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Overcoming the "Supreme Nuisance": Command Relationships in Amphibious  
Operations

by

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

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

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## Overcoming the “Supreme Nuisance”: Command Relationships in Amphibious Operations

*“I had wondered how the Navy would react to our plans. At that time a good many naval officers regarded our amphibious ambitions as a supreme nuisance and did not hesitate to tell us so.”*

*A. A. Vandegrift, General, U. S. Marine Corps in reference to 1934's amphibious experiments*

*“Coast Attack...a large and intricate question...Very different views are held on either side; those of extremists seem at times mutually destructive. If precise agreement cannot be reached...we shall learn at least to understand each one another's meaning and reasons...”*

