

A New Mission for Atlantic Command

By PAUL DAVID MILLER



DOD photo

Navy SEALs descend to a submarine.

DOD photo

In a February 1993 "Report on the Roles, Missions, and Functions of the Armed Forces," General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recommended changing the Unified Command Plan (UCP) by placing certain forces in the continental United States under a single joint commander for the primary purpose of ensuring the joint training and readiness of response forces. The Secretary of Defense approved that recommendation in April and an implementation plan is now under development. The plan will merge Forces Command (FORSCOM), Atlantic Fleet (LANTFLT), Air Combat Command (ACC), and Marine Corps Forces Atlantic (MARFORLANT) into a single combat command. The services will retain their

Summary

In a recent report to Congress, General Colin Powell raised the issue of creating a joint command to enhance the ability of forces based in the United States to respond quickly in the event of crises. The Chairman concluded it would be advantageous to establish such an organization and recommended that assets of Forces Command, Atlantic Fleet, Air Combat Command, and Marine Corps Forces Atlantic be fused into a single joint command. U.S. Atlantic Command (LANTCOM) will become that command with responsibility for joint training, force packaging, and deployments during contingencies, including providing support to U.N. peacekeeping operations and assistance in times of natural disasters. To accomplish this new joint mission LANTCOM must streamline training and exercises, facilitate packaging and adapting forces to meet theater requirements, and enhance readiness through innovations in doctrine.

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statutory responsibilities and the U.S. Atlantic Command (LANTCOM) will be responsible for joint training, force packaging, and facilitating deployment in crises.

The advantages of the proposed changes, particularly in the area of joint training, warrant a close look. LANTCOM is well-suited to assume this new mission. As a CONUS-based joint headquarters, it already enjoys strong component relationships with FORSCOM, LANTFLT, ACC, and MARFORLANT. Cold War planning in LANTCOM focused on defending the sea lanes and conducting offensive

naval operations against the Soviet Union. While the NATO Alliance endures—and LANTCOM retains a large regional area of responsibility—the threat of war is greatly reduced. Thus LANTCOM has the capac-

ity to assume added responsibilities in keeping with the revised military strategy and the proposed changes to the UCP.

The Commander in Chief of the Atlantic Command (CINCLANT) also has responsibilities under NATO as Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic (SACLANT). In the new plan CINCLANT will likely continue to serve as SACLANT where he will be well situated to integrate and tailor forces to support Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) for NATO contingencies. Since LANTCOM will no longer be a predominantly naval command, CINCLANT will be a nominative position filled by an officer from any service. LANTCOM will also be assigned additional missions in support of United Nations peacekeeping and disaster relief missions. The command might also be renamed in order to more accurately reflect this new focus.

Comments on the Chairman's roles and missions report—both from inside and outside the military—cite the proposed new

mission for LANTCOM as one of the most significant aspects of this triannual report. The proposal builds on many important joint training initiatives which have flourished since the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986, particularly in the wake of Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

General Powell helped to point the way with the publication of Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces*, which traces the roots of jointness and charts a course for the future. Meeting challenges with a smaller, less costly force depends on realizing the full force-multiplier potential of jointness. Joint Pub 1 is a focal point for the further refinement of joint doctrine.

Joint Training and Exercises

The first cornerstone in realizing the full potential of our Armed Forces is joint training—particularly regularly scheduled, major joint exercises. Both Exercise Ocean Venture in the Atlantic and Exercise Tandem Thrust in the Pacific are examples of joint training being done by the CINCs. In 1992 those exercises saw thousands of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines train together on joint warfighting tasks. A new spirit of cooperation and enthusiasm was clearly evident. Progress was made on doctrinal and joint command, control, communications, computers and intelligence (C⁴I) issues as raised by Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm such as procedures for the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC) and effectively employing mobile operations and intelligence centers with joint C⁴I connectivity.

Joint training has a high priority in all theaters. The U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) has developed an innovative, two-tier Joint Force Commander (JFC) concept to ensure the readiness of JFCs and staffs in responding to contingencies. PACOM has deployable JFC staff augmentation teams that train and exercise regularly with designated joint force commanders. The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) has been busily engaged in joint training in Southwest Asia since the end of the Gulf War. Regular joint strike and air defense exercises maintain readiness for rotationally deployed forces

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U.S. Coast Guard photo



U.S. Navy photo by Jack C. Behm

(Top) A Coast Guard cutter intercepts a group of Haitians. (Bottom) Carriers seen underway during Exercise Dragon Hammer '92, (from foreground) Italy's *Guisepppe Garibaldi*, France's *Foch*, and Spain's *Principe de Asturias*.

from all services. The U.S. European Command (EUCOM) uses the Air Force's Warrior Prep Center in Germany to support aggressive joint training efforts. Joint training in the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) supports counterdrug and nation assistance operations.

