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The relationship between operational commanders and the national-level intelligence community is examined by suggesting the nature of support that should be provided to the theaters. Proper support from the national agencies is necessary if a theater commander is to have the best possible intelligence needed for planning and executing campaigns and operations. Problems which developed between theater commanders and the national agencies during DESERT STORM and other operations are examined. These cases demonstrated that a unified intelligence effort is needed between the theater and national levels. Also, near-real time dissemination of national-level intelligence products to the operational commander should be ensured. These products should provide the theater commander with the clearest possible assessments on enemy capabilities and intentions.

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NATIONAL-LEVEL INTELLIGENCE AND THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER:
IMPROVING SUPPORT TO THE THEATER

by

Mr. Steven Hecker

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Maritime Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract of

NATIONAL-LEVEL INTELLIGENCE AND THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

The relationship between operational commanders and the national-level intelligence community is examined by suggesting the nature of support that should be provided to the theaters. Proper support from the national agencies is necessary if a theater commander is to have the best possible intelligence needed for planning and executing campaigns and operations. Problems which developed between theater commanders and the national agencies during DESERT STORM and other operations are examined. These cases demonstrated that a unified intelligence effort is needed between the theater and national levels. Also, near-real time dissemination of national-level intelligence products to the operational commanders should be ensured. These products should provide the theater commander with the clearest possible assessments on enemy capabilities and intentions.

PREFACE

Only open sources were used in preparation of this paper. The latest JCS publication on joint intelligence doctrine provided most of the background information concerning the national intelligence agencies' responsibilities in support of operations. U.S. Congressional documents, which included testimony from General Norman Schwarzkopf (retired), provided the main sources for the DESERT STORM case study. The use of classified material could have added to the paper's level of detail, especially for the three case studies. Nonetheless, sufficient unclassified material existed to warrant the exclusion of classified sources.

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NATIONAL-LEVEL INTELLIGENCE AND THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Iranian President Ali Rafsanjani, following reestablishment of US-Iranian relations for the first time since 1979, is suddenly overthrown. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard, a militant, Muslim fundamentalist group, assumes power. Angered by US military aid to Israel during the on-going Palestinian-Israeli border war, the Iranian regime announces that US vessels will be denied entry through the Strait of Hormuz. This heavily transited Strait lies some 40 miles from the Iranian mainland and 20 miles from several of its islands. The new regime warns that any US vessels attempting to transit the Strait will be fired on by land-based SILKWORM anti-ship missiles, and by Iranian combatant vessels, until the U.S. suspends military aid to Israel. The U.S. president immediately rejects the Iranian demand, and warns Iranian forces from interfering with any US ships transiting the Strait.

Shortly after Iran threatens the U.S., a crisis-action team is formed at CENTCOM HQ in Tampa, beginning the JOPES process for crisis-action planning. The CINCCENT's J2, through the command's Joint Intelligence Center (JIC), will be responsible for providing CINCCENT with the intelligence needed to plan and

execute an operation order to accomplish the mission, as derived from NCA and JCS guidance.

To meet this requirement, the CINC's J2 (or depending on the command structure chosen, the JTF's J2) will have to rely on some non-organic, intelligence resources found at the national level. The J2, as a result, should know the capabilities of the national agencies to support the theater's planning and execution phase. The J2 should also coordinate theater intelligence efforts with those of the national agencies. The national agencies, to fulfill their partial mission of supporting the operational commander, should provide tailored intelligence to the theater J2 and the operational commander in support of the mission.

This paper begins with a description of the national-level intelligence agencies tasked with supporting the theaters, and the type of support they can provide to operational commanders and their J2s. The next chapter examines the three different levels of intelligence, suggesting which level or levels national agencies should provide to the theaters. Next, DESERT STORM is analyzed to determine problems that occurred between the national-level agencies and the theater commanders. Intelligence problems during URGENT FURY and JUST CAUSE are only briefly considered, as their lessons are generally the same as for DESERT STORM.

