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GLOBAL INTEGRATED ISR: A BETTER ORGANIZATIONAL CONSTRUCT FOR AIR FORCE LD/HD ISR

by

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BIOGRAPHY

Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Nobriga entered the Air Force in 1998 after graduating from the United States Air Force Academy. He is a command pilot with more than 3,900 hours—including more than 400 combat hours—in the U-2, F-15C, T-38, and T-37. Colonel Nobriga has served in a number of positions throughout his career to include Commander of the 1st Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron at Royal Air Force Akrotiri, Cyprus. He is currently a student at the Air War College, Maxwell AFB, Alabama.

ABSTRACT

The unpredictable and complex global strategic environment the United States currently faces has stretched U.S. military forces thin around the world. The 2015 National Military Strategy emphasizes the importance of adapting to the changes in the global strategic environment, by suggesting the United States cannot afford to focus on only one area at the exclusion of others or attempt to be everywhere all at once. The United States must employ its limited resources with agility and flexibility in order to counter trans-regional threats seamlessly. This is especially true for the Air Force's fleet of U-2, RQ-4, RC-135, and E-8 intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft it refers to as Low Density/High Demand (LD/HD). Current worldwide demand for LD/HD ISR outstrips available supply and spreads assets too thinly across Combatant Commander (CCDR) Areas of Responsibility. With worldwide threats regularly crossing Combatant Command boundaries, the process for managing operational control (OPCON) for Air Force, LD/HD ISR needs modification. The Air Force needs an OPCON arrangement giving it the authorities to actively manage assets and arbitrate disagreements between CCDRs for ISR collection priorities worldwide.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Air Combat Command
AFGSC	Air Force Global Strike Command
AFSPC	Air Force Space Command
AMC	Air Mobility Command
AOC	air operations center
CCA	Chairman's Controlled Activity
CCDR	combatant commander
CCMD	combatant command
CENTCOM	United States Central Command
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
C-NAF	component numbered air force
COCOM	combatant command (command authority)
CSA	combat support agency
CSAR	combat search and rescue
CYBERCOM	United States Cyber Command
DCGS	distributed common ground system
DEPORD	deployment order
DOD	Department of Defense
FCC	functional combatant command
FY	fiscal year
GCC	geographic combatant command
GFM	global force management
GFMAP	Global Force Management Allocation Plan
GIISR	global integrated intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
JFCC-ISR	Joint Functional Component Command for Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
JPRA	Joint Personnel Recovery Agency
LD/HD	low density/high demand
MDOC	multi-domain operations center
NCA	National Command Authority
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act

NMS	National Military Strategy
OPCON	operational control
PED	processing, exploitation, and dissemination
PR	personnel recovery
RFF	request for forces
RPA	remotely piloted aircraft
SAC	Strategic Air Command
SOCOM	United States Special Operations Command
STRATCOM	United States Strategic Command
TACC	Tanker Airlift Control Center
TACON	tactical control
UCP	Unified Command Plan
TRANSCOM	United States Transportation Command
VEO	violent extremist organization

Introduction

> Today, with the number of complex global security issues we face growing and resources shrinking…A Joint Force with global responsibilities and finite resources must prioritize threats and balance today's risks with tomorrow's uncertainty.
>
> — General Martin E. Dempsey, Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff [1]

The unpredictable and complex global strategic environment the United States currently faces has stretched U.S. military forces thin around the world. The 2015 National Military Strategy (NMS) emphasizes the importance of adapting to the changes in the global strategic environment, by suggesting the United States cannot afford to focus on only one area at the exclusion of others or attempt to be everywhere all at once.[2] The United States must use its limited resources wisely in order to achieve its national security objectives in a manner—as stated in the Joint Chiefs *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020*—providing maximum *global agility* and *flexibility*.[3] Current trends around the globe point toward a future global strategic environment fraught with several challenges. The Joint Chiefs' *Joint Operational Environment 2035* (*JOE 2035*) identifies two distinct strategic challenges the United States faces and will continue to face in the coming years. The first is contested norms, where "increasingly powerful revisionist states and select non-state actors will use any and all elements of power to establish their own sets of rules in ways unfavorable to the United States and its interests" in an attempt to undermine the current world order.[4] The second challenge is *persistent disorder* characterized by an array of weak states that become increasingly incapable of maintaining domestic order or good governance. Numerous conflicts around the world commit U.S. Armed Forces mainly along these two strategic challenges and each requires a globally integrated strategic approach. With limited resources available, the United States, by necessity, must prioritize how and where to employ its armed forces to achieve strategic goals and must do so with a global perspective. This is not implying the U.S. Armed Forces attempt to

accomplish "more with less." With the emergence of globe spanning violent extremist organizations (VEOs) and a resurgent and confrontational Russia and China looking to rewrite the post-World War II world order, the threats are no longer contained within a single Combatant Commander's (CCDR's) geographic area of responsibility (AOR). The span of these threats requires a more agile force with a global perspective not locked into accomplishing individual objectives exclusively within geographic AORs.[5]