With all the attention that has already been directed toward joint training, one might question the need to assign overall responsibility for joint training of CONUS-based forces to a single commander. But there are two reasons to do so. First, such a consolidation will build on, rather than supplant or replace, ongoing efforts. Unified CINCs will continue to conduct joint training to sharpen the focus and maintain the readiness of assigned forces. Second, as the military grows smaller fewer forces will be positioned forward, either permanently stationed (as in Europe and Korea) or rotationally and periodically deployed (as CENTCOM). Assigning responsibility for joint training readiness to LANTCOM will help to ensure that deploying forces are ready on arrival for joint operations. It would also be a means for ensuring that those forces—and designated back-up units at the ready—can be trained to meet the requirements and standards of the supported CINC.

As in the case of joint training, each service is doing an excellent job of providing basic, intermediate, and advanced training to ensure its forces are ready for joint operations. This traditional stovepipe approach to training has served us well. It evolved during the Cold War to meet each CINC's requirements for forward positioned forces. In most

cases the requirements were met by using fairly rigid combinations of permanently assigned forces and standardized deployment groups. This was largely a single or dual service approach—as opposed to being truly joint. The system worked well and supported our military strategy. The supported CINCs dealt directly with the services providing the forces, and joint force integration was accomplished in the field, often on an ad hoc basis.

The Cold War prescription may now provide more capability than needed in some regions. To do the job with a smaller force, we must explore ways to more tightly lace together the full joint military capability of the United States. We must explore and refine ways of providing the CINCs with packages of capabilities more closely tailored to their requirements. Once assigned the joint training mission, LANTCOM will be ideally situated to assist CINCs in designing and training the needed joint capabilities packages.

Joint Force Packaging

The second cornerstone of realizing the force multiplier potential of jointness is developing effective joint force packages. The Chairman and the unified CINCs are already evaluating ways to better organize and train forces to support CINCs by making it easier to call forward specific capabilities needed in their respective areas of responsibility (AORs). One concept envisions rotationally deployed forces from all services organized into *adaptive joint force packages*—that is, specific capabilities deployed during a given timeframe and supported by designated back-up units in CONUS. This concept brings together initiatives from various quarters and involves two elements: *packaging* forces and *adapting* those forces to specific theater requirements.

Forging adaptive joint force packages does not require major adjustments to existing service organizations. Each service will remain responsible for individual unit readiness and training. The Atlantic Fleet, for example, has replaced traditional battle group formations with expanded force packages more closely aligning responsibilities for tactical training with the operational chain of command. The new organization provides

greater flexibility and adaptability, permitting battle groups, amphibious ready groups, or other needed force packages to be configured from a broad range of maritime capabilities. The Pacific Fleet has been reorganized along similar lines. In 1991 General Merrill McPeak, Air Force Chief of Staff, reorganized the basic structure of the air wing. New Air Force composite wings are comprised of the range of assets needed to provide a complete capability package. These new organizations provide more options to the unified CINCs and make it easier to select needed capabilities from each service force package kit. Single service force packages can be *adapted* by selecting capabilities to meet specific theater requirements. We are just beginning to explore ways of doing this.

Maritime forces provide a useful example of how force packages can be adapted to specific theater requirements. Formerly, to counter the global Soviet threat, carrier battle groups (CVBGs) comprised a fairly standard menu of assets and capabilities. New naval force packages facilitate breaking Cold War deployment patterns by making it easier to structure and train capability-specific packages. In today's fast-changing world a naval force may not need the same capabilities in one region or situation as in another. One CINC may desire to augment the offensive firepower of an aircraft carrier by varying the mix of strike aircraft in the embarked naval air wing. Another CINC may choose to modify the capabilities of the carrier by reducing the number of naval aircraft and instead embarking Special Operations Forces (SOF) or a special purpose Marine force with capabilities tailored to specific theater requirements. Circumstances in a third region may be such that requirements can be met with a tailored Marine Amphibious Ready Group (MARG) supported by Tomahawk cruise missile-firing ships and submarines. In each case the capabilities are tailored to meet CINC requirements. Army and Air Force capabilities may be similarly tailored.

