

Integrated Operations

Executive Summary

Few of our readers know that *Joint Force Quarterly* is delivered to every general and flag officer within the Department of Defense, as well as to senior leaders throughout the executive branch of the U.S. Government. For decisionmakers, executive summaries are an essential daily element of time management in the face of heavy responsibilities and tight schedules. *JFQ* is mindful that national security professionals at every level face competing demands for their attention. The purpose of this executive summary is not to reduce the Forum's content to a few

summarizing bullets, but rather to address the *So what?* question behind the editors' assessment that these submissions are truly worth readers' time.

Like Generals Shelton and Myers before him, General Pace has placed great emphasis on the importance of U.S. military leaders integrating their plans and operations "with a wide variety of actors" in an effort to achieve national objectives in a more holistic fashion. Whether this involves military organizations from more than one country combined with one or more U.S. or foreign governmental agencies, private volunteer organizations,

international nongovernmental organizations, and private or public local agencies is not as important as the intent: to maximize efficiency and legitimacy in achieving national security objectives. While this has been done in an ad hoc fashion for years, the potential value added is so great that, like "jointness," this concept is in need of formal approaches, starting with institutional adaptation.

Our first Forum article, "Planning Lessons from Afghanistan and Iraq," focuses on the contemporary security threat and the way in which leaders plan and orchestrate



diplomatic and military instruments of power to meet this threat. Hailing back to the Clausewitzian admonition to understand the *nature* of the war in question, Joseph Collins focuses on the critical importance of interagency partnership in planning for, and subsequently addressing, the fractured environments produced by blunt military power contests. Dr. Collins argues that involving the interagency community in the military aspects of the planning process is essential to achieving security objectives in the postconflict (or postcrisis) return to normalcy. He concludes with eight practical recommendations to improve mid-range planning.

The second Forum article, “Combating Terrorism: A Socio-Economic Strategy,” addresses the economic instrument of national power in the war on terror and the relationship between economic prosperity, stability, and terror. Miemie Winn Byrd posits that the traditional argument that “market-based solutions cannot lead to poverty reduction and economic development” is no longer plausible and that col-

laborating with nontraditional partners is a necessary component of a successful counterterrorism strategy. Major Byrd criticizes inflexible planning and other traditional military organizational problems as enemies of innovation in the economic arena. Regional combatant commanders must anticipate a future in which more businesses find competitive arenas in underdeveloped nations and seek to cultivate their partnership in defeating terror.

Our third Forum feature, “Integrating Partner Nations into Coalition Operations,” outlines the techniques, mechanisms, and integrated operations successes used by the U.S. regional combatant command with the fewest resources to perform its mission: U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM). This dearth of assets and a perceived absence of strategic threat have inspired great interagency and partner nation coordination to bring, as General Pace noted in his message earlier, a greater array of resources and expertise to bear on the increasing transnational threat. As in other regional areas of responsibility, USSOUTHCOM is working with its partners to mitigate a growing panorama of security threats that exploit vast ungoverned territories and border seams. Major Barbara Fick addresses the deliberate training and exercise activities that pay dividends in smoother integrated operations during crisis. Notably, USSOUTHCOM is the first regional combatant command to incorporate the State Department Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization in its exercise program. For his part, the coordinator is working with the Western Hemisphere Affairs Bureau on Cuba to develop a framework for U.S. strategy for the period immediately following Fidel Castro’s death. Events will clearly demand even more efficient integrated operations in the USSOUTHCOM area of responsibility, and the implications for state, Federal, and international agencies who deal with mass migration, foreign disaster assistance, and even homeland defense, are legion.

In the fourth article, “Are We Ready for an Interagency Combatant Command,” Christopher Naler argues that, because the National Security Council (NSC) is not optimized for daily strategy implementation, every regional combatant command should be reorganized as an *integrated* combatant command. In this serial debate, previous authors have opined that the National Security

Council should serve as an aggressive arbiter of interagency equities in the war on terror and force greater synergy on Federal agencies with contrasting cultures, incentives, and perspectives. In the aftermath of the 1986 Tower Commission’s investigation of the Iran-Contra affair, many drew the lesson that the NSC should serve only as staff and never as an operational agency, closing the door on any suggestion of a standing integrated combatant command headquarters. Colonel Naler points out that the immediate chain of command for such an organization is a contentious issue, but so is leadership of the command itself.

Henry Stratman’s case study, “Orchestrating Instruments of Power for Nationbuilding,” concludes the Forum and takes the opposite approach by focusing on individual leaders organizing staffs and liaison elements to overcome myriad impediments to integration and coordination (the “clash of cultures”). In this case, the dual challenge is nationbuilding in parallel with counterinsurgency operations. General Stratman suggests that perhaps separate but equal agencies with clear mandates and cooperative leadership can achieve better results through careful interaction than a single integrated agency with organic interagency expertise. The general is careful to point out that the successes he reports were not attributable to doctrine, but were products of age-old unity of effort between the chief of mission and the combined force commander. Should we draw the conclusion that multiple independent agencies working cooperatively outperform a single, truly integrated combatant command? Unity of effort is essential to successful integrated operations.

In his guidance to the Joint Staff, General Pace underscored the need to “harness elements of national power” by integrating and coordinating Defense Department efforts with the work of others. The challenge of integrated operations is to build trust, synergy, and momentum in realizing national security objectives, but the devil is in the details, and efforts to complement and strengthen other elements of national power depend on leadership, habitual interagency relationships, and reliable vehicles for communication. **JFQ**

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