Current worldwide contingencies across multiple CCDR AORs demonstrate inefficiencies in how the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) and military service secretaries and chiefs flow assets to CCDRs. With operational control (OPCON) of Air Force assets locked into a deployment order (DEPORD) determined 24 months in advance, the eventual execution of operations can be slow to respond to contingencies taking away airpower's inherent flexibility and agility. This is especially true for Air Force airborne ISR systems. The Air Force's 30-year strategy document, *America's Air Force: A Call to the Future*, calls for the Air Force to aggressively pursue strategic agility in order to be "agile and responsive enough to support global and theater requirements in a seamless manner."[6] This necessity is particularly acute along the seams of Combatant Command (CCMD) boundaries and in areas of ongoing contingency operations.[7] With worldwide threats now regularly crossing CCMD boundaries, the process for managing OPCON for Air Force, low-density/high demand (LD/HD) ISR assets—specifically U-2, RQ-4, RC-135 and E-8—needs modification. The Air Force needs an OPCON arrangement giving it the authorities to actively manage assets and arbitrate disagreements for ISR collection priorities worldwide.

This paper will address the Air Force's need to revise basic command structures for the presentation of forces to CCMDs and to create a better structure for the control and execution of

LD/HD ISR assets on behalf of the Joint Force.[8] With global force management (GFM) policies and procedures explained upfront for context, this paper steps through the current GFM Allocation Plan (GFMAP) process and the Global ISR DEPORD for LD/HD ISR. The paper will then explore alternative OPCON and Air Force organizational arrangements that would meet the intent of the Air Force's 30-year Strategy Document of seamless ISR employment, across and within CCMD AORs, in the context of the strategic environment envisioned in the *JOE 2035*. Finally, this paper recommends a better organizational construct to allocate and eventually employ LD/HD ISR under a command structure similar to the 618 Air Operations Center's (AOC) Tanker Airlift Control Center (TACC). After outlining the recommended organizational construct, this paper offers a short vignette—using the CCMD seam in the Eastern Mediterranean—to demonstrate its utility.

GFMAP, LD/HD ISR, and Air Force GIISR

Global Force Management is a process and compilation for the services to assign, allocate, and apportion U.S. Armed Forces to CCDRs. *United States Code, Title 10, § 161, 162, and 167* outline legal requirements put on the President and the SecDef by the Congress.[9] After receiving direction from the President—through the Unified Command Memorandum—the secretaries of the military departments present forces to CCMDs to perform real-world operations. This process requires SecDef approval and transfers OPCON, or the authority to organize and employ forces to accomplish the mission, to either a functional or geographic CCDR. This is the key construct of the Unified Command Plan (UCP), put in place by the *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986*, cutting the service chiefs and military secretaries out of the operational chain of command.[10] The purpose was to establish unity of effort under one joint force commander, reporting directly to the National Command Authority (NCA), to accomplish the President's national security objectives. A key authority outlined in Title 10, mandates only SecDef—through authority derived from the President—may transfer OPCON between CCDRs. The Secretary must also establish the command relationship the gaining commander will inherit and the losing commander will surrender, i.e. the supported versus supporting CCDR. If he chooses to, SecDef may delegate this authority to a lower level.[11]

Joint Publication 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning,* and CJCSI 3130.06, *Global Force Management Allocation Policies and Procedures,* outlines how the CCMD staffs and Joint Staff execute the GFM process. These processes include the CCMD staffs submitting Request for Forces (RFFs) to the Joint Staff by way of the Functional Component known as Joint Functional Component Command for ISR (JFCC-ISR).[12] This organization coordinates with the CCMD

staffs to build an allocation plan for the following fiscal year (FY) called the Global ISR GFMAP. Once approved by SecDef, it serves as the Global DEPORD for ISR at the beginning of the applicable FY. This process does not delegate the authority for JFCC-ISR to make changes to the OPCON relationships between CCMDs once the GFMAP is published. Per Title 10, the SecDef must approve any OPCON changes to the current DEPORD on a case-by-case basis.[13] Furthermore, since JFCC-ISR resides in the J2 Directorate of the Joint Staff, it does not adjudicate disagreements for ISR assets shared between the CCMDs. This is firmly established in Title 10 as the Joint Chiefs of Staff are the communication and advisory link between the CCMDs and the NCA, and are prohibited from making operational decisions. Effectively then, JFCC-ISR can only coordinate the negotiations for any OPCON changes between CCMDs before going to the SecDef for approval.[14]

