. All nations providing forces to a multinational military operation will retain those forces under their respective national C2 structure, while providing those forces under an alliance or coalition agreement. The US is no different in this regard, and a JTF conducting these operations will normally be part of two organizational structures. Regardless of how the MNF is organized operationally, each nation furnishing forces normally establishes a national component, often called a national command element, to ensure effective administration of its forces. The national component provides a means to administer and support the national forces, coordinate communication to the parent nation, tender national military views and recommendations directly to the multinational commander, and facilitate the assignment and reassignment of national forces to subordinate operational multinational organizations. In an administrative role, these national components are similar to a Service component command at the unified command level in a US joint organization. The logistic support element of this component is referred to as the national support element."

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has a robust and well-established C2, based on decades of Alliance operations. A JTF conducting operations within NATO needs to understand the command relationship terms unique to the Alliance (e.g., Full Command, Operational Command, Operational Control, Tactical Command, and Tactical Control.)

Command authorities derive from what has been agreed upon by the participating nations and what is recognized / understood among the military forces. For example, in some common operations, contributing nations may decide to provide forces TACON (US definition) to a designated MNF Commander for the conduct of operations. Thus the MNF Commander can give local direction, but must go back to the specific contributing nations to reorganize forces.

Working By, With, and Through Host Nation or Indigenous forces.

We can expect to see more scenarios where a JTF may be largely working by, with, and through host nation or indigenous forces – much like what our forces are doing in Iraq and Syria. This has unique implications for the JTF. Every situation will be unique just as it is in Iraq or Syria. However both require the JTF to understand their role, authorities, how their partner force operates, and the mechanisms through which the JTF will need to work by, with, and through that partner force. For example, in Iraq, several ministries control the military or paramilitary forces conducting operations. The JTF interacts by, through, and with each of these ministries and their forces to assist them – within their own construct – gain synergy of action. Operate at the speed of your partner.

Insights:

- Key to multinational (and by, with, through) operations are personal relationships and trust. Coalitions are built on personal relationships, mutual trust and confidence between partners. Focus on building these at the earliest opportunity, ideally during the pre-deployment training phase. Maintain trust through thought-out plans to receive, leverage, and support the coalition members. Personal relationships will overcome the bureaucratic impediments that can threaten synergy and harmony.

Your partners can communicate with and influence their national governments more quickly and effectively than you can via formal channels.

- Keep a “one-team, one-fight” mentality. Don’t allow anything to jeopardize the strength of the coalition. This requires a command climate and organizational design that facilitates inclusion and partnership. Socialize mission tasks before final determination and publishing in formal orders. Advise partners when work must be done in isolation for national security; understand when they do the same.
- Recognize the important role of national command elements (NCE) and national support elements (NSE). Forces participating in a multinational operation will always have at least two distinct chains of command: a national chain of command and a multinational chain of command.
- Caveats will always exist among the forces, including caveats on U.S. forces. These caveats form the conditions for national commitment to a particular operation, and normally have their roots in the internal policies and politics of the individual states. Understanding these caveats and finding ways to usefully employ all multinational forces is an essential part of multinational command. It is clearly more effective to know the impacts of national caveats early in the planning process.
 - ✓ Work with the CCMD to gain assistance in potentially modifying limiting caveats of both US and contributing troop nations. Lastly, recognize the important role of framework nations – those nations who have committed to the toughest mission sets.
 - ✓ Leverage potential increased authorities and capabilities of your partners (e.g. in cyber).
- Unity of effort, interoperability and resourcing will always be a challenge. Attack them head on to maintain the cohesion of the coalition.
- Early collaborative planning between partners is essential to successful operations. Leverage the unique skill sets and capabilities of each nation’s force within the coalition. A simple planning reminder is C5: Command, Control, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Coordination.
- When preparing plans, briefs, standard operating procedures (SOPs), tactical directives, or other theater related correspondence, authors should consider how to best “write for release” while also recognizing the need to protect sensitive information. A simple guideline for sharing is to ask who needs to know, who cannot see what I can see, and what is the risk versus gain of sharing this information. Elevate information only as necessary to higher classification systems. Develop depth in the foreign disclosure elements to enhance information sharing.
- Interoperability is far less technical than often portrayed. Coalition operations are human-based; don’t allow technical limitations of information sharing networks, tools, and databases to fracture the coalition. Similarly, language differences can impose formidable challenges. Words have different meanings to different people. Select words carefully, avoid acronyms, and confirm understanding early rather than risk confusion at a later time.
- Work with the CCMD in providing feasible network infrastructure and software tools, and foreign disclosure/releasability authorities. Maximize the use of systems that allow for the greatest participation by multinational partners within OPSEC/releasability constraints.
- The successful conduct of multinational operations requires common understanding and application, wherever possible, of doctrine applicable across all services and levels of military activities. Adherence to doctrine can expedite operational planning and execution, help to ensure that pertinent factors are not overlooked, and enhance interoperability and common understanding among units.
- Training is an important aspect in ensuring success in multinational operations. Think your way through the planning and conduct of combined exercises to get at the above insights, particularly for those activities in which a partnered nation may not have in-depth experience.