From the vantage point of the supported CINCs, the ready forces of all services represent the full set of available capabilities. To meet CINC requirements for forward posi-

tioned forces with a smaller force, the particular full joint force package must be trained jointly and structured to support a given CINC's specific requirements. Training must focus on specific contingencies and operations that the joint force may be called upon to execute. As seen in the accompanying illustration, tailored elements of the full set of joint forces—adaptive joint force packages—can then be positioned forward as needed. As the concept matures, supported CINCs will be able to write a more accurate prescription—based on the situation in the AOR—and call forward only the precise capabilities needed. Since the full joint force will have trained together, an adaptive joint force package—once deployed—becomes the forward element of a trained and ready joint force available in CONUS.

In examining the adaptive joint force package concept, Navy and Marine Corps component commanders of LANTCOM jointly developed concepts for a carrier-based Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF). This special task force would provide the supported CINC with specified, focused capabilities—such as noncombatant evacuation, security operations, or tactical recovery of aircraft and personnel. Other maritime force package options, including tailored carrier air wings and MARGs with a more capable Air Combat Element (ACE), are also being examined. Recognizing the largely maritime flavor of these efforts, LANTCOM has been working with Army, Air Force, and SOF components, as well as the Coast Guard, to explore contributions that those forces could make to deployable joint capabilities packages.

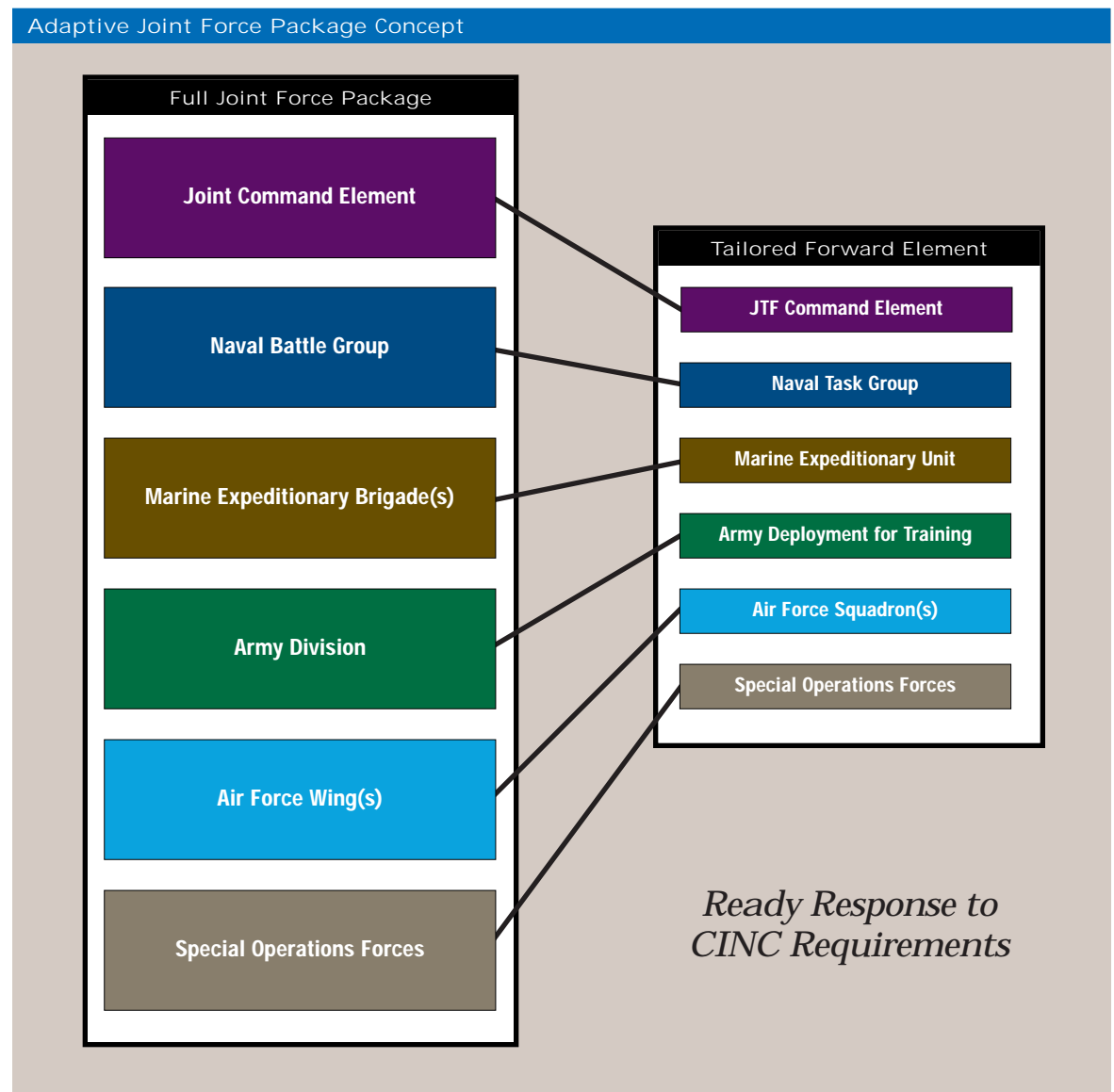
Tailored joint capability packages, structured and trained for a variety of requirements, will soon prove their value in EUCOM. Joint Force 93-2, for example, represents an adaptive joint force package which blends service capabilities by combining a typical 11-ship carrier battle group, 5-ship Marine amphibious ready group, Special Operations Forces, land-based Air Force and naval aircraft, and advanced Army helicopters. Working

