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**JOINT TASK FORCE HEADQUARTERS --
TIME FOR PERMANENCY?**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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This paper analyzes three methods of forming a joint task force headquarters (JTF Hqs). The first way is to form an ad hoc staff by tasking the personnel and equipment from several services and posts. The second technique is to augment an existing headquarters, which serves as the nucleus of the JTF Hqs, with additional personnel and equipment. The final procedure involves establishing a permanently assigned cadre who deploys with their own equipment. To determine which method is better this paper examines lessons learned from several recent case studies, requirements for JTF Hqs in the joint doctrine, and the advantages and disadvantages of the three methods to organize a JTF Hqs. The conclusion of this study is that it is definitely better to establish a permanent standing JTF Hqs.

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Introduction

William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, has articulated three strategic goals for the United States in the 1996 National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement document. One of these goals is to enhance our security with military forces that are ready to fight and with effective representation abroad.¹ Within President Clinton's primary objective of enhancing our security he mandates a military force that is capable of winning two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts. Additionally, he provides a task list of national security objectives for the military that includes; deterring and defeating aggression in major regional conflicts, providing a credible overseas presence, countering weapons of mass destruction, contributing to multilateral peace operations, supporting counterterrorism efforts, and fighting drug trafficking.²

A challenge facing the United States military is how to execute all these missions provided in the National Security Strategy and the National Military Strategy and operate within a limited budget. Already the United States has answered the call forty times over the past five years (1991-1995) by providing soldiers to assist in Military Operations Other Than War.³ To command and control these operations requires some type of

headquarters. This requirement often entails the combining of two or more services' headquarters into a joint task force headquarters (JTF Hqs).

There are several methods to organize a JTF Hqs. This paper addresses the question, what is the best method to form a joint task force headquarters (JTF Hqs) to accomplish Military Operations Other Than War and other national security objectives. To answer this question the first section of this paper will analyze the various ways to organize a joint task force headquarters. The next section examines lessons learned from several recent case studies. The third part reviews current joint doctrine and looks at some of the requirements for the JTF Hqs. The last section compares and contrasts the three methods of organizing a joint task force headquarters.

Methods of Organizing Joint Task Force Headquarters

There are currently three methods by which to organize a joint task force headquarters (JTF Hqs). One way to build a JTF Hqs is to establish an ad hoc organization. An ad hoc staff forms by tasking for personnel and equipment from two or more services. The staff and equipment can come from anywhere in the world.⁴

A second technique to organize a JTF Hqs is to augment an existing headquarters, such as an Army Corps, Marine Expeditionary Force, numbered Navy Fleet, or numbered Air Force. The existing headquarters serves as a nucleus for the JTF Hqs. The existing unit can provide a majority of the personnel and equipment. The JTF commander can come from the existing unit or be assigned from an external organization.⁵

The last procedure is to constitute a standing JTF Hqs. This headquarters consists of a permanent commander and staff who live, train, and deploy together. The equipment is also part of the standing JTF Hqs. Certain missions may require a minor augmentation of personnel and equipment to the standing JTF Hqs.⁶

Historical Case Studies

Studying some of the past military operations identifies several of the advantages and disadvantages of the various methods of forming joint task force headquarters. A common trend that exists is the difficulty in initially establishing and commanding and controlling the joint task force. Some of these historical operations include the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), Operation Power Pack in the Dominican Republic (1965-66), Operation Desert One in Iran (1980), and Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada (1983). More recent operations involving JTF Hqs are

Operations Provide Relief, Restore Hope, and Continue Hope in Somalia (1993-1994), and Operation Support Hope in Rwanda (1994).