5.0 INTERAGENCY PARTNERS. We have observed numerous best practices, all centered on an atmosphere of inclusiveness, in how operational commanders and our interagency partners work together to achieve objectives, often in coordination with other organizations.

The military nature of “command relationships” do not apply between a JTF and agencies of the federal government during interagency operations. There is a significant difference between supported/ing command relationships among DOD forces, and that of DOD forces providing support to civil authorities during either domestic or foreign operations. Designated federal agencies normally have the lead responsibilities and authorities (e.g., Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency in domestic disaster response and Department of State/Office of Foreign Disaster Relief in the equivalent foreign operations). Support to those civil authorities occurs under the direction of SECDEF. Any supporting JTF remains under the DOD chain of command and provides support to those civil authorities in accordance with guidance from its higher military HQ.

This is more fully addressed in a separate “Interorganizational Coordination” focus paper (see URL inside front cover). That paper extends beyond only USG interagency coordination to include other mission partners and stakeholders such as multinational, intergovernmental and private sector organizations in both foreign and domestic operations.

USG Interagency Coordination:

There are challenges associated with interagency coordination. Our USG interagency partners frequently do not have the budget or the capacity of the military. Due to this, the military is often tasked to fill roles it is not habitually accustomed to perform. Anticipate this. Likewise, recognize and guard against the temptation to inundate interagency partners by sheer numbers of the various DOD elements desiring coordination.

Challenge
Coordination between DOD and other USG agencies because of budget, capacity, culture, policy gaps, etc.

USG interagency coordination is not as easy as theory would suggest; the agencies have different authorities, different priorities, different organizations, different cultures and different capabilities. National level direction may not always be sufficiently clear to prevent differences in interpretation of national goals and end states. However, experience continues to reinforce the obvious – that we’re all on the same team and everyone is trying to do the right thing to support national policy within a unity of effort framework. Continue to be inclusive and work together despite the above challenges.

Insights:

- Today’s complex environment demands Unified Action to achieve National Objectives.
- Personal Relationships with stakeholders are the key to generating Unified Action.
- Embrace a “C5” mindset (Command, Control, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Coordination) to facilitate unity of effort.
- Understand partners’ roles, authorities, perspectives, capabilities, and processes in both foreign and domestic operations, and how they differ from U.S. Armed Forces.
- Think inclusion rather than exclusion with stakeholders during planning, execution, and assessment. Recognize that this has significant classification and information sharing implications. Balance need to know with need to share. Whenever possible, write for release.
- Leverage the CCMD in gaining inclusion with these partners. CCMDs, often through their J5, provide in depth linkages to Coalition partners, Country Teams, and international organizations.

