Combatant Command Interagency Directorate Symposium

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With the proliferation of non-state actors with global reach and their willingness to use weapons of ever-increasing lethality, solutions to the problems of the 21st century became less and less likely to reside within the capabilities of a single agency or department – even where that department possesses superb military forces, unparalleled information-collection assets, and dedicated intelligence analysts. Yet, in the fall of 2001, the United States in general and the Department of Defense (DOD) in particular suffered from an almost systemic and often self-imposed lack of coordination and information sharing among governmental agencies.[1]

As a result of the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York City's World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the Secretary of Defense authorized the creation of interagency coordination cells within the Combatant Commands.[2] Known as the Joint Interagency Working Group-Counterterrorism (JIACG-CT) it was visualized as being the vehicle by which the Combatant Commander (CCDR) would integrate the interagency into the Theater planning process. As with the evolution of living organisms, after nine years each JIACG's development was directly impacted by its environment. Among the Combatant Commands not even the name remains the same.

The Army War College took advantage of the opportunity to see the many faces of interagency coordination from August 31 – September 1, 2010 when the Center for Strategic Leadership, at the request of the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) EC-J9, hosted the *Combatant Command Interagency Directorate Symposium (IDS)*. Two years in the offing, the Combatant Command IDS brought together for the first time the CCDR's Senior Executive Service (SES)/Senior Foreign Service (SFS)-level civilian interagency coordinators in one room for a free flowing exchange of ideas and lessons learned. The Directors from the six Geographical Combatant Commands (GCCs), U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), U.S Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) and the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) were at the table. In addition, representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), the Joint Staff, and the Department of Homeland Security were in attendance.

During the two-day session the participants discussed their organizations, missions, and on-going projects. They also looked at connectivity between the Combatant Command interagency coordination organizations and the DOD, and, the possible development of a role-defining continuity document. A connecting thread throughout the two day symposium was the criticality of advancing the "Whole of Government" approach in Theater planning and operations. During the symposium the Interagency Directors focused on three principal topic areas: "Who Are We?" (Organization); "What Do We Do?" (Mission); and "What is the Next Step?" (The Road Ahead).

ORGANIZATION

Organizationally, interagency coordination responsibility within the GCCs takes one of two forms. The responsibility either resides in a J-Code principal staff agency, or as a separate or embedded interagency coordination group. USEUCOM, U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), and U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), operate as the J-Code, J9. U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), and U.S. Northern Command

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1. Colonel Matthew Bogdanos, Transforming Joint Interagency Coordination: The Missing Link Between National Strategy & Operational Success, Case Studies in National Security Transformation, Number 9, August 2007
2. Ibid

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(USNORTHCOM) are organized as non-J-Code agencies. In the Functional Combatant Commands, U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) addresses interagency coordination through the Joint Irregular Warfare Center; U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) employs an Interagency Task Force; and U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) has a JIACG.

J-CODE ORGANIZATIONS[3]

In the four J-Code GCCs, the J9 is the end result of the evolutionary process. USEUCOM's experience is reflective of this progression. Organized in 2001 as a JIACG-CT, in 2004 its charter expanded beyond the JIACG-CT arena to encompass the interagency process as a whole. In 2007 the JIACG was reorganized as the Commander's Interagency Engagement Group (CIEG). Following the CCDR's restatement of the USEUCOM Mission and Vision in 2009, the CIEG became the EC-J9, Interagency Partnering Directorate. As the EC-J9, it is a separate primary staff directorate with the requisite prestige that supports an increased coincidence of purpose and enables the potential for interagency partnership growth. USEUCOM has a Civilian Deputy to the Commander and Foreign Policy Advisor, a uniqueness shared with USAFRICOM. The Director, EC-J9 reports to the civilian Deputy. His main focus and challenge is the integration of the interagency process into strategy development and planning. USEUCOM does not use its EC-J9 as a clearing house for the interagency, but as a built-in capability to introduce interagency coordination, and to advise in public-private outreach.