Somalia

Operations of joint task force headquarters in Somalia provide three examples of the challenges of forming a JTF Headquarters both with an ad hoc organization and an augmented existing headquarters. The first JTF Hqs to form was the United Nations Operation Somalia I (UNOSOM I) which formed by augmenting a Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters. Forming around a Marine Corps Headquarters led to using Marine Corps acronyms, tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). This use of Marine acronyms and TTPs resulted in non-marine personnel not understanding instructions and delaying actions while waiting for clarification of terms and tasks.⁷

Another difficulty with using an existing headquarters as the base for the JTF Hqs was the non-connectivity of the various types of computer software and hardware. As a marine headquarters UNOSOM I used Enable OA, a word processing software, which was not compatible with any non-Marine unit in the Task Force or Central Command Headquarters. By having different computer software, delays were caused in processing reports and instructions.⁸

The second JTF to form was the United Task Force (UNITAF). This headquarters formed an ad hoc organization and provided numerous lessons learned on why an ad hoc organization for a JTF Hqs is difficult. "Neither the makeshift UNOSOM II HQ staff nor the weak UN Secretariat had experience organizing and commanding such a large, complex multinational operations..."⁹ "At the outset, UNOSOM II had serious command, control, and communications problems, stemming from inadequate planning, absence of clear doctrine, and inadequate communications and liaison between HQ and component units."¹⁰ "Because of this lack of planning, the top UNOSOM II military commanders had no understanding of the transition; the number, capability, or concept of employment of their forces; or the rules of engagement (ROE)."¹¹

The third JTF Headquarters to form in Somalia provides another example of the disadvantages of forming a staff by augmenting an existing headquarters. After a bloody battle resulted in eighteen U.S. losses and seventy wounded in October 1993 in the streets of Mogadishu, President Clinton took action and issued a Presidential Directive. He mandated the missions, protect U.S. troops and bases; secure essential lines of

communication; and deter further attacks against military forces and humanitarian relief organizations.¹²

As a result of this Presidential Directive, Joint Task Force Somalia (JTFSOM) activated on 14 October 1993 and accepted battle hand-off from United States Forces Somalia (USFORSOM) six days later. About half of the personnel base for the 133 person JTF Somalia Headquarters and a majority of the equipment, came from the 10th Mountain Division (Light) headquarters. The other half of the staff was individual augmentees from all services, who arrived over the next few weeks. The command group was unable to arrive until two days later.¹³

Reports on JTF Somalia reveal several of the downsides of forming a JTF Hqs through augmenting an already existing staff. Some of the challenges were in the manning and experience of the staff and the equipping of the JTF Hqs.

The "standing-up" of JTF-Somalia in October 1993 provides a useful example of the continuing pitfalls of units entering a joint world for which they are not adequately prepared. Once again, this JTF was formed around a nucleus-this time the Army's 10th Mountain Division. Because of its tactical orientation, no division-especially not a light infantry unit-has either the staff structure or the cadre of experienced personnel needed to conduct joint operations. Necessarily, staff procedures are "Army" rather than "joint". The kinds of communications and ADP equipment required to conduct joint operations are also missing in these divisions. ... and although the officer placed in command of the JTF was an Army officer ... he had not previously been assigned to the division-a fact

that made the establishment of new working relationships another burden among many.¹⁴

Another dilemma of augmenting an existing headquarters was having the depth and knowledge to conduct joint combat operations.

...the execution of more demanding missions during UNOSOM II became more difficult because the Force Command headquarters was not equipped to act like a battle staff. The initial difficulties in manning this headquarters were never entirely overcome, with the result that key functions-long-range supporting fires, combat engineers, and air operations-were either missing or not available 24 hours a day. The JTF had to improvise a Joint Operations Center using existing equipment and personnel, many of whom had no real expertise in some of the areas for which they were now responsible: joint and combined ground operations, fire support, air operations, training, and intelligence.¹⁵

In an unpublished after action review on Joint Task Force Somalia, the major challenges with organizing the JTF Hqs were forming the JTF staff and establishing the joint operations center. The JTF Hqs did not form until it was in Somalia and was formed by personnel who deployed from all over the world. Forming the JTF staff required personnel who already had some training and joint experience in their assigned staff position. JTF Somalia lacked the requisite experience, manning, and seniority to conduct joint operations. Since the majority of the JTF Somalia staff were from the 10th Mountain Division (Light) they represented a cross section of the division's expertise for

tactical level operations not the joint and operational war fighting capability required in Somalia. Joint level experience was absent in the ground and air operations, intelligence, communications, and joint training.¹⁶