6.0 BATTLESPACE GEOMETRY. JFCs establish various *control and coordination measures* including maneuver control, airspace coordinating, and fire support coordination measures to facilitate effective joint operations. These measures include boundaries, phase lines, objectives, coordinating altitudes to deconflict air operations, air defense areas, operational areas, submarine operating patrol areas, no-fire areas, and others as required.

Boundaries are necessary control measures but can be potential seams not only in understanding the adversary and local population, but also in coherently working with our partners – the host nation, local governments, and other agencies. In developing boundaries, analyze social, physical, and adversary aspects together with political and other agency boundaries to minimize these seams.

“Three requirements for effective operations: clear COMREs, defined battlefield geometry, and widely understood commander’s intent.” - *CJTF*

An AO is an operational area defined by the CJTF for land and maritime forces. AOs do not typically encompass the entire operational area of the JFC, but should be large enough for component commanders to accomplish their missions and protect their forces. Within their designated AOs, land and maritime force commanders integrate and synchronize maneuver, fires, and interdiction. To facilitate this integration and synchronization, such commanders are normally empowered as Supported Commanders, and have the authority to designate target priority, effects, and timing within the AO. [Many field commanders refer to this as battlespace and the commanders as battlespace owners (BSOs)]

Challenge
BSOs often don’t feel that they have the necessary authority over other forces operating in their battlespace. This can degrade trust and synergy of operations.

Many joint players (e.g. SOF, Airpower, engineers) operate across “BSO” areas of operation and even CCMD AORs. The BSOs need the ‘support’ of these players (e.g. for targeting, intelligence) even though they may not ‘own’ them. Likewise, functional task forces need the support of battlespace owners (e.g. for QRF, intelligence, CASEVAC) to accomplish their tasks. While initially hesitant, BSOs become increasingly more comfortable with these functional TFs in their battlespace. They recognize that these players are part of the team and are accomplishing important tasks contributing to the mission.

Insights:

- The practice of a commander being empowered as a supported commander within an AO (the BSO construct) is a proven best practice. [see next section]
- JOAs and AOs are military-centric viewpoints of terrain. Non-coalition players (e.g. Host Nation agencies, NGOs, and other military forces) may neither recognize nor heed our military control measures. Account for the realities of host nation sovereignty in terms of limits to their actions and in achieving situational awareness.
- Service-based core HQs do not always understand the other joint force control and coordination measures. Some considerations:
 - ✓ Consult with superior, subordinate, supporting, and other affected commanders.
 - ✓ Leverage service expertise and LNOs when developing these control and coordination measures.

Importance of control measures – an example
The CJTF-OIR Commander and subordinates devoted significant time discussing and refining a single boundary and FSCM to optimize Land, SOF, and Air capabilities supporting a key C-ISIS operation.

Example: CJTF-OIR - BSOs
Commander CJTF-OIR in conjunction with the CENTCOM CDR opted to align battlespace geometry, the task organization, and command relationships to accomplish the mission. They established two subordinate HQs; CJLCC-OIR and SOJTF-OIR, established an AO for both, and designated each as the supported commander in their respective AO.

7.0 COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS. We've seen joint commanders focus on both the art (in terms of relationships, trust, shared understanding, intent, and empowerment) and some of the science (in terms of COMRELS) to engender and sustain an interdependent, one team - one fight attitude. This section focuses more on the COMREL piece. Other focus papers address the commander-centric art aspect of mission command and the associated attributes of trust, relationships, intent, and empowerment.

“While relationships between commanders are critical, C2 (COMRELS) should not solely depend on these personal relationships. Likewise, good C2 should work despite changing personalities.”

“Get COMRELS right so that synergy of action continues through transitions of commanders.”

“Developing the requisite personal relationships to gain synergy of action takes time. However, we require COMRELS that units can fall in on as they rotate into a mission so that this synergy is not lost during transitions.”