This process is effective when CCMD AORs remain relatively static and intelligence collection priorities stay confined within the boundaries of a Geographic Combatant Command (GCC). As an example, prior to the rise of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Iraq and Syria, U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) operations required very little adjustment to LD/HD ISR allocation based on relatively steady operations tempo stretching back several years. With the emergence of ISIS and the arrival of Russian Forces in Syria and a subsequent increase in ISR collection requirements, SecDef approved OPCON changes for LD/HD ISR to better support CENTCOM.[15] The amount of effort, though, required to staff OPCON change requests to SecDef limits efficiency which in turn limits the global agility and flexibility of LD/HD ISR. The problem is not inherent to the GFMAP process but to the lack of flexibility in being able to quickly transfer OPCON and Tactical Control (TACON) between the GCCs. To put it another way, allocating, apportioning, and assigning limited LD/HD ISR to GCCs stovepipes those

resources to a regionally focused CCDR's objectives that do not take into account an ever-changing, unpredictable worldwide strategic picture. The *Air Force Future Operating Concept: A View of the Air Force in 2035* (*AFFOC*) describes this worldwide perspective in its description of the Air Force core mission of global integrated ISR (GIISR) operations.

The concept of GIISR is "the fundamental and constantly-increasing role in how the joint force maintains situational awareness, conducts and assesses operations, and employs force against adversaries."[16] It continues describing Air Force GIISR as the enabling factor in allowing leaders to make the most informed decisions possible at a superior *decision speed*.[17] Air Force doctrine further advocates the need for GIISR to transcend a single GCC mindset in its employment by recognizing the essential role it plays in the global ISR enterprise for not just theater, but also national objectives.[18] The global reach of LD/HD ISR makes it essential to employ it with a worldwide perspective transcendent of any individual CCDR's AOR. In order to achieve the vision presented in the *AFFOC*, the Air Force must relook how it presents LD/HD ISR resources to CCMDs. A better way to approach this problem set is to task resources on a "needs-based" versus the current process of "capabilities-based" allocation.

Under the current GFMAP structure, CCDRs submit RFFs with the agreement being they will have that specific asset and the sensors they provide for the entire FY or a designated period of time.[19] As mentioned earlier, this works well when the world stays relatively static. In the dynamic strategic environment outlined in the *JOE 2035*, with threats operating between, in, and across GCC boundaries, the GFMAP process cannot possibly respond quickly enough to meet national security objectives. If resources were assigned and tasked based on CCDR and national intelligence priorities, independent of a specific platform or sensor, a "needs-based" structure would provide maximum flexibility and agility in the allocation process. This paradigm shift

would require an organization with a global perspective, and the authorities from the NCA to manage strategic ISR assets between the CCMDs. The process required to shift prioritization of intelligence collection needs globally, requires a sensor and platform agnostic approach meaning CCDRs would need to accept their GCC collection priorities may sometimes be trumped by higher priorities in another AOR, or collected by another platform than they have traditionally used. A major step toward bringing this allocation model into reality would be an organizational restructure of Air Force LD/HD ISR.

A smarter course of action would be to allocate LD/HD ISR to a functionally aligned command with the authorities delegated to it by SecDef to establish supporting relationships with each of the geographic CCMDs. Under this construct, rapidly changing world events might be more easily adjusted for with LD/HD ISR under a functional command. Additionally, LD/HD ISR could be massed within a CCMD, when required, without having to convince another CCDR to agree to relinquish OPCON. Functionally aligned commands with global mission responsibilities—STRATCOM, TRANSCOM, and SOCOM—give the NCA flexible options to conduct military operations around the world without the limits imposed by geographic AOR boundaries, providing strategic agility and flexibility.

Three Options for Air Force Reorganization of LD/HD ISR

This paper proposes three options for allocating Air Force LD/HD ISR under a centralized management structure, with two of the options requiring an extensive Air Force and/or Joint Force reorganization possible under current law—see *United States Code, Title 10, § 161, Unified Commands*.[20] In addition, organizations exist within the Department of Defense (DOD) serving as models for a future centralized command structure for LD/HD ISR. The three options proposed are creating a Chairman's Controlled Activity (CCA) for ISR with JFCC-ISR given authority to make OPCON/TACON changes across CCMDs; a Specified Combatant Command of Air Force ISR organized under Air Force hierarchy; or a Service component command with all Air Force LD/HD ISR assets organized and managed under a Functional Combatant Command (FCC).