The final chapter provides recommendations aimed at assuring unity of intelligence effort between the national and theater levels. Additional recommendations deal with assuring proper

dissemination of national-level intelligence to the theater, and with providing useful intelligence to the operational commander. A brief conclusion will summarize the paper's major findings, using the Straits of Hormuz scenario.

CHAPTER II

NATIONAL-LEVEL INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

Operational commanders and J2s should be familiar with national-level intelligence agencies responsible for supporting the theater. This familiarity is necessary due to the inability of a commander to rely exclusively on organic theater intelligence assets. This fact is acknowledged by the latest Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) doctrine on joint intelligence, which states: "Rarely will a command or intelligence organization be able to depend entirely on its own capabilities to collect and produce all the necessary intelligence."[1] Also, understanding the national agencies and what they can provide is useful towards ensuring a unified intelligence effort between the theater and the national levels.

The national-level intelligence agencies have been directed by Congress to enhance their support to operational commanders. For example, the Senate, in the 1992 National Defense Authorization Act, stated that it wanted to "improve the responsiveness and utility of national intelligence systems and organizations to the needs of the combatant commanders."[2] The JCS, in its joint intelligence doctrine, tasked the following national intelligence organizations with supporting operational commanders: Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), National Security Agency (NSA), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Defense Mapping

Agency (DMA), Department of State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR), National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), Central Imagery Office (CIO), and the intelligence divisions of the military services.[3]

DIA is the primary national intelligence agency charged with supporting the unified commanders. This role was buttressed in the Senate's 1992 National Defense Authorization Act, which called for reorganization of the DIA to improve its capability to support combatant commands.[4] DIA completed its reorganization by October 1993 in accordance with this congressional demand.

The agency produces imagery intelligence (IMINT), human intelligence (HUMINT) reports through its defense attache system, as well as all-source analysis.[5] All-source analysis incorporates IMINT, HUMINT, signals intelligence (SIGINT), and other forms of intelligence into an integrated, fused product concerning, among others, current intelligence, targeting support, and indications and warning (I&W), all of which can be pertinent to the theater commander. DIA also is responsible for managing Department of Defense-wide HUMINT and IMINT collection activities, meaning that theater collection requirements are sent to DIA for validation and prioritization if those requirements can not be obtained by the theater's organic intelligence assets.[6]

DIA produced intelligence can be disseminated to theater commanders and their JICs in "near-real time" through the Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System (JWICS), or through

the Joint Deployable Intelligence Support System (JDISS).[7] The JWICS provides a means for sending high-speed, secure text, voice, and graphics, while the JDISS provides similar capabilities within a transportable work station.[8] DIA's National Military Joint Intelligence Center (NMJIC) acts as the conduit for disseminating DIA products via the JWICS to the theater.[9] The NMJIC is augmented during crises by the CIA, NSA, and other national agencies as required to provide the theater with intelligence support from those agencies as well.[10]

DIA also can support CINCs by deploying National Intelligence Support Teams (NISTs) to the theater during crises. NISTs are composed of representatives from DIA and/or CIA, NSA, or other national intelligence agencies.[11] The function of a NIST is to forward deploy analytical expertise to the theater, and to quickly disseminate theater Requests for Information (RFIs) to the national agencies.[12] DIA liaison representatives, present at each unified command, can also provide a conduit for passing information from the national agencies to the theater.

NSA, also part of the Defense Department, can provide SIGINT support to the operational commander. SIGINT includes intelligence on foreign communications transmissions (COMINT), or foreign electronic emissions (ELINT).[13] NSA also manages SIGINT requirements forwarded theaters, and provides theaters with technical SIGINT assistance.[14] NSA also responds to theater, SIGINT-related RFIs by augmenting NISTs and the NMJIC, as required.[15]

CIA, although not part of the Defense Department, has recently taken steps intended to improve support for military operations. In 1992, former CIA director Robert Gates created the CIA Office for Military Affairs with that purpose in mind.[16] CIA has the capability to provide operational HUMINT support or analytical support to operational commanders through participation on a NIST, in the NMJIC, or in a theater JIC.[17]