- CJTF CDRs

Synergy of action should not depend solely on personal relationships as noted in the text boxes; effective COMRELS and the authorities discussed earlier (coordinating and direct liaison) can help codify the desired relationships. An effective construct decreases confusion and risk as Commanders and their staff rotate out with follow-on HQs every 6, 9, or 12 months.

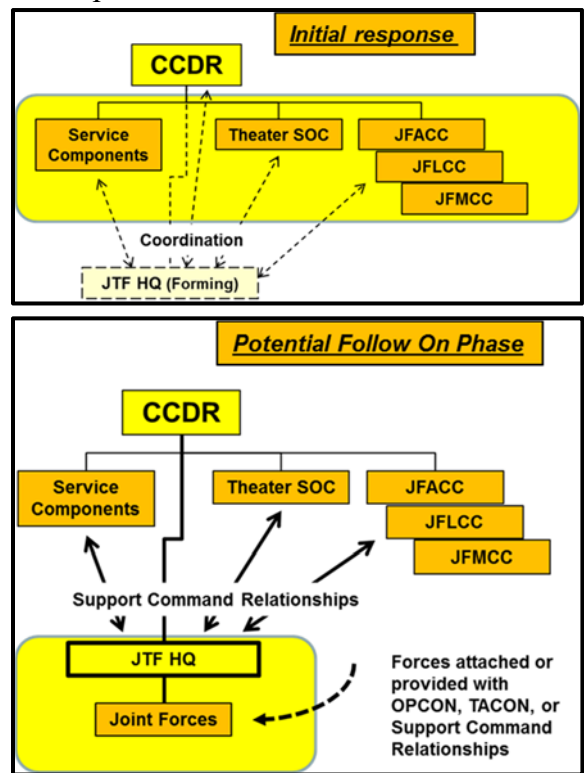
COMRELS and authorities will change throughout the lifecycle of a JTF. During the initial response and before activation, the forming JTF HQ will likely have some liaison authorization arrangement with the operational forces (see Initial response figure). Upon establishment, the JTF will likely have a Supported COMREL with the other CCMD components, with forces attached or provided with a combination of OPCON, TACON, and Support COMRELS (see figure labelled Potential Follow On Phase). This section focuses on this second construct – an established JTF.

Operational Control (OPCON).

CCMD and other JFCs often exercise OPCON through subordinate JTF commanders. We find that OPCON is often the default position with respect to a JTF. We see this in GCC level CONPLANS, and in the mindset of staff officers during design and planning.

OPCON Insights:

- Consider two factors in determining the delegation and further delegation of OPCON:
 - ✓ First, does the JTF and/or subordinates require OPCON to accomplish its mission? Does it need ownership of a force (OPCON or TACON) or simply access to specific capabilities (Support)?
 - ✓ Second, does the respective HQ have the capacity and expertise to take on the inherent responsibilities of the OPCON authority?
- JP 1 contains a two page list of the authorities and the inherent responsibilities that come with the delegation of OPCON.



Tactical Control (TACON). TACON is defined by joint doctrine as the delegated local direction and control of forces for accomplishment of mission or tasks assigned. However, while commonly used, TACON can be a source of friction within a JTF if intent and authorities are not adequately defined. We often see differing perspectives on the TACON relationship, and this is normally due to personal viewpoints instead of direction from the higher (JTF) Commander.

The JTF HQ and the gaining HQ often view delegation of TACON as a means to achieve unity of command by empowering the gaining commander to direct the TACON force - in essence “owning” the force for accomplishment of the mission. We often see disparity in understanding of specific TACON authorities between the parent (providing) command and the gaining command in the specific authorities provided by TACON. Parent/providing commands may take on a minimalist view of TACON, viewing themselves as the key authority over the employment of the force – retaining mission assignment, prioritization, and employment authorities.