During the December 2009 USPACOM reorganization, the PC-J9 and five strategic focus groups were created with the goal of having an interagency perspective in all their activities. With a mission to facilitate introductions, information sharing, and collaboration, the PC-J9 focuses on determining who the actors are within the theater, and incorporating the "Whole of Government +" into the planning and theater campaign plan activities. This involves the parallel challenge of educating the USPACOM staff on interagency processes and capabilities, and what comprises "outreach" as defined by the CCDR. USPACOM has a Washington-based element, the PC-J94, to maintain an awareness of the DOD/Beltway perspective.

In the USSOUTHCOM, the SC-J9, Partnering Directorate, reports to the CCDR. Its goal is to determine how to adapt and apply "Smart Power," using the "whole of government" and "whole of society" approaches to address the myriad non-traditional challenges faced in their area of responsibility (AOR). Of these challenges, the disaster response mission is the most critical, especially with competing disasters. The crisis in Haiti forced a relook in SC-J9 organizational structure; this complex disaster required an "all hands on deck" approach and the extant organization didn't quite fit. Today, the SC-J9 works closely with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with notable success. Employing mutual support and embedding them into planning and exercise processes (e.g., construction, humanitarian), the SC-J9 is building on success from the Haiti crisis. There is no attempt to replace U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) functions and support, but rather to codify relationships and capabilities. The investment of time to cultivate these relationships, and those with the business community, provides high payback. The SC-J9 is also working on non-traditional security issues with interagency representation, such as sustainable energy, environment and pandemic risk. The representatives for those efforts are less embedded, and more military staffs are included. In addition, the SC-J9 is coordinating discussions with nations' security forces (normally not military) regarding incident management, with the realization that there is a United Nations (UN) aspect, and thus meeting with UN representatives as well.

The movement and shaping of policy via outreach efforts is a USAFRICOM objective. Its primary agency to guide this effort is the AC-J9, Outreach Directorate, whose director reports to the CCDR via the Chief of Staff. This directorate conducts strategic communication and develops partnerships. Integrated into the theater planning process, the staff is involved in policies and programs from the beginning. They interact with 40 interagency employees representing 12 agencies; all but one are imbedded in the command, providing an environment to grow interagency capability. To further strengthen this potential, the command is planning to "house" organizational liaisons, providing facilities, administration, logistics and information technology support. The goal is to enable coordination and synchronization of USAFRICOM and partner nation collaboration. This includes working with the African Studies Association, all Service academies and some U.S. universities to forge academic partnerships and outsource research to industry and academia. The Outreach Directorate initiates discussions with the Department of State, U.S. and European academic institutions,

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3.   J-Code refers to the Combatant Command's principal staff sections that deal with specific areas. (e.g. J-1 (Personnel), J-2 (Intelligence), J3 (Operations), J4 (Logistics), etc.). These Staff Directors normally report to the Chief of Staff and the Commander directly.

and some military groups on African security issues. The NGO community is slowly beginning to develop projects with USAFRICOM. When the command established itself two years ago, interagency-wise, outreach was its only mission. Since that time the OSD has worked diligently within the interagency community to identify increased collaborative opportunities within USAFRICOM's AOR. Following the conclusion of the OSD assessment, the command initiated a gap analysis to ascertain skill shortfalls that will allow it to develop a strategy for acquiring identified needs. Since few employees speak the native languages of Africa, or have served in that theater, increasing the language and experience levels of its military liaison officers is a priority.

NON-J-CODE ORGANIZATIONS

USNORTHCOM is different; its "overseas" partners are not overseas, but U.S. neighbors Mexico and Canada. This results in objectives, authorities, funding, processes, and stakeholders distinct from other Combatant Commands. Domestically, it must operate in the "gray zone" between Homeland Defense and Homeland Security. To coordinate and integrate its "whole of government" efforts it has an Interagency Coordination Directorate (ICD) that resides at the same staff level as the J-Code directorates and reports to the CCDR. While facilitating the anticipation, integration and synchronization of interagency activities, it forges relationships with new entities and strengthens existing relationships to ensure mutual understanding and unity of effort. A principal tool in working with the 31 different agencies within USNORTHCOM is the embedded JIACG. An integral part of the ICD, the JIACG coordinates and collaborates with numerous working groups. Before events it employs a civil-military planning synchronization working group to integrate activities. During the execution phase, it establishes an Interagency Coordination Center (ICC) in the NORAD USNORTHCOM Command Center (N2C2) to provide the interagency perspective to the command, and the military perspective to the various agencies. On a regular basis the ICD oversees a number of initiatives, ranging from educational exchange forums to partnering with USPACOM, the Department of Energy and other federal agencies on an electric grid initiative. As part of its Homeland Defense focus, it conducts a gap analysis on state emergency plans to determine the level of federal support needed for contingencies.