DMA is tasked with providing the operational commander with maps, charts, and geodetic (MC&G) support. This is accomplished during peacetime and crises. During the latter, DMA can provide specialized maps, charts, and related products that are tailored for the commander's needs, if sufficient lead time is provided to DMA.[18] Special requests during crises can be facilitated through a DMA liaison officer assigned to a joint command.[19]

INR, part of the State Department, is the third national intelligence agency capable of providing all-source intelligence support to operational commanders (the other two agencies being DIA and CIA). Specifically, INR can produce analysis on political-military and economic matters. The bureau, with an estimated 360 employees in 1991, is much smaller than the other national intelligence agencies, which number well into the thousands.[20] Nonetheless, an INR representative may be part of the NMJIC or the theater JIC, and thus be in a position to provide direct support to operational commanders as required.[21]

Other national intelligence agencies, so designated by the JCS, include the NRO, the CIO, and the intelligence divisions of

the military services. Unlike the agencies described previously,
however, the NRO and the CIO do not produce intelligence for
operational commanders and their J2s. The NRO is responsible for
"research and development, acquisition, and operation of
spaceborne and airborne intelligence data collection systems."[22]
The newly created CIO is involved with managing national imagery
collection requirements.[23] The military service intelligence
divisions, such as the Office of Naval Intelligence and the Air
Force Intelligence Agency, are primarily service-oriented.
However, they can provide representatives to serve on the
NMJIC.[24]

CHAPTER III

LEVELS OF INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT

National agencies that produce all-source intelligence (the DIA, CIA, and INR) traditionally focused on producing broad, strategic intelligence to senior policy makers, as opposed to operational or tactical intelligence. Policy makers and other high-level government officials care little, for example, about detailed intelligence concerning specific enemy units. Although operational commanders may find that information useful, the NCA, senior Department of Defense (DOD) officials, and other policy makers usually demand broader assessments about a nation's armed forces.

National agencies today, however, must be poised to provide more specific intelligence of use to the operational commander. Congress and the JCS have levied this requirement since DESERT STORM. The JCS underscored this requirement in its latest definition of strategic intelligence: "Intelligence that is required for the formulation of strategy, policy, and military plans and operations at the national and theater levels."[1] The inclusion of plans and operations at "the theater level" means that strategic intelligence, the domain of the national agencies, ought to be sufficiently detailed to meet the needs of the operational commander.

The requirement of supporting the theater commander also mandates that national agencies meet some operational intelligence needs as well. The JCS defines operational intelligence as that which is "required for planning and conducting campaigns and major operations to accomplish strategic objectives within theaters or areas of operations."[2] While the theater JIC is primarily responsible for most operational-level intelligence requirements, gaps in its collection and analytical capability will necessitate inclusion of the national agencies. Also, some of the operational intelligence needs will likely overlap with the strategic intelligence needs, and thus be within the capability of the national agencies to provide.

Even tactical intelligence requirements may apply in some situations to national agencies. The JCS defines tactical intelligence as that which is "required for planning and conducting tactical operations."[3] Tactical operations in some cases, particularly in operations other than war, may result in achieving strategic objectives, and thus greatly impact the operational commander. For example, a tactical air strike against an Iranian SILKWORM site near the Strait of Hormuz could be conducted to achieve the strategic objective of securing freedom of navigation for US vessels. In cases such as these, national agencies may need to support the theater commander with tactical-level support, such as updated intelligence on weapon or troop movements. However, in tactical operations that do not accomplish strategic objectives, the national intelligence

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agencies should not be burdened with tactical requirements that could be better handled by theater resources.

Another reason why national agencies should provide the theater with operational, or in some cases, tactical levels of intelligence is because the means to do so are now available, given the technological communications capabilities of the JWICS and the JDISS. These systems provide national agencies with near real-time communications and dissemination capability to support the theater. Time-sensitive intelligence about the disposition of specific units, targets, and other theater-level intelligence needs can be quickly disseminated from national agencies to the operational commander before the intelligence is overcome by events.

CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDIES

Examining problems which occurred between the national
intelligence agencies and operational commanders helps to clarify
what the nature of the relationship should be, and   measures
can assure a proper level of intelligence support from the
national level. Although a unique operation unlikely to be
repeated anywhere else, DESERT STORM is an excellent case to
examine, as it is the most recent operation to have been
completed. The operation also spurred recent Congressional and
JCS concerns with improving the relationship between theater and
national intelligence. This concern is reflected in the
following US Senate finding about intelligence during DESERT
STORM:

> Military commanders appear to seek self-
> sufficiency through organic systems and organizations
> on the argument that national systems cannot be relied
> upon for support. The national community, likewise,
> appears to emphasize its peacetime missions and pays
> insufficient attention to combatant commanders'
> needs.[1]

DESERT STORM

General Norman Schwarzkopf, the operational commander,
clearly approved of the overall support he received from the
national level intelligence agencies. He told the US Senate:

I think that as far as the intelligence support in the war as a whole, it was excellent. We had very, very good intelligence support. We had terrific people. We had a lot of capabilities.[2]

Similarly, he told the US House of Representatives:

The intelligence community gave us great support. They gave us great people. They had great systems. They worked very, very hard in supporting us. I would never, ever say one bad word about the effort put forth by the intelligence community to support us.[3]

Despite the praise, General Schwarzkopf did not hesitate to criticize some aspects of national intelligence support. His foremost complaint concerned Battle Damage Assessment (BDA). Significant analytical differences developed between the national intelligence community and CENTCOM concerning the amount of damage inflicted by US forces against Iraqi targets.

BDA disagreements between the theater and the national agencies largely stemmed from a lack of unified effort. Specifically, different methodologies were used for making assessments. National agencies focused on using satellite imagery to conduct damage assessment, making damage harder to discern.[4] At the operational level, the CENTCOM JIC in Riyadh placed more emphasis on pilot reports, gun camera videos, and other theater assets. General Schwarzkopf articulated his frustration with what he regarded as over-cautious BDA reports from the national agencies:

I will tell you very candidly that, based upon some of the analyses we were getting, we would still be sitting over there waiting, if we were dependent upon that analysis, because unless it could be seen on a photo as absolutely 100 percent being destroyed, no credit was given for it being destroyed.[5]

General Schwarzkopf levied particularly harsh criticism against
CIA, stating in his memoirs:

> On the eve of the ground war, it (CIA) was still
> telling the President that we were grossly exaggerating
> the damage inflicted on the Iraqis. If we'd waited to
> convince the CIA, we'd still be in Saudi Arabia.[6]

The DOD, in its official report to Congress on DESERT STORM,
largely agreed with the General's comments. The DOD report
stated that national-level BDA was largely limited to "what could
be proven using imagery."[7] The report added that this method
"did not serve well the needs of the commanders operating under
combat time pressures."[8]

Besides BDA, another problem during DESERT STORM concerned
overly-cautious intelligence from the national agencies, which
often failed to provide the operational commander with a clear
estimate of enemy intentions and capabilities. General
Schwarzkopf noted this problem:

> Probably my major concern as a theater commander
> was the fact that the analysis had estimates that were
> coming out of consolidated analysis, and by the time we
> received them, they had been caveated, disagreed with,
> footnoted and watered down to the point that the
> estimate could have supported any outcome. When you
> were all done, no matter what the outcome was, they
> could say, 'You see, we were right in our estimate.'
> That is not helpful to a commander in the field.[9]

The DOD also expressed concern about inconclusive
intelligence given to the theater commander. In it's final
report to Congress, the DOD stated that overly caveated and
footnoted intelligence "often presents too broad a picture and
too wide a range of options to affect combat force posturing or
employment."[10]