The JTF Somalia joint operations center (JOC) also faced burdens relating to personnel. Forming JTF Somalia Hqs, without any guidance from higher headquarters, other than a personnel ceiling, led to organizing a staff with little regard to required duty position or rank. Without guidance or a blueprint on how to design a JOC, the JTF had mostly field grade officers, working in areas other than their specialties, and some of the required staff positions being unmanned. Additionally, the lowest ranking person in the JOC was a Marine Gunnery Sergeant who by default conducted all the administration such as posting maps, typing, filing, and cleaning. It also took time to become fully functional because the personnel in the JOC came from a variety of units and services and had never functioned as a cohesive unit before.¹⁷

Another dilemma in the JOC was the availability and compatibility of the equipment. Personnel deployed from all over the world to form JTF Somalia and brought whatever equipment they thought they needed. The end result was an assortment of

administrative supplies, computers, and radios. The computers were different both in available hardware and software. This caused delays in processing paperwork and sending out reports. Several types of radios deployed, many of which were not compatible. This resulted in initially not being able to communicate with all the different units in the task force.¹⁸

Another challenge in the JTF Somalia JOC operations was the absence of a manual on JOC standard operating procedures (SOPs). Since JTF Somalia headquarters was an augmented type JTF Hqs, no one had an SOP on JOC operations. Simple items like what reports to send to higher headquarters and in what formats were missing. The JOC also needed internal systems to coordinate the release of message traffic, distribution of messages, and a way to monitor what action was needed. Establishing what the shifts were in the JOC and how to receive updates on the future plans seemed like easy tasks, but without any initial SOPs it took time to develop.¹⁹

Rwanda

Operation Support Hope in Rwanda provides another example of the difficulties in designing a JTF Hqs by forming an ad hoc staff. This operation consisted of U.S. military support to the United Nations and non-governmental organizations performing

humanitarian assistance in Rwanda. Rwandan refugees fled in reaction to approximately 500,000 Tutsis being massacred in Rwanda from April to June of 1994.²⁰

Planning operations in Rwanda both before and after deploying reveal one major deficiency involving the manning of the JTF Hqs.

The organization and physical facilities of the JTF headquarters affected operations, particularly in the early stages. ... the main JTF headquarters was formed, in Stuttgart, from scratch, using a flow of individuals from separate units and all Services. The JTF was ultimately composed of individuals and units from 118 different locations in ACOM, PACOM, SOUTHCOM, and EUCOM AORs.²¹

Operation Support Hope also provides lessons learned in the training of a headquarters and the equipment required to function as a JTF Hqs. One of the challenges of forming the ad hoc staff was conducting the necessary training prior to deployment. The JTF Hqs was not able to train or organize prior to deploying to Rwanda. Because the staff could not form before deploying, the design, construction and procurement of equipment for the JTF Hqs were also late and disruptive to operations.²²

Review of Joint Doctrine

We recognize that peace operations are often different from traditional military operations in the tasks and capabilities they require of our Armed Forces. We are continuing to develop appropriate doctrine and training for these operations.²³

Reviewing joint doctrine indicates some of the requirements for a JTF Hqs. Joint Pub 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF) provides some criteria for the establishment of a JTF Hqs staff. "The commander of a JTF will have a joint staff with appropriate members in key positions of responsibility from each Service or functional component..."²⁴

The mission assigned to a JTF should require execution of responsibilities involving a joint force on a significant scale and close integration of effort, or should require coordination within a subordinate area or coordination of local defense of a subordinate area.²⁵

Joint Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations, recommends that Joint Task Force staffs train together before deploying.