USCENTCOM's Interagency Action Group (IAG) is more operationally focused than its counterparts in the other Combatant Commands. An active player in USCENTCOM's combating terrorism, counternarcotics, and development support initiatives; the IAG regularly falls back on its relationships with the resident interagency representatives to ensure mission accomplishment. Due to physical proximity, the IAG leverages the USSOCOM's network web to reach out further, particularly when dealing with transnational issues. It has had a lot of success in training, mentoring and relationship building by having agency representatives tutor military team members; there has been mixed success with coalition forces. The IAG hires and makes team selection based on required skill sets, experience and competencies. One of the more significant challenges is synchronization and deconfliction of agencies and their activities. For this reason, it emphasizes the importance of involving interagency partners in planning, shaping and operational activities early, iteratively and continually.

The Interagency Task Force (IATF) at USSOCOM uses Special Operations Support Teams (SOST) to coordinate its interagency missions. Team leaders are handpicked as the command representative to the interagency effort. The SOST network was established as part of USSOCOM's counter-terrorism mission and it uses it to support the GCCs. Global synchronization is a USSOCOM initiative to try to align the interagency; its use in Haiti provides a case study. In the absence of a formal framework, the Office of the Response Coordinator (ORC) established for Haiti/Port au Prince Relief reported, coordinated and provided troubleshooting for issues such as gender-based violence in camps, rubble removal, and other concerns that could not be stove-piped but cut across agencies. SOST and Senior Development Advisors (SDA) enhanced the ORC by improving its common operating picture and decision making capability. This facilitated joint task force drawdown, the military to civilian transition, and enabled flow of aid during transition. These efforts, however, required a significant amount of improvisation for success.

As its contribution to interagency integration, USJFCOM provides policy, and rules-guidance development. Where this function will be performed in the future was addressed by the Director, Joint Irregular Warfare Center, USJFCOM who provided an update on the announced disestablishment of the command. In conjunction with fulfilling any required planning functions associated with the deactivation, USJFCOM will continue its mission until properly relieved. A major component of this mission is the identification of a comprehensive approach for the achievement of "smart power." The interagency is embedded into various functions within the command via the joint force integrator

(J6/J8), joint concept development, experimentation (J9) and the joint force trainer (J7). The Joint Interagency Working Group (JIWG) is focused on coordination efforts and building relationships before they are needed. To assist with this effort, they developed the *Interagency Teaming to Counter Irregular Threats Handbook*. A significant challenge has been the movement towards "whole of government" solutions, when the principal players view the changing global security environment through different lenses. Reaching agreement as to the level that integrated planning should take place complicates the issue of how to achieve partnerships with the key civilian agencies. The reality is that although DOD defers to the State Department Country Team, there are instances where DOD will be the only government player. This requires DOD to work with greater flexibility and agility to manage the interagency process. As an ongoing initiative, USJFCOM is leveraging USAFRICOM and USEUCOM efforts (pilot programs) in its Comprehensive Approach to Building Partnerships (CABP). It hopes to share end results with all Combatant Commands.

MISSION

The operative words in the Combatant Command interagency coordination mission statements are "coordinate," "facilitate," "enable," "develop" and "synchronize" interagency support. Also prominent among the mission statements is the requirement to build collaborative partnerships with other government agencies and with the private sector. How to accomplish these tasks with the available manning, and how to address the interagency challenges over the horizon generated extensive dialogue.