With the Joint Force literature like the *JOE 2035* advocating for a worldwide structure of command and control of forces in an effort to better respond to trans-regional threats, all three options would be a step toward this centralized approach.[21] Ultimately, a FCC for ISR within the DOD, to include the Combat Support Agencies (CSA) of the Intelligence Community, might be the best answer to respond to the trans-regional threats the United States faces, but political support within DOD and the Congress for major organizational changes takes time. The tide may be turning, though, and the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) illustrates this point. The NDAA identifies the complex security challenges the United States faces and their propensity to cut across CCMD boundaries while recognizing the necessity to improve the DOD's agility, adaptability, and strategic integration. The draft NDAA placed the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) in the operational chain of command between the CCDRs and the SecDef and gave the CJCS a mandate to more directly influence functions cutting across

GCC boundaries; however, the final bill signed into law stopped short of making this significant change.[22] Future legislation, might change the DOD's structure to better account for trans-regional problem sets making any of the three options proposed in this paper better for organizing and managing LD/HD ISR.

Option 1: Chairman's Controlled Activity

The first option for reorganization is a Chairman's Controlled Activity (CCA) for GIISR. A CCA is a joint organization, reports directly to the CJCS and is designated as the DOD's office of primary responsibility for that specific function. A current example is the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA). The JPRA coordinates personnel recovery (PR) responsibilities between all the military departments and SOCOM while ensuring PR procedures are properly implemented within the CCMDs.[23] However, the JPRA does not maintain OPCON on any of the Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) assets deployed to GCCs. The CCMDs utilize those assets in support of their operations and coordinate with JPRA to ensure proper planning and execution of operations.

If DOD were to create a CCA for GIISR, the most likely organization to handle such an endeavor is JFCC-ISR—see FIGURE 1. Under SecDef's direction, JFCC-ISR could arbitrate disagreements between CCMDs on the movement of strategic ISR across CCMD boundaries but currently is not staffed to actively manage worldwide collection requirements across all the GCCs.[24] Interviews with a J2 Staff officer also identified a lack of connectivity with strategic direction and associated collection requirements within the CCMDs at a level of fidelity required to centrally manage employment of assets. Additionally, as the current functional management lead for strategic ISR, JFCC-ISR would be in the right position to manage LD/HD ISR employment, but it would be limited in its authorities to make operational decisions within the CCMDs due to current Title 10 restrictions. By *United States Code, Title 10, § 161*, OPCON cannot flow through the CJCS or the military service secretaries.[25] Bottom line, a change in current law coupled with an increase in staff at JFCC-ISR would be required to make CCA a valid option for GIISR operations for the Air Force LD/HD ISR fleet. Based on these

limitations, this would not be the best solution for consolidating global command and control of LD/HD ISR. Other options would better meet the vision of globally integrated ISR allocation management.