TACON Insights:

- Articulate overall intent in the establishing directive (i.e., the higher order directing the TACON COMREL) for achieving unity of command through the use of the TACON relationship. Specify those missions for which the gaining command has authority over tasking, positioning, CONOPS approval, force protection, operational reporting, and deployment of LNOs. Also specify limits on the providing/parent HQ authority together with identifying command venues by which to address misunderstanding or risk concerns.

- Consider using a matrix much like that laid out in Army doctrine (see figure) that can delineate and clarify authorities.
- Specify force protection / risk responsibilities. We normally find the TACON Commander is responsible for force protection and decisions on risk to force and mission.

Support. The supported/supporting COMREL is probably the most powerful COMREL in terms of gaining overmatching power. It provides the authority and basis for interdependence, and is often the most appropriate in today’s complex operational environment.

Challenge
HHQ does not sufficiently define TACON authorities leading to confusion between the parent and gaining Command.

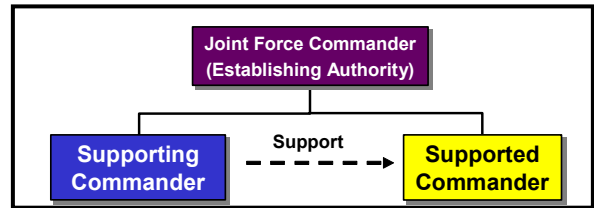
Example
One JTF clarified TACON within the structure with the approval of HHQ by a TACON (+) designation, gaining authority to task and position, but not a re-task organizing authority.

BLUF: Consideration on TACON:
Empower and codify the specific authorities to the Commander receiving TACON of a force to ensure unity of command.

TACON Authorities and Responsibilities								
	Has command relationship with:	May be task organized by:	Receives CSS from:	Assigned position by:	Provides liaison to:	Establishes communications with:	Has priorities Established by:	Gaining Unit can impose further Command Relationship of:
(Typical per Army Doctrine)	Gaining Unit	Parent Unit	Parent Unit (Unless in Area Support Concept)	Gaining Unit	As required by Gaining Unit	As required by Gaining Unit & Parent Unit	Gaining Unit	Support
(Delineated in joint force)	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?

BLUF: Observation on Support COMREL:
The Support Command Relationship can be a means of achieving unity of command when fully empowered by the establishing authority.

This support relationship in essence makes the supporting commanders responsible for enabling the success of the supported commander. *They can't simply provide some forces and walk away from the challenge.* Rather, in accordance with the joint force commander's guidance and intent, the Support COMREL requires supporting commanders to stay involved with the supported commander and continue to aid and assist him within the defined scope and priorities as he conducts operations. Recent joint doctrine changes have further strengthened this construct in terms of providing the Supported Commander more authority over supporting forces. We'll address this further below.



The **establishing authority** is the higher joint commander. He defines the support COMRELS among his subordinates in terms of which is supported and supporting for the various mission sets. He also specifies the purpose of the support relationship, the effect desired, and the scope of the action to be taken. Specifying the forces and resources allocated to the supporting effort; time, place, level, and duration of the supporting effort; and relative priority of the supporting effort affords the necessary transparency in which the supported and supporting commanders can harmonize their actions.

Challenge

“The Support Command Relationship places a requirement on all three commanders (higher, supported, and supporting) to work together within a framework of trust, transparency, and intent to be successful. The relationship may have to be revisited in the initial stages to get it right, but as it matures this command relationship becomes a very powerful means of harnessing the power of the joint force.” - *Senior Flag Officer*

The establishing authority is also the referee - the tie breaker, when subordinates cannot work out the necessary balance of access to capabilities.

Establishing Authority Insights:

- Provide below insights in an establishing directive – as part of the order or separately.
- Empower the supported commander to direct supporting efforts within defined scope and priorities.
- Give clear direction to subordinates in terms of priorities and intent to allow subordinates to work horizontally with each other in accomplishing tasks.
- Set conditions for and demand crosstalk among supported and supporting commanders to build and reinforce the necessary horizontal personal relationships, and trust and confidence.
- Challenge subordinates to ‘self-regulate’ their allocation of capabilities to one another through horizontal crosstalk within higher intent and priorities.