In USAFRICOM, its priority is to identify processes that bring value-added to its planning, and to its initiatives to integrate its government partners and other communities of interest. Employing existing tools and references to frame difficult problems, such as the Army's FM 5-0's chapter on the Design methodology, and bringing specific skill sets/subject matter experts (SMEs) to bear in particular stages are proving to be viable courses of action. This approach seems to be working well in USAFRICOM's counter narco-terrorism effort, as FBI, DTRA, ICE and Treasury work together in the Law Enforcement Agencies cell. Identifying and mining the various databases available to the Combatant Commands and other federal agencies supports this effort as well. However, a lesson learned when using multiple databases is that global systems are problematic due to security clearances or an inability to communicate across agencies. Another difficulty is that, in practice, military staffs struggle because theater campaign plans (TCP) cannot be built over a short series of three-day conferences; it takes a long time. Those who need to be a part of the process are not always available, and liaisons are not interchangeable. In response to this challenge, USAFRICOM established the Commander's Collaborative Forum. This solution seems to be working and is creating communities of interest. Though informal, ad hoc, and still evolving, there is potential for making the effort work. One of the challenges is the "ownership" of agency liaisons and representatives. Essentially, if DOD funds the position, then at least 51 percent of duties must be in direct support of the DOD mission; realistically, it doesn't always work out that way.

Actively engaging all partners from the beginning to the end of the planning process is necessary, but difficult. In USSOUTHCOM it is easier to partner with other federal agencies, since most of them have offices in Miami, than with the private sector and NGOs. In response to the challenge of aligning resources at the right time to provide support, USSOUTHCOM actively pursues Public Private Cooperation (PCC) opportunities. Obstacles to success include what legal authorities the military can use to leverage resources, as well as how much information can be shared with partners. Liaison officers are critical to operational synchronization, and most agencies, realizing it takes a concerted, coordinated "whole of government" approach, fund their own as they want to participate in the process. Interagency and partnering relationships take time to develop and maintain. This requires a plan with metrics that allow for the quantification of results from private interactions. USOUTHCOM is developing a handbook on their activities and the intent is to send it to the U.S. Embassies within their AOR.

Education and the environment are priority outreach goals in USPACOM. Using education as a carrot, the command is facilitating the development of a Masters of Environmental Science program at the University of Hawaii, underwritten by private investors and targeting foreign students. With DOD facilitating, the university and program partners handle all planning and execution. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in Hawaii will serve as the host organization; FEMA cannot fund the program, but it can be a sponsor. The concept is that once students return to their countries, they can work with their own governments to find local or regional solutions to environmental issues. USPACOM considers that over time a program such as this can have a very positive impact throughout Asia, as it addresses a potential solution for two highly visible needs. This proposal raised a question as to the efficacy of military involvement

since this appears to be more of a USAID and State Department program with no obvious defense connection. It highlighted the issue that planners and those involved in interagency actions must be cognizant of language used to discuss and manage programs, as there are can be legal ramifications.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Predicting the future is always an "iffy" proposition. It becomes even more tenuous when the subject is interagency integration. Complicating the inherent lack of trust and control within interagency collaboration efforts are the challenges of institutional diversity. Some examples include, the DOD's recognition of the security needs much earlier than other government agencies; the absence of policy that can help manage resource (time, money) constraints; an understanding of differences in planning, particularly with different agency cultures (sometimes even within an agency); and getting the right agencies on board, e.g. Department of Agriculture doesn't provide foreign agriculture development (USAID does). Given that there are no solutions to these challenges over the horizon, the combatant commands must ask: "What are my limits for interagency engagement?" To assist in framing a response to this question the OSD representative addressed some outstanding issues.

TCPs vs Numbered Plans: GCCs each prepare their theater campaign plans (TCP) differently and it is often difficult to identify where civilian agencies plug in. This lack of consistency makes it hard for civilian partners to know how to approach and work with the individual combatant commands. Even so, some good mechanisms for promoting collaborative planning exist. Since numbered plans do not allow for interagency participation until approved and released by the CCDR and the Secretary of Defense, the TCPs provide a better vehicle for collaboration. Both USSOUTHCOM and USAFRICOM shape their TCPs with an integrated planning process that includes agency and civilian partners from start to finish.