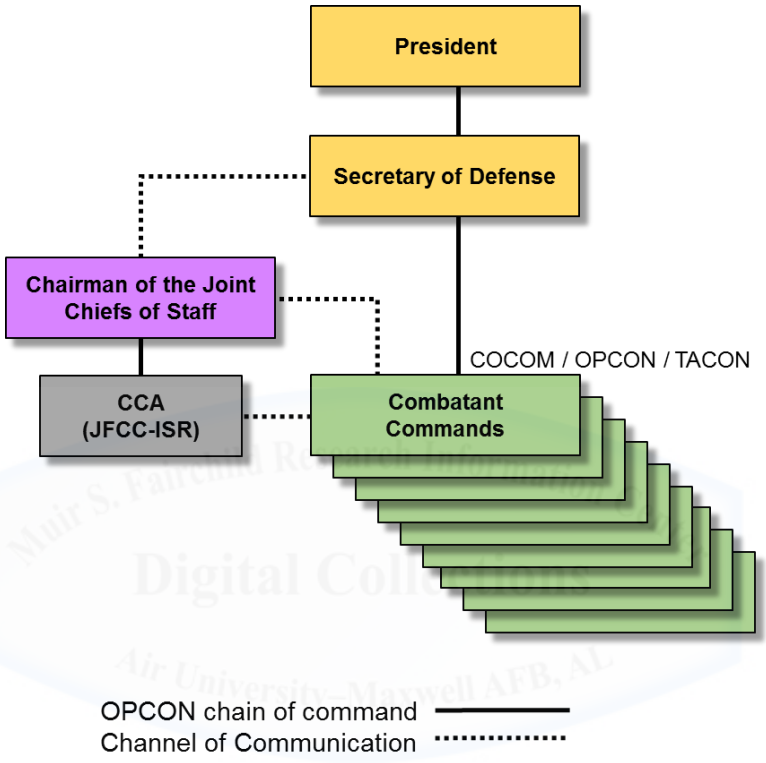

Figure 1 - Chairman's Controlled Activity

Option 2: Specified Combatant Command

A Specified CCMD is a second option under the UCP construct for centralizing OPCON outside the GCCs. A Specified CCMD is a service specific organization with COCOM and OPCON flowing directly from the SecDef—not the military service secretaries.[26] It is exactly what its name implies—a Combatant Command organized under a specific military service. Under *United States Code, Title 10, §161, Unified Command Plan*, the SecDef has the power to create a command relationship giving Combatant Command Authority (COCOM) to a specific service component—see Figure 2.[27] The DOD does not currently have a Specified CCMD but did in the past. The Air Force's Strategic Air Command (SAC) functioned as the last Specified CCMD in the DOD until it was absorbed into STRATCOM on June 1, 1992.[28] Current law does not prevent SecDef from forming a similar command arrangement today. The advantage of a Specified CCMD over a CCA is authorities. A Specified CCMD is a more viable option for centralized control of LD/HD ISR since COCOM and OPCON would rest with the Specified CCDR. Under this construct, the Specified CCMD would actively manage and control LD/HD ISR acting as the supporting CCMD to the GCCs where operations would be conducted—similar to how STRATCOM, TRANSCOM or SOCOM operate today.

This solution would push the Air Force towards greater strategic agility in how it conducts ISR operations as described in *America's Air Force: A Call to the Future*.[29] The document describes "agility" as a way to capture the attributes of flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness—all enduring qualities of an airborne weapon system. In order for this solution to be viable, the Air Force would need to dedicate significant resources to building the infrastructure required to maintain OPCON and TACON over dozens of LD/HD ISR aircraft and intelligence units executing missions all over the globe. The amount of manpower required to

make this an effective enterprise is beyond the scope of this paper, but from a conceptual standpoint would probably need to evolve from an existing Air Force organization. The most likely candidate is 25 AF, located at Lackland AFB, Texas. This organization is already responsible for the majority of the airborne LD/HD ISR assets the Air Force flies, along with the intelligence infrastructure of the Distributed Common Ground System (DCGS) which processes, exploits, and disseminates the collected intelligence.

A Specified CCMD for Air Force ISR is not a new concept. This idea gained some momentum recently with Air Force leadership as an idea to consolidate all Air Force ISR, to include Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), LD/HD ISR, and DCGS under a single command called "Vigilance Command."[30] Vigilance Command would have pulled these assets mostly out of Air Combat Command (ACC). The resulting Vigilance Command would have the authorities and responsibilities under Title 10 to act as the global supporting CCMD for ISR. This organizational structure has the advantage of not requiring changes to OPCON or TACON in order to move assets from one GCC to another. This is particularly important for operations along the GCC seams in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Northern Pacific. Additionally, efforts to confront trans-regional threats like Russia or VEOs, like ISIS would be managed by an organization with a global focus and perspective.

This organizational construct does not come without its disadvantages. Convincing DOD leadership that a Specified CCMD is the right answer to globally integrate ISR operations might appear too parochial within the DOD and Joint Staff establishment.[31] If the goal is to integrate all ISR across the Joint Force then another organizational model might be a better option.

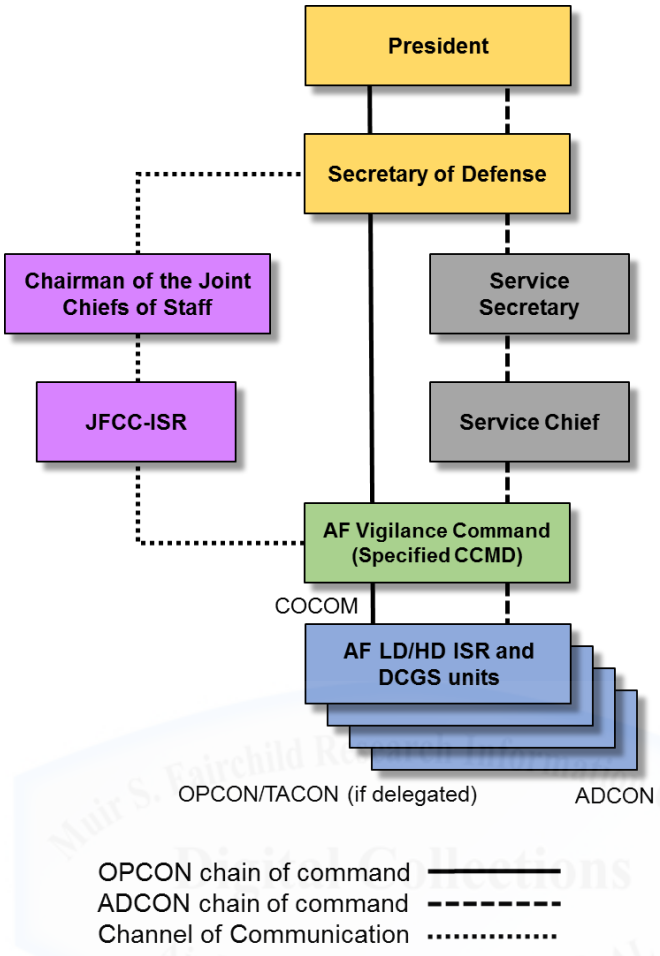

Figure 2 - Specified Combatant Command[32]