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Timely intelligence dissemination to the theater was cited as another problem during DESERT STORM. General Schwarzkopf told the U.S. Senate:

> One of the shortcoming we found is that we just do not have an immediately responsive intelligence capability that will give the theater commander near real time information that he personally needs to make a decision... I think that intelligence community should be asked to come up with a system that will, in fact, be capable of delivering a real time product when he (the theater commander) requests that.[11]

The DOD noted this problem as well, particularly regarding the dissemination of intelligence to the tactical level: "Intelligence provided to ground tactical commanders from the theater and national levels was not always timely and often came in unfamiliar formats."[12]

URGENT FURY

Intelligence dissemination to the theater is not a new problem. Similar difficulties were noted during 1982 URGENT FURY operation in Grenada. For example, the CINCLANT during URGENT FURY, Admiral McDonald, stated the following:

> What good is sophisticated satellite imagery sitting in Washington, D.C., or Norfolk, Va., when the field commander who needs it is on the ground in Grenada, on a ship off Lebanon, or in some even more remote corner of the world.[13]

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JUST CAUSE

Similarly, dissemination problems occurred during Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama in 1989. The problem of map distribution to operational units was specifically noted. For example, the 18th Airborne Corps stated that it was "inconceivable" that operational units were not provided with completed or updated maps and gazetteers.[14] Although map support may not traditionally be considered part of the intelligence effort, the JCS has designated DMA as a national intelligence organization responsible for supporting theater commanders.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous cases demonstrated three principal lessons
about the nature of intelligence support to the operational
commander. First, national-level support should be part of a
unified intelligence effort between the national and theater
levels. Second, near real-time intelligence dissemination from
the national agencies is needed to support the theater. Finally,
intelligence estimates about enemy capabilities and intentions
should be as unequivocal as possible so they can be used by the
operational commander for planning and executing operations and
campaigns.

Unifying the Intelligence Effort

The first lesson involves unity of effort between the
theater and national levels. A unified intelligence effort
entails avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort, and
allocating theater and national assets to compliment rather than
compete with one another. Unity of effort will take on added
importance as budgetary considerations will likely reduce
national and theater-level intelligence assets. The following
recommendations are aimed at assuring unity of effort.

--Coordinate Intelligence Requirements. Theater J2s must
closely coordinate their intelligence collection and production
requirements with the JCS J2 to avoid needless redundancy. This
coordination should lead to a sensible division of

responsibility, based on identifying theater requirements that can best be met by national versus theater assets. For example, as the operational commander's intelligence needs are determined, the theater J2 and JCS J2 should coordinate on a collection effort. This would entail dividing collection responsibilities along theater and national lines. Similarly, production requirements should be divided between the theater and national levels. Some duplication of intelligence collection and production efforts is unavoidable. Nonetheless, close coordination will help to ensure that national assets usually compliment, rather than duplicate, theater assets.

--Give BDA Responsibility to the Theaters. The BDA example of DESERT STORM demonstrated the problem that occurs regarding duplication and lack of a unified effort. The BDA process was proliferated, with duplication of effort between the theater and the national level.[1] To avoid the pitfalls of the DESERT STORM experience, a BDA cell should be the responsibility of either a national-level interagency group, or of the theater JICs, but not both. Giving BDA to the theater JICs is advised. Doing so would make the BDA process more responsive to the operational commander, who is ultimately responsible for employing the necessary means to accomplish the strategic objective. General Schwarzkopf's comments to the U.S. Senate underscore this reality:

There were many people who felt that they were in a better position to judge battle damage assessment from a analysis of things like photography and that sort of thing, alone, rather than allowing the theater commander, who is the person that really in the final analysis has to make the ultimate assessment to apply good military judgment to what he is seeing.[2]

Putting the BDA cell in the theater is also practical, given that most of the assets used to assess BDA, such as cockpit video and pilot reports, are already located in-theater. This factor was also cited by General Schwarzkopf above, when he noted that photography is not the only means by which BDA can be completed. National agencies could still support the theater-based BDA cell by providing analytical expertise as required.