with LANTCOM to develop, integrate, and jointly train such force packages will help the supported CINCs meet the requirements for continuous and periodic presence. By using the full potential of a joint force and calibrating forward-positioned capabilities to the needs of CINCs, we can maintain a forward presence without overcommitting our forces.

The end of the Cold War enables LANTCOM to focus increased attention on tailoring joint exercises and training to support

other CINCs. Assigning LANTCOM the joint training mission for CONUS-based forces will institutionalize this critical role. Orienting joint force training toward the supported CINCs' requirements and training deploying forces alongside designated back-up units will ensure additional forces can be sent forward. Surge forces would arrive in theater organized, trained, and ready for large scale joint operations.

To efficiently tailor joint training to the requirements of the supported CINCs, we need an effective, widely understood means



U.S. Navy photo



Lockheed photo by Schulzner and Lombard



to communicate requirements. The Joint Staff and the CINCs are developing a universal joint task list which will make it easier for supported CINCs to state their training requirements in common terminology, prioritize needed training, and aid LANTCOM in structuring exercises to meet those needs.

Joint Doctrine

The third cornerstone in realizing the full joint force multiplier potential is ensuring the readiness of JTF commanders and staffs to plan and execute contingency operations. Each geographic CINC is developing a JTF training concept, but individual theater approaches are not yet grounded in a common set of JTF staff tasks, conditions, and proficiency standards. Once the universal joint task list is finalized, LANTCOM will be able to train deployable JTF and component commanders in joint doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures tailored to the supported CINC's requirements from a menu of common standards that are applicable worldwide.

Four principles have guided development of the implementation plan for the new joint training mission:

- ▼ Finding ways to add value without adding cost
- ▼ Avoiding creating additional bureaucratic layers
- ▼ Resisting the pressure to increase the size of the LANTCOM staff
- ▼ Making good use of what already exists

These principles will help achieve the full value of the proposed changes to the Unified Command Plan. One example is the potential payoff to be derived from coordinating exercise schedules. Aligning individ-

ual service schedules will make training more efficient, relevant, and interesting. Considerable improvement can be achieved while staying within programmed budgets and force structure. Existing service exercises can be overlaid by joint training without increased cost. Service exercises can be synchronized for mutual benefit, and sequenced to yield efficiencies in transportation, range utilization, and support.

Another area with important potential payoff is the evaluation and testing of joint tactics, techniques, and procedures to refine joint doctrine. Being located in close geographic proximity to the Joint Doctrine Center, the Army Training and Doctrine Command, and the newly created Naval and Air Force doctrine commands, as well as Army and SOF tactical training centers at Fort Bragg, LANTCOM is squarely at the *hub* of a number of activities. Assigning the expanded joint training mission to LANTCOM will facilitate evaluating, testing, and sequencing the development of joint doctrine.

The hub-and-spoke analogy also applies to other joint training activities. LANTCOM is working in cooperation with existing component commands to establish joint tactical training and development teams. Each team focuses on specific joint tactical mission areas such as joint air operations and joint air defense. The teams will assist in designing and evaluating realistic, relevant joint exercises and training. They will also develop joint tactical standards and assist in training joint staff elements. The teams provide focal points for developing joint tactics, techniques, and procedures, and cadres of joint tactical experts on the CINC and component staffs. Joint tactical training development teams could also provide a vehicle for drawing on the expertise, and integrating

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the efforts, of various service tactical *school-houses* and *centers of excellence* in an effort to enhance joint training without infringing on service priorities.