Option 3: Service Component Command to USCYBERCOM

Creating a Specified CCMD would improve flexibility and responsiveness for strictly Air Force ISR assets, but another option would allow for the same effect without the parochial perception of a Specified CCMD. A Service component commander created out of a Component Numbered Air Force (C-NAF) AOC similar to TRANSCOM's 618 AOC—also known as the Tanker Airlift Control Center (TACC)—is another option. Under the TRANSCOM construct, OPCON is delegated to Air Mobility Command (AMC) for mobility forces designated to support the GCCs. The AMC is the Air Force component command to TRANSCOM. The SecDef has established a support relationship between TRANSCOM and the GCCs allowing the 618 AOC at Scott AFB, Illinois to centrally manage and control mobility operations worldwide on behalf of TRANSCOM.[33] Using the TACC as a model, the 625th Operations Center (OC) at Lackland AFB, Texas could function as a "Strategic ISR Control Center."[34] With OPCON delegated to the Air Force component command—in this case 25th Air Force—the 625 OC could leverage a broad range of control over LD/HD ISR by centralizing collection priorities across the GCCs and act as the global supporting C-NAF by moving assets to and between CCMDs as national priorities change. In most cases concerning LD/HD ISR, the "movement" of sensors and aircraft would be notional and not require changing overseas basing locations. Currently, overseas and CONUS based LD/HD ISR service multiple CCMDs from a single operating location and, at times, on a single sortie; however, an emerging crisis might require changing basing locations to satisfy collection requirements.

A significant hurdle for implementing this command structure is gaining consensus within DOD for the CCMD to place the C-NAF under for OPCON. The simplest solution would be to place the 625 OC as an Air Force component to STRATCOM. This is problematic for two

reasons. First, STRATCOM has tried to give away the responsibility of managing the global ISR enterprise. This is evident in JFCC-ISR's recent move out of STRATCOM and over to the Joint Staff at the Pentagon. Second, STRATCOM already has two other Air Force components—Air Force Space Command (AFSPC) and Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC). A third Air Force component related to a function STRATCOM has recently tried to divest makes little sense. Another Service component command option might emerge in the future and potentially could align with the Air Force vision of multi-domain operations.[35]

The 2017 NDAA contains verbiage allowing for the elevation of U.S. Cyber Command (CYBERCOM) to a FCC.[36] If CYBERCOM emerges as its own standalone FCC, a natural Air Force component command would be the Cyber and ISR assets located within 24th Air Force and 25th Air Force at Lackland AFB, Texas. In order to fulfill its vision of a strategic agility to confront trans-regional threats across multiple domains, the Air Force could merge both the 624 OC and 625 OC into a single Multi-Domain Operations Center (MDOC). Since Air Force LD/HD ISR units fall under the 25th Air Force command structure and the Air Force's cyber assets within 24 Air Force, the new C-NAF would be a first of its kind MDOC and Strategic ISR Control Center—see Figure 3 – Service Component Command.