National Intelligence Dissemination to the Theater

The second lesson imparted by the case studies is that near-real time dissemination of national-level intelligence to the theater is necessary. Without timely dissemination, the operational commander is not likely to have all the information needed to plan and execute operations or campaigns. Intelligence dissemination has traditionally been the weakest link between the national level agencies and the combatant commanders. The following recommendations are aimed at improving this problem.

--Deploy National Intelligence Support Teams (NISTs) to the Theater. These teams, composed of analysts from the DIA, CIA, NSA, or other agencies as required, can deploy to theater JICs during crises to provide near real-time links via the JDISS between the national level agencies and the theater. During DESERT SHIELD and STORM, for example, a total of 11 NISTs (then

referred to as NMISTs - National Military Intelligence Support Teams) were deployed, including nine down to corps and component levels.[3] These teams can process RFIs from the theater to the national level, resulting in tailored intelligence support to the operational commander. For example, NMISTs processed approximately 2,700 RFIs between the start of DESERT SHIELD and the ceasefire at the end of February 1991.[4]

Analytical expertise represented on a NIST team also provides the theater with some on-the-spot expertise. However, team members will usually need to send RFIs to the national agencies for response, as responses usually require access to records available only at national agency offices.

The utility of employing NISTs during DESERT STORM is well documented. The DOD, in its final report to Congress on DESERT STORM, related the following:

> The NMIST network was to prove crucial to the CENTCOM J2 since it eventually would be the sole dedicated intelligence communications capability between the CENTCOM J3, the component and subunifed command intelligence staffs, and the national intelligence community. These teams were vital sources of timely information, to include imagery, especially when the existing communications circuits between the United States and the theater became saturated with operational message traffic.[5]

--Link All Theater Commanders with the NMJIC. The NMJIC is another method of facilitating dissemination. Established in 1992, replacing the National Military Intelligence Center (NMIC), the NMJIC includes DIA, CIA, NSA, and other national-agency representatives. The NMJIC can provide the operational commander with a one-stop shopping center for national-level intelligence

products of concern to the theater commander, such as I&W, targeting intelligence, and threat estimates. Intelligence can be disseminated in near real-time between the NMJIC and theaters via the JWICS. Additionally, a DMA representative, present at the NMJIC as required, can facilitate the dissemination of mapping support.

The NMJIC can also foster unity of effort among the national agencies, by acting as a central manager for theater-driven production requirements. For example, an RFI on enemy order of battle could be tasked to DIA, while RFIs on political and economic products could be tasked to CIA or INR.

--Place National Agency Representatives With the CINCs. Agency representatives can also enhance dissemination to the theater commander. DIA, NSA, and CIA should each have at least one representative present with all unified CINCs, and JTF commands. These representatives can play a crucial role in providing the commanders with additional access to national-level intelligence expertise and products, especially during non-crises situations when NIST teams may not be available for deployment.

Clarify Estimates

A third lesson imparted from the case studies concerns the need for improving the usefulness of national-level intelligence provided to the operational commander. Estimates and other intelligence products of concern to the theater should be clear and conclusive so they can be used by the commander for

operational planning and execution. The following
recommendations address this issue.

--Avoid Producing Watered-Down Estimates. National-level
estimates should be clear, and not heavily caveated. Although
agencies may be tempted to heavily qualify estimates to shield
itself from future criticism, this does not support the
operational commander's need for specific assessments on enemy
capabilities and intentions. General Schwarzkopf's advise seems
sound:

> I think there needs to be a combination of good
> facts, and then the facts need to be coupled with good
> analysis and the application of a judgment to go ahead
> and make a guess, which is what an estimate is, and a
> guess that would be helpful to the theater commander.[6]

Conclusive assessments concerning enemy intentions will
always be more problematic than assessments on capabilities.
Enemy capabilities intelligence is generally based on hard
intelligence, such as weapons inventory and orders of battle.
Intentions, however, often must be based on intelligence that is
softer or imprecise. While the national agencies should attempt
to provide conclusive estimates, the theater commander should
expect ambiguity on some estimates concerning enemy intentions.