JTFs and components that are likely to be employed in theater operations should be exercised regularly during peacetime. Staffs should be identified and trained for planning and controlling joint operations. Joint Force Commanders and the composition of their staffs should reflect the composition of the joint force to ensure those responsible for employing joint forces have thorough knowledge of their capabilities and limitations.²⁶

The one joint doctrine manual that provides the most information on joint task forces is the Joint Pub 5-00.2 (Final Draft), Joint Task Force Planning Guidance and Procedures. This document furnishes the details of how to organize a joint task force headquarters, specifies the responsibilities of the JTF staff, and discusses JTF operations planning.

First, Joint Pub 5-0.2 prescribes a way to organize a JTF Hqs. The organization of a JTF staff normally includes the commander, deputy commander, chief of staff, personal staff of the commander, special staff group, JTF staff directorates, and other organizational considerations. The personal staff encompasses public affairs officer, legal officer, chaplain, surgeon, inspector general, provost marshall, comptroller, and political advisors.²⁷ The special staff group contains representatives from technical and administrative services and government and nongovernmental agencies.²⁸

The JTF staff directorates are manpower and personnel (J1), intelligence (J2), operations (J3), logistics (J4), plans (J5), and command, control, communications, and computer systems (J6).²⁹ Additional organizational considerations include special operations forces, linguists, interpreters, historian, joint visitors bureau, civil-military operations center, joint planning group, assessment team, and contracting officer.³⁰

Next, to form a responsible JTF staff requires the following conditions. First, a JTF staff needs to form that has experience and knowledge of their position. The JTF staff should also know their capabilities, limitations, and required support.

Organizing the JTF staff takes time. The staff needs to have

time to establish a building process. A bond of trust and dependability must build between the staff members.³¹ Finally, "a staff and facilities orientation program should be established to ensure all individuals joining the JTF staff become thoroughly familiar with their surroundings (e.g., work and HQ area, living area, key personnel)."³²

A key function of the JTF staff is conducting joint operations planning and understanding how to direct joint warfighting. The staff must be able to plan using both the military deliberate decision-making process and the crisis action planning procedure. To plan, the staff must follow and train on standard operating procedures (SOPs) and policies.³³

Comparison of the Methods of Organizing Joint Task Force

Headquarters

The formations of the ad hoc and the permanent standing JTF Hqs are total opposites in terms of advantages and disadvantages. The pros and cons of the augmentation of an existing headquarters lie between the ad hoc and permanent headquarters.

Standing Joint Task Force Headquarters

The advantages of the permanent JTF Hqs are primarily in the areas of time, equipment, and specialization. A knowledgeable and well-trained staff can save time for the commander. Having a

staff that knows and can follow SOPs, especially the procedures for the military decision-making process, will save considerable time in the production of orders and the establishment and operation of the headquarters. There is a possibility that through the training of the staff in developing courses of action, wargaming, and publishing orders, they will develop a plan that is similar to one needed for the current operation. Additionally, the commander and staff already know their individual and collective strengths and weaknesses.³⁴

Having the correct design, construction, and procurement of equipment is another advantage of the permanent standing headquarters. All the necessary equipment to conduct operations such as communications equipment and computers, already uploaded with the appropriate software and forms, is in place and ready to deploy.³⁵

A third advantage of the standing JTF Hqs is specialization. A fully staffed and trained JTF Headquarters familiar with a particular area can conduct an alert to deploy anywhere in the world quicker and more efficiently. Already being knowledgeable of a region's culture, history, politics, economy, and geography will reduce the time needed to familiarize the staff and commander with a particular area of operations. A regionally

oriented JTF Headquarters can deploy an advance party quickly, equipped with language qualified liaison officers and the proper equipment.³⁶

Another advantage of the standing JTF Hqs is having a stable, experienced, and educated fully joint qualified permanent staff that can train to fight as a combined arms team. A stable team that trains together on a regular basis will be able to execute the appropriate joint tactics, techniques, and procedures and be able to refine staff procedures. The staff can develop a battle-focused training program that will allow the crawl, walk, and run method of training to take place. As the staff trains together they will learn to know the capabilities and limitations of their own service, sister services, non-DOD agencies, and possible coalition partner.³⁷

Part of the staff training includes gaining experience through war gaming and readiness exercises as a JTF Headquarters facilitates readiness and efficiency. A force educated in joint operations will facilitate the command and control of joint operations.