Another useful hub-and-spoke arrangement could be created by establishing an appropriate joint agency to provide a range of technical support services to the exercise programs of both the CINCs and the services. This agency could provide turn-key support in technologies and services common to such efforts. One example is providing the distributed simulation technology needed to link existing training ranges, command posts, and simulators to an effective joint training network. While the services would continue to operate and use existing facilities, training horizons would be expanded by sharing data and capabilities

among users via a distributed simulation network.

The skills and experience required for such complex technologies are not plentiful. Building exercise support organizations separately for the CINCs, their components, and service staffs is inefficient and prohibitively expensive. One option under consideration would merge the Joint Doctrine Center (JDC) in Norfolk, Virginia, and the Joint Warfare Center (JWC) at Hurlburt Field, Florida, into a single command located near LANTCOM headquarters. This new JDC/JWC agency would be controlled by the Joint Staff and support simulation-based studies. By working in partnership with the JDC/JWC the pressure to expand the LANT-

COM staff would be minimized and potential redundancies would be limited, particularly in the areas of joint publications, distributed simulation, and exercise support.

The Atlantic Command currently has several JTF commanders. One of them, JTF-4, is the executive agent in the counterdrug campaign. Others are established for training and contingency response. Each service component has potential training/contingency JTF commander, namely, the Commanding Generals of the three CONUS-based active Army Corps; Commander Second Fleet; Commander 12th Air Force (soon to be Commander 8th Air Force); and Commanding General, Second Marine Expeditionary Force. The permanently assigned staffs of JTF commanders are oriented primarily toward service functions and responsibilities. Each JTF commander is routinely given important responsibilities in joint exercises, and augmented by personnel from CINCLANT and other components as necessary. Joint training and readiness could be measurably enhanced by permanently assigning sufficient personnel from each service to make the JTF staffs truly joint, but without diluting the ability to carry out service responsibilities or compromising primary areas of expertise. This could be accomplished by exchanging a modest number of permanent billets between existing organizations, though the need for some additional billets cannot be ruled out without further analysis.

One key to adding value without adding cost or additional bureaucratic layers is steadfastly controlling growth of the LANTCOM staff if it assumes new responsibilities. Ideally, the goal is zero growth. To accomplish the mission without additional personnel, LANTCOM would rely on service components—namely, FORSCOM, ACC, LANTFLT, and MARFORLANT—to perform their current functions. LANTCOM is not able to take over responsibilities or do the work of the component commands. Rather, it will provide a common vision and efficiently coordinate mutual efforts. The component commanders themselves would serve as an executive board, helping to develop

Members of the 82^d Airborne secure a building during an exercise in the Gulf.



DOD photo



U.S. Navy photo by John D. Biviera

Marines hit the beach in Manta, Ecuador, during a combined exercise.

and instill in LANTCOM the customer orientation needed for success.

Earlier organizations have had a CONUS-based joint training mission, such as U.S. Strike Command, established in 1961 and replaced by U.S. Readiness Command in 1971. Because they were perceived to conflict with service Title X responsibilities (that is, to organize, train, and equip forces), neither command succeeded in its mission. LANTCOM would succeed only by complementing, rather than competing with, service programs. Success would be measured by just how well LANTCOM satisfies cus-

tomers demand by providing trained and ready joint force packages to meet a supported CINC's particular needs for periodic presence forces, forward positioned forces, and surge forces in times of crisis or conflict.

The Goal of Unification

Global security and economic reality call for a restructuring of our defenses. This involves refining the capabilities and roles of the Armed Forces to advance the Nation's security interests in the future. The definition of those interests is growing. To do the job we must change and adapt. We must find new ways to bring our full capabilities to bear on emerging security challenges.

We still need a capable military to defend our national interests. But, at the same time, the Armed Forces *can* be smaller and less costly. Meeting future challenges with a smaller, less costly force, however, will depend both on continued technical and C⁴I superiority, and on realizing the full force-multiplier potential of jointness.

The fourth and final cornerstone in realizing that potential is assigning a single commander the mission of training designated CONUS-based forces to fight as a joint team. Giving that mission to LANTCOM, as recommended by the Chairman, would be the next logical step in the evolutionary process of unification which began in 1947. By wisely using the tremendous capability at hand, we *can* add value without increasing cost or the size of the bureaucracy. And, by so doing, we can ensure effective joint leadership and combat capability on tomorrow's multidimensional battlefields. **JFQ**



DOD photo



U.S. Navy photo

(Top) Air Force A-10
Warthog.
(Bottom) Navy A-7
Corsairs.