--Consolidate National Intelligence Positions. National
agencies should seek to arrive at a single, coordinated, national
position regarding strategic-level matters of concern to the
theater commander. Currently, the format for providing "one"
national position on such matters is the National Intelligence
Estimate (NIE).[7] However, NIEs are often footnoted with

dissenting analysis from various national agencies. This reduces their utility to operational commanders, who need specific assessments to help plan and execute operations. Equivocal estimates can not be avoided at all times, however, particularly when hard intelligence is lacking. Nonetheless, analysts from the national agencies should attempt to provide a consolidated position.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

National-level intelligence support to the theater comprises an important part of the overall intelligence effort needed to support the operational commander. As such, it is crucial that this support be part of a unified effort between the theater J2 and the JCS J2. Unity of effort will help integrate the collection and production efforts of the theater and national agencies, thus providing the theater commander with better intelligence support. Impr/ing dissemination of national-level intelligence to the opera onal commander is already possible with the advent of the JWICS and the JDISS. These systems allow NISTs and the NMJIC to provide near-real time dissemination to the theater. If national-level intelligence estimates and other products are to be of use to the operational commander, they need to be as conclusive as possible regarding enemy capabilities and intentions.

Returning to the scenario involving Iranian threats against US vessels transiting the Straits of Hormuz, as described in the introduction, the operational commander will require intelligence support to develop and execute an operations order. During the crisis action planning phase, CENTCOM's J2 should be closely coordinating with the JCS J2 at the NMJIC on collection and production requirements that address Essential Elements of

Information (EEIs) needed to develop an operations plan.
Intelligence estimates and other products concerning Iranian
capabilities and intentions to threaten US vessels should be as
conclusive as possible to provide CINCCENT with a clear
understanding of the threat.

A NIST should be deployed to the theater's JIC to facilitate
further crisis-action support from the national level. Depending
on the planned duration of the operation, NISTs may also need to
be sent to the component commands. The NISTs, employing the
JDISS, will process RFIs from the combatant commanders to the
national agencies in near-real time. Additional dissemination
can be facilitated by the NMJIC, which should be linked to the
theater JIC via the JWICS.

National-level support would continue during the execution
phase of the JOPES process, which would likely consist of a raid
by carrier-based strike aircraft against Iranian surface
combatants, shore-based SILKWORM sites, and other threats near
the Strait of Hormuz. The NISTs would continue to provide
combatants with the capability to issue tailored RFIs needed to
plan and execute follow-on strikes. Theater JIC analysts could
coordinate updated orders of battle, targeting information, and
other pertinent data with the national agency representatives
present at the NMJIC. Also, the theater could continually pull
from the NMJIC any intelligence products that the CINC's J2 deems
necessary. BDA would be accomplished by a BDA cell residing in

the theater JIC, with augmentee support provided by the national agencies as required.

National-level support carried out by the process described above will maximize the capabilities of theater and national intelligence assets to support the operational commander. This process will also avoid the mistakes experienced during past operations. The end result will be national and theater intelligence assets working as a team, rather than in isolation.

APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

BDA	Battle Damage Assessment
CENTCOM	Central Command
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CINCCENT	Commander-in-chief, Central Command
CIO	Central Imagery Office
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DMA	Defense Mapping Agency
HUMINT	Human intelligence
I&W	Indications and warning intelligence
IMINT	Imagery intelligence
INR	Bureau of Intelligence and Research (Department of State)
JIC	Joint Intelligence Center
JDISS	Joint Deployable Intelligence Support System
JWICS	Joint Worldwide Intelligence Communications System
NIST	National Intelligence Support Team
NMJIC	National Military Joint Intelligence Center
NRO	National Reconnaissance Office
NSA	National Security Agency
RFI	Request for Information
SIGINT	Signals intelligence

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