Additional advantages of the standing JTF Hqs are articulated in the study, "The Achievement of Organizational Objectives by Task Force". The author of this study notes that a

team with a permanent cadre will possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and a high degree of trust and confidence in each other.³⁸ He also suggests that the size and closeness of the group will facilitate the rapid dissemination of information and instant feedback.³⁹ The permanent staff's attitudes and motivation are also complementary.⁴⁰

The disadvantages of the permanent JTF Hqs are its demands on resources, range of missions, and the length of time of commitment. A standing cadre requires additional resources such as personnel, equipment, and money, at a time of reduction in troop strength and budget constraints. Trying to decide which military operation other than war to commit the JTF Hqs to, is another disadvantage. A scenario of multiple crises in several regions at the same time with only a limited number of standing JTF Hqs available is plausible.⁴¹

Ad Hoc Joint Task Force Headquarters

The advantages of the ad hoc staff are the temporary savings in personnel, equipment, and money. Tasking for personnel and equipment on an 'as needed' basis permits the force structure, to include equipment, to stay at current levels. Not requesting supplementary demands for personnel and equipment eliminates any

requirement for additional money, which is necessary to fund a standing JTF Hqs or augmenting an existing headquarters.

There are numerous disadvantages of ad hoc staffed task force headquarters. Temporarily drawing people and resources from existing departments will undoubtedly affect current operations now and after the members of the task force return to their original organizations. One challenge as a member of a temporary task force is to return to your original position and be satisfied with a new set of conditions. "While participating as a member of the task force he gained experience with respect to autonomy and authority, upon termination he may still seek this type of challenging and satisfying work. The result could be the loss of the individual from the organization or loss of morale."⁴²

Additionally,

If the task force is partially or largely staffed by personnel from outside sources, it may be difficult to establish favorable working relationships between the members and other organizational departments and personnel. Upon disbandment of the team the outsiders would probably not be integrated into existing organizational elements. This means paying a premium for increased expertise lost when such individuals depart. In addition, a risk is involved since these released outsiders may take with them skills and organizational information which may be valuable to a competitor.⁴³

A major disadvantage of the ad hoc staff is the amount of time it takes to organize and train the staff and receive and setup the equipment. Service members all over the world have to be notified, prepared for movement, transported, and assembled. All types of equipment have to be requisitioned. This process takes time and in the case of JTF Somalia not all the staff positions and equipment requirements were filled. Once the ad hoc staff does assemble, it requires significant time to organize, assign functions, train, and conduct the military decision-making process. The equipment also requires time to assemble and be tested. The time this process requires is not available once the JTF Hqs is in the area of operations.

Augmenting An Existing Headquarters Joint Task Force Headquarters

There are also pros and cons with the third method of forming a JTF Hqs, augmenting an existing headquarters. Serving as a starting point for personnel and equipment is the primary advantage of the augmentation technique. Having some people and equipment available saves some time in establishing the headquarters. Also, there may or may not be some type of SOPs or procedures available for use in organizing and operating the JTF Hqs.

Several disadvantages of using an augmented headquarters are service bias, integration of new personnel, and the impact on the parent unit headquarters. There may be a tendency on the part of the members of the nucleus to use their own acronyms, procedures, and tactics, techniques, and procedures. Individual augmentees will initially face some challenges in trying to integrate into the nucleus. They will have to learn SOPs and their particular roles and missions. Finally, the impact on the parent headquarters will be significant as the positions and functions left vacant by the members of the nucleus will have to be filled or delegated to other staff members.

Summary and Conclusions

This paper has addressed the question, what is the best method to form a joint task force headquarters (JTF Hqs) to accomplish Military Operations Other Than War and other national security objectives. By examining, lessons learned from historical case studies, requirements for JTF Hqs in the joint doctrine, and the advantages and disadvantages of the three methods to organize a JTF Hqs, a recommendation is available. The best method to organize a JTF Hqs is the formation of permanent standing Joint Task Force Headquarters.