TCP Ownership: Successful integration of all key government and civilian players into a combatant command TCP can be a two-edged sword. Does such a success represent the militarization of foreign policy, and if so, doesn't this dictate that the TCP should be State Department-owned? Given the facts that the TCP is developed in support of the Country Team Mission Plan and that they are reviewed at departmental level, the OSD representatives were very clear in reinforcing the fact that the TCP belongs to the CCDR.

OSD Single Entry Point: Combatant command interagency coordinators have no single point of contact for OSD, by design. Each combatant command has figured out how to plug in. Those plugs seem to work, so keep those interactions open. OSD-Policy will provide guidance, but the diversity in reaching OSD is a good thing. The key is to keep communications open and reach out early whenever anything new or urgent takes place.

Homeland Defense Coordination: Currently, OSD looks to the 3Ds (State, Defense, and USAID) as the core agencies to focus on practical solutions for interagency planning. This results in overwhelming the capabilities of smaller agencies. If the "whole of government" effort is to work, these core agencies need to figure out how the smaller agencies plug in. When successful, this will build trust at the headquarters level; support better reach back when combatant commands need it; and provide improved guidance down the road.

CONUS-Based Planning: USNORTHCOM pointed out that OSD's OCONUS-based approach isn't overly helpful for CONUS-based planning and execution. OSD agreed, but argued that Homeland Defense issues go up very different channels, and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) hasn't fed into this yet.

ANNEX V: Should interagency instructions should remain in Annex V of the numbered order, or be integrated throughout the order? Current practices are trending away from the Annex V solution.

Capabilities Portfolio Management: In response to whether or not Capabilities Portfolio Management was still active, participants were told it was on the back burner.

THE WHITE PAPER

This issue centers on whether or not there is a requirement to update the 2009 "OSD-COCOM Interagency White Paper" which was never fully staffed at OSD. Facilitated by USNORTHCOM, the discussion could be subtitled "Mapping the Future…or Not." In the introductory remarks, it was pointed out that leadership was looking for a refreshed white paper. If appropriate, the product would remove obstacles to interagency operations. The question posed

to the group: Do we want to refresh the White Paper? If so, USNORTHCOM would lead the collaborative effort to build a combatant command consensus.

There were a number of comments.

- This paper would be very helpful for those who replace us in a year or so, or POLADs; an advocacy document for what we do.

- Need recognition from OSD that interagency efforts and coordination is vital and build in efficiencies for the U.S. government, particularly when resources become scarce.

- The White Paper would need to communicate the right agency participation in exercises and other events that test capabilities/abilities.

- Need to have recognition from the State Department for participation and visibility and leadership across the board for accountability.

- Perhaps this could be a UCP-type document, national imperative for action, if department leads won't reach across agencies for support.

- This has to be a top-down effort, as actions won't be done when resources fall short; interagency efforts will become a back burner issue.

- How to solve the "one voice" for the Combatant Command JIACG community, working with the Pentagon. Identify common sections/needs to address in the White Paper, perhaps:
  - Human capital
  - Exercise and strategic plans development
  - Resources
  - Communications

Because of his institutional history in the development of the interagency coordination agencies, Professor Harry Tomlin, Department of Military Strategy, Planning and Operations (DMSPO), USAWC, was asked to develop a skeleton for a revised White Paper. This document, "Speaking with One Voice," has been distributed to the principals. A tentative date of 1 November 2010 was set for the drafting team to convene at the USNORTHCOM headquarters.

SUMMARY

At the close of the Symposium the following conclusions could be drawn:

- The combatant commands have turned the corner on interagency involvement
- Military leaders/staffs are starting to "get it"
- Future strategy and planning integration appears promising

However, challenges to Interagency Integration remain:

- Constant, year-round planning highlights the fact that interagency representatives are High Demand/Low Density (HD/LD) assets
- Deliberate and contingency planning are a unique skill-set amongst experienced military personnel, and Interagency representatives are unfamiliar with the process
- Lingering staff unfamiliarity on how non-DOD departments/agencies can contribute

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