Transparency and crosstalk among components will allow them to arrive at the optimal allocation of capabilities to accomplish both their assigned tasks and support the designated supported commanders.

Transparency

“Transparency between supported and supporting commanders is key to effectiveness.” - *CJTF Commander*

- Stay involved to arbitrate and resolve conflicts between subordinate commanders in the prioritization, allocation and employment of limited capabilities supporting numerous missions.

Supported Commander. The supported commander is given access to supporting capabilities and has the authority to provide general direction, designate and prioritize missions, targets, or objectives, and other actions for coordination and efficiency (to include requesting liaison and directing of reporting requirements).

Supported Commander Insights:

- Identify requirements and provide priorities to supporting commanders. This is a continuous, not one time, activity.

- Request liaison from supporting commanders to help coherently integrate supporting capabilities in the operation.
- Address lack of support or potential adverse implications first to supporting commanders, and if necessary, to establishing authority for resolution.

Supporting Commander. The supporting commander is responsible to both ascertain and satisfy the needs of the supported commander within the priorities directed by the establishing authorities.

Supporting Commander Insights:

- Recognize your role in ensuring the success of the supported commander. We see those believing and following through on the ‘one team one fight’ view set the conditions for success.
- Recognize that your support to another supported commander may have an even higher priority than a mission for which you have been tasked.
- Take time in ascertaining supported commanders’ requirements and understanding the overall priorities in apportioning your forces to accomplish both your assigned tasks and those of other supported commanders.
- Recognize your responsibility as a Supporting Commander executing operations within a land or maritime AO **to coordinate** the operation with the appropriate commander **to avoid adverse effects** and friendly fire incidents. (This is a relatively unknown doctrinal responsibility for a Supporting Command – JP 3-0 Section VII)
- Send liaison to supported commanders to assist them in planning and in ascertaining your requirements. These liaison facilitate the necessary transparency noted above.
- Direct appropriate command relationships to your subordinates to ensure you (and your subordinates) fulfill your supporting responsibilities. You, as the supporting commander, can ‘provide forces or capabilities’ in a ‘direct support’ or even ‘TACON’ relationship to a respective supported commander to ensure his success.

Vignette: CENTCOM

The CENTCOM CFACC is a model “Supporting Commander” continually looking for opportunities to assist CJTF-OIR. AFCENT and the CFACC dispatched senior leaders to ensure they were supporting CJTF-OIR requirements.

The Support COMREL authority in an AO

“In coordination with JFLCCs and JFMCCs, other commanders tasked by the JFC to execute theater- or JOA-wide operations have the latitude to plan and execute them within land and maritime AOs. Commanders executing such operations within a land or maritime AO must coordinate the operation with the appropriate commander to avoid adverse effects and friendly fire incidents. If planned operations would have adverse impact within a land or maritime AO, the commander assigned to execute the JOA-wide functions must readjust the plan, resolve the issue with the land or maritime component commander, or consult with the JFC for resolution.” - JP 3-0

Overarching Support COMREL Insights:

- At the JTF level, understand (or seek to clarify) the existing supported and supporting command relationships between you and your lateral organizations such as the Theater Service Component Commands (e.g. Army Service Component), functional components (e.g. the Joint Forces Air Component Command), and sub-unified commands (e.g. the Theater Special Operations Command). As a JTF, you will normally be designated a supported command for operations in your JOA; these lateral commands will likely have a supporting command relationship to you. In some cases, you may have mutually supporting missions and a mutual support command relationship. We often see confusion between the joint task force and other Combatant Command forces operating within the JOA if these supported and supporting command relationships are not clearly defined.
- Demand integration and promote interdependence amongst your subordinates by delineating clear support command relationships. Specify the supported commander for specific tasks together with the respective supporting commanders, realizing that there will be multiple, concurrent supported and

supporting commanders due to the number of ongoing tasks. For example as depicted in the figure, a BSO may be the supported commander for offensive operations in an AO with SOF in support, while the BSO is concurrently supporting discrete SOF high value target (HVT) missions in the same AO. Provide clear priorities to allow subordinates to allocate their efforts to the various tasks.