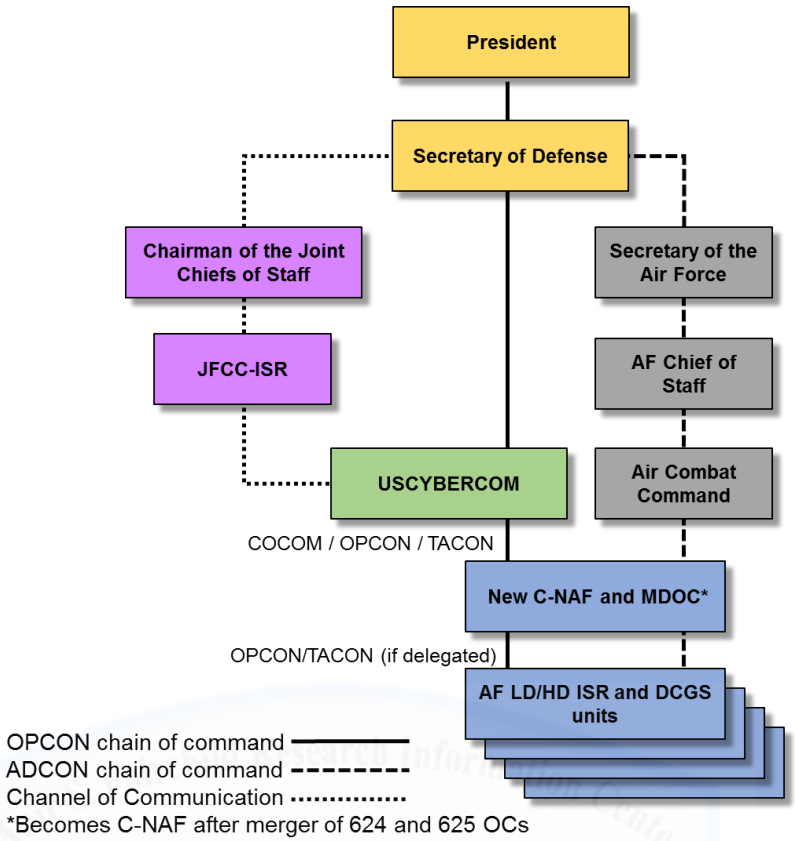

Figure 3 – Service Component Command

Service Component Command Vignette

The lack of flexibility in LD/HD ISR planning and execution is particularly problematic in the Mediterranean Sea along the geographic boundary lines of the CENTCOM, EUCOM, and AFRICOM AORs. As an example, when Russian forces invaded Ukraine in 2014 and deployed to Syria in the summer of 2015, the GFMAP process was not able to shift U-2 and RC-135 assets to higher national priority AORs. As already discussed, the GFMAP locked in resources for U-2 and RC-135 missions based on the 18 to 24-month timeline outlined in *Joint Publication 5-0*. The only means to shift assets from one CCMD to another required SecDef approval. If the President and SecDef approved the elevation of CYBERCOM to a FCC, the Air Force component command at 25th Air Force could quickly coordinate the movement of U-2 and RC-135 sorties to support higher priority collection requirements in another AOR without the need to staff changes to the OPCON relationship. It would execute this through the Strategic ISR Control Center located within the C-NAF MDOC. The 25th Air Force Commander, by doctrine, would serve as both the Commander, Air Force forces (COMAFFOR) and the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) for CYBERCOM. The Commander would also be OPCON and ADCON for the LD/HD ISR fleet with OPCON flowing back to the CYBERCOM Commander and ADCON flowing back to the Air Force Major Command—in this case Air Combat Command.[37]

As already noted, current U-2 and RC-135 operating locations allow these assets to execute missions in all three CCMDs from a single location and, if tasked, conduct missions in multiple CCMDs on the same sortie. With CYBERCOM designated the global lead for LD/HD ISR, OPCON would remain with the CYBERCOM air component at 25th Air Force even with the LD/HD ISR based overseas. Without the need to change the OPCON arrangement, the

Strategic ISR Control Center could then give TACON of LD/HD ISR to the GCC with the highest collection priorities or retain those forces for CYBERCOM's own collection requirements. This would allow for the easy flow of missions across CCMD boundaries within, or even inside, the normal book process timeline without having to approach SecDef for approval in each specific instance. The details and recommendations for accomplishing this might require a revision of the CJCSI 3250.01E, *Policy Guidance for Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance and Sensitive Reconnaissance Operations* and extensive coordination with JFCC-ISR.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current global environment requires tough choices to determine which CCMD receives LD/HD ISR support in a resource-constrained environment. Coupled with a volatile and unpredictable geo-political environment outlined in the *JOE 2035*, and the Air Force's 30-year strategy document *America's Air Force: A Call to the Future*, the need for the quick and seamless tasking of assets to emerging AORs is vital to accomplishing national security objectives. This is especially true for the Air Force's limited fleet of U-2, RQ-4, RC-135, and E-8 LD/HD ISR aircraft. Current worldwide demand for LD/HD ISR outstrips available supply and spreads assets too thinly across CCDR AORs. Recent events on the CCMD seams demonstrate the current process of GFMAP development might be antiquated, unresponsive, and inadequate, but current command relationships within and between the GCCs is the biggest hindrance to seamless LD/HD ISR execution. A better Air Force and Unified Command structure is needed to fulfill the vision of the Air Force's 30-year strategy document—*America's Air Force: A Call to the Future*—of making ISR systems agile and responsive enough to dynamically support both global and theater specific requirements. In order to accomplish this the Air Force needs to ensure OPCON of its LD/HD ISR is maintained by a centralized command structure for global operations responsible for coordinating ISR collection priorities within and between the GCCs. This will allow for a more globally focused collection plan for the nation's very valuable, but extremely limited LD/HD ISR assets.