The lessons learned from historical case studies, especially the JTF Hqs organized for Somalia and Rwanda, recommend that the ad hoc and augmenting existing headquarters methods are the last measures to use in structuring a JTF Hqs. Numerous problems were encountered in manning and equipping the ad hoc and augmented JTF headquarters. Even the joint doctrine states the JTF staff should have prior training, knowledge of their capabilities, limitations, and SOPs, and an understanding of joint operations planning and joint warfighting. The only method of organizing a JTF Hqs to achieve the training and experience that the joint doctrine suggests is the standing JTF Hqs.

Finally, the advantages of the standing JTF Hqs outweigh those of the ad hoc and augmenting existing headquarters methods. Having a staff with regional expertise and compressed planning ability, command and control facilitators, and trained professionals in joint operations planning and warfighting along with the necessary, functioning, and compatible equipment in place and ready to deploy are major advantages. Additionally, deploying with communications equipment that provides the capability to talk to each service upon arrival in theatre and using common computer software applications to aid

interoperability of automated systems, facilitates any deployment.

The standing joint task force headquarters is the way of the future for the United States Military. To meet future contingencies, the commanders in chiefs of the combatant commands need to establish standing joint task force headquarters in their areas of responsibility.

ENDNOTES

¹President of the United States, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office February 1996, i.

²Chairman of the Joint Staff, National Military Strategy of the United States of America, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office 1995, 13.

³Ibid., 2.

⁴Joint Pub 5-00.2 (Final Draft), Joint Task Force Planning Guidance and Procedures, Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997, x.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Kenneth Allard, Somalia Operations: Lessons Learned (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1995), 23.

⁸Ibid., 80.

⁹David Bentley and Robert Oakley, "Peace Operations: A Comparison of Somalia and Haiti," May 1995, <<http://198.80.36.91/ndu/inss/strforum/forum30.html>>, 11 October 1996, 2-3.

¹⁰Ibid., 2.

¹¹Ibid., 1.

¹²Allard., 20.

¹³Harry D. Scott Jr., "Joint Task Force Somalia After Action Report," Mogadishu, Somalia, March 1994, 8.

¹⁴Allard., 62.

¹⁵Ibid., 63.

¹⁶Scott., 27.

¹⁷Scott., 29.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid., 45.

²⁰United States European Command, After Action Review Operation Support Hope 1994, USEUCOM, 1995, 1.

²¹Ibid., 31.

²²Ibid., 32.

²³Chairman of the Joint Staff., 9.

²⁴Joint Pub 0-2, Unified Action Armed Forces, Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997, IV-10.

²⁵Ibid., IV-9.

²⁶Joint Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1997, IV-2.

²⁷Publication Joint Pub 5-00.2. (Final Draft), II-14.

²⁸Ibid., II-24.

²⁹Ibid., II-3.

³⁰Ibid., II-24-II-28.

³¹Ibid., II-4.

³²Ibid., II-5.

³³Ibid., xvi.

³⁴The author is the former division plans officer and head of the Operations Planning Group in the 10th Mountain Division (Light) as well as the J3 Plans Officer for Joint Task Force Somalia and head of the Joint Planning Group. He has experience in working in an environment where there is a standing

headquarters as well as an augmented joint task force headquarters.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Robert D. Chelberg, Jack W. Ellertson, and David H. Shelley, 'EUCOM-At the Center of the Vortex' Field Artillery, Fort Sill, Oklahoma: Headquarters, Department of the Army, October 1993, 15-16.

³⁸Edgar F. Todd, The Achievement of Organizational Objectives by Task Force (Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: US Army War College, 1973), 7.

³⁹Ibid., 10.

⁴⁰Ibid., 9-10.

⁴¹Chelberg., 13-14.

⁴²Ibid., 12.

⁴³Ibid.

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