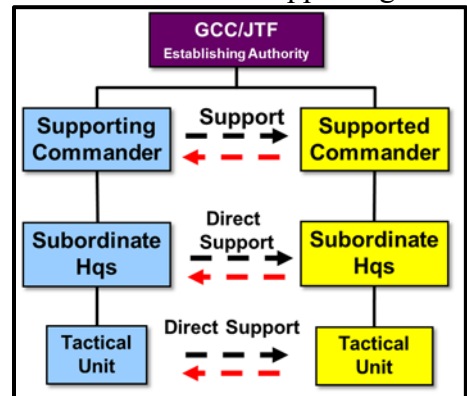
Task	Priority	Supported Commander	Supporting Commander
Offensive operations	2	BSO	SOJTF, Air
HVT	1	SOJTF	BSO, Air
Counter TBM	3	Air	SOJTF

- Understand risk to force and risk to mission implications associated with the Support COMREL. We find that the supported commander is responsible for risk to the mission while the supporting commander remains responsible for employment of his forces and the associated risk to his force. [We acknowledge that both commanders will be attentive to both aspects as part of trust and transparency] The supported commander, being responsible for risk to mission, can veto/turn back a supporting commander’s concept of operations if it poses unacceptable risk to his mission accomplishment. For example, unacceptable risk to the mission could be the likelihood of an unfavorable reaction by the populace, or the potential risk and escalation of force requirements to rescue an endangered supporting force. Empowering a battlespace owner as a supported commander directly solves this mission approval dilemma, recognizing the role of the establishing (or appointing) authority in providing risk guidance. Likewise, the Supporting Commander must craft supporting efforts to operate within established risk to force parameters. This dual perspective on risk is healthy and protects both the mission and the force.

Risk to Mission: Ability to execute assigned missions and the strategic cost/peril, given available resources and the threat.

Risk to Force: Acceptability of the human, material, and financial costs of actions.

- Relationships matter – at all levels. Require synergy and relationships at lower echelons below the high level supported and supporting COMREL. Direct both the supported and supporting commanders to further specify appropriate parallel-like support COMRELs at their lower echelons to promote horizontal crosstalk and improve agility and speed of operations at the lower echelons (see figure). [Note the two way areas depict the typical mutual support between these commanders; while one may be supported the overall mission, the other may be supported for a specific task that is supporting the other’s larger mission.]



“Your subordinates must have a relationship with their counterparts.” - CCDD

- We’ve even seen where *Supporting Commanders may opt to provide a force TACON to a Supported Commander*. This is often a temporary measure focused on a single objective or task, and intended to enable even closer integration of operations. We normally also see related staff expertise ‘loaned’ the receiving HQ to facilitate effective employment of the force. This kind of temporary and responsive lateral provision of forces is a sign of mutual trust between commanders and an example of extreme synergy. *This could entail an Army unit being provided TACON to a SOF Commander – or a SOF unit TACON to an Army unit.* [Note: We’ve seen a variant with the JFACC providing sorties in CAS to a ground commander.]
- Sustainment of a Supporting force remains the ‘parent command’ responsibility within the broader national and Service logistic framework. However, this is often executed in practice through an area support responsibility (normally provided by the battlespace owner) due to the area support concept’s inherent efficiency and effectiveness. In practice, this has to be worked out in advance.

8.0 CONSIDERATION: TERMS OF REFERENCE DOCUMENTS. We are seeing more focus by various JTFs in developing terms of reference (TOR) to increase shared understanding of roles and responsibilities – an important action in today’s complex environment.