A command structure which centralizes OPCON for LD/HD ISR within a single command is necessary. This paper proposes three options the Air Force and the Joint Force might pursue. The first is a CCA at the Joint Staff utilizing the current structure within JFCC-ISR. This construct would be limited in its authorities unless future legislation granted the CJCS

greater authority to make operational decisions. Current law prohibits the flow of OPCON through the CJCS or the military service secretaries. In addition, current officers on the Joint Staff do not feel the fidelity exists at their level to make global operational decisions for ISR collection. The second structure, a Specified CCMD, would not be limited in its authority, as current law allows for service specific CCMDs. Forming 25th Air Force into a Specified CCMD for Air Force ISR—Vigilance Command—would be the logical choice for a current Air Force organization that could fill this role. This option, although viable, might be viewed as too parochial by the DOD leadership and would exclude ISR assets within the rest of the Joint Force. The best option would be for the Air Force to merge the 624 OC and 625 OC into a MDOC and then declare it the Air Force C-NAF to CYBERCOM once this newly authorized FCC is separated from STRATCOM. This new C-NAF would then function as a Strategic ISR Control Center in a manner similar to TRANSCOM's TACC.

NOTES

1. Martin E. Dempsey, "From the Chairman: The Posture Paradigm," *Joint Force Quarterly* 76 (1st Quarter, 2015): 4.

2. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America: The United States Military's Contribution to National Security* (June 2015), 3.

3. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Capstone for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020,* 10 September 2012), 5-6.

4. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operating Environment 2035: The Joint Force in a Contested and Disordered World,* 14 July 2016, 4.

5. Dempsey, "From the Chairman," 4.

6. Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, *America's Air Force: A Call to the Future,* July 2014, 15.

7. The Eastern Mediterranean and Northern Pacific provide clear examples where LD/HD ISR platforms regularly cross CCMD boundaries. U-2 and RC-135 flights stationed within one CCMD may fly in another CCMD depending on the mission tasking.

8. For the purposes of this paper, LD/HD ISR serves as brevity for the U-2, RQ-4, RC-135, and E-8.

9. United States Code, Title 10, § 161-167, *Combatant Commands*. http://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=(title:10%20section:161%20edition:prelim) (accessed December 3, 2016).

10. United States Congress, *Public Law 99-433: Goldwater-Nicholas Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986* (October 1, 1986), https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-100/pdf/STATUTE-100-Pg992.pdf (accessed February 3, 2017).

11. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0, Joint Operation Planning,* 11 August 2011, H-1.

12. JFCC-ISR moved out of STRATCOM and over to the Joint Staff J2 Directorate in December 2016.

13. United States Code, Title 10, § 162.

14. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 5-0,* H-1; *Joint Publication 5-0* specifies SecDef as the approval authority for any change of OPCON. This authority is derived from United States Code, Title 10, § 162. This authority can be delegated.

15. Anonymous, USAFE/A2, “Sensitive Reconnaissance Operations” (lecture, Air War College, Maxwell AFB, AL, November 9, 2016).

16. Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, *Air Force Future Operating Concept: A View of the Air Force in 2035,* September 2015, 23.

17. Ibid., 23.

18. Air University LeMay Center, *Air Force Doctrine Document 2-0: Global Integrated Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance,* 29 January 2015, 2-3.

19. Depending on the asset or sensor, the GFMAP might rotate OPCON between different CCMDs several times during the FY—e.g. on a quarterly, triannual, or bimonthly basis.

20. Anonymous (J2 Directorate Staff Officer), interview by the author, 20 September 2016.

21. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operating Environment 2035,* 21.

22. Kathleen J. McInnis, "Fact Sheet: FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) DOD Reform Proposals," *Congressional Research Service,* 30 June 2016, 1, https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/R44508.pdf.

23. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *CJCSI 3270.01B: Personnel Recovery,* 23 January 2016, A-1, http://www.dtic.mil/cjcs_directives/cdata/unlimit/3270_01.pdf.

24. Anonymous (J2 Directorate Staff Officer), interview.

25. United States Code, Title 10, § 162(b)(1-2).

26. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 1-02: Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,* 15 February 2016, 222.

27. United States Code, Title 10, § 161(a)(1), (c)(2).

28. Andrew Feickert, "The Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands: Background Issues for Congress," *Congressional Research Service,* (January 3, 2013), 20, http://www.crs.gov/R42077.

29. Secretary of the Air Force, *America's Air Force,* 8.

30. Brian W. McLean (Doctrine Analyst, LeMay Center for Doctrine Development), interview by the author, 6 April 2017.

31. Ibid.

32. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 1: Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, 25 March 2013, II-10, IV-6, IV-9.

33. Air University LeMay Center, *Commander's Handbook for the JFACC: Incorporating Change 1*, 10 February 2014, 42-43.

34. Kevin Williams, email message to author, December 6, 2016.

35. Office of the Secretary of the Air Force, *Multi-Domain Command and Control (Draft)*, 21 November 2016.

36. McInnis, "Fact Sheet: FY2017 NDAA," 8; CYBERCOM is currently a Subordinate Unified Command to STRATCOM and is commanded by the Director of the National Security Agency.

37. Air University LeMay Center, *Commander's Handbook for the JFACC*, 35; OPCON is normally delegated by the CCDR to the air component commander—in this example, the 25th Air Force Commander.

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