Most HQs develop some form of TOR focused on codifying roles, delegated authorities, and responsibilities for the JTF HQ senior leaders. This is particularly important when the HQ has multiple Deputy Commanders; it helps prevent “direction fratricide” among senior leaders and assists the staff by clarifying which leaders have specific oversight functions for interaction with the staff. TORs can also include the CoS, CSEL, POLAD, J3, and other key staff, as appropriate to improve understanding across the HQ.

We find two formats in use: a memorandum and a matrix (see figure). We observe that many HQ find that the matrix is more useful as it is easily displayed, understood, and deepens understanding across the staff, HHQ, and subordinates. The Chief of Staff or Secretary of Joint Staff normally has responsibility for developing, coordinating, and maintaining the TOR in conjunction with leader guidance.

JTF Senior Leader TOR - Sample Template -				
Leadership Position	JTF Commander	Deputy JTF Commander	Deputy JTF Commander	COS
HQ Locn, Key Functions and Oversight	•	•	•	•
Engagement Responsibilities - Up and Out	•	•	•	•
Authorities	•	•	•	•
Oversight of Supporting & Subordinate Orgs	•	•	•	•

The TOR should JTF senior leader primacy areas including:

- JTF authorities (e.g., second in command, targeting authorities, and funding approval)
- Oversight of JTF staff functions and associated battle rhythm events
- Relationships/engagements with all key external organizations (e.g., HHQ and embassies)

It is especially useful for:

- Senior JTF leaders (especially deputy commanders from other Services / nations)
- External organizations (up and out, lateral, and subordinate)
- JTF HQ staff

Challenge

Lack of common understanding on the role of the HQ and the roles of senior leaders can confuse the staff, subordinates, partners, and HHQ.

Some HQs take the concept of a TOR further and leverage it to increase shared understanding of the broader perspective of friendly forces – an important benefit in today’s complex environment. They have developed simple TORs that help explain the role of the JTF within the broader context of the mission with our interagency and multinational partners. In some cases, where appropriate, the TOR describes the roles of various command posts and delineates where HQ functions occur. (see figure).

Broad Viewpoint on Terms of Reference

- Role of HQ with external mission partners and stakeholders
- Role of different Command Posts (Main, Forward, TAC, ...)
- Joint functions accomplished at each Command Post
- Role of Senior Leaders

Insights:

- Establish TOR early in an operation, then routinely update/adjust as needed.
- Address the Commander’s personal focus areas.
- Share widely across the staff and subordinates.
- Ensure the COS has the staff synchronization function (see the COS focus paper).

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Glossary

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADCON – Administrative Control
AETF – Air Expeditionary TF
AO – Area of Operations
AOR – Area of Responsibility
BSO – Battlespace owner
C2 – Command and Control
CAS – Close Air Support
CASEVAC – Casualty Evacuation
CCMD – Combatant Command
CE – Crisis Establishment
CJSOR – Combined Joint Statement of Requirements
COA – Course of Action
COMREL – Command Relationship
CONOPS – Concept of Operations
COS – Chief of Staff
CSA – Combat Support Agency
CSEL – Command Senior Enlisted Advisor
HVT – High Value Target
IED – Improvised Explosive device
JACCE – Joint Air Component Coordination Element
JFACC – Joint Force Air Component Commander
JFC – Joint Force Commander
JFLCC – Joint Force Land Component Commander
JFMCC – Joint Force Maritime Component Commander
JFSOCC – Joint Force Special Operations Component Commander
JMD – Joint Manning Document
JOA – Joint Operations Area
NCE – National Command Element
NGO – Non-Governmental Organization
NSE – National Support Element
OPCON – Operational Control
OPT – Operational Planning Team
POLAD – Political Advisor
SOJTF – Special Operations JTF
TACS – Tactical Air Control System
TACON – Tactical Control
TMM – Transregional, Multi-domain, Multi-functional
TOR – Terms of Reference

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**The Joint Staff J7
116 Lake View Parkway
Suffolk, VA 23435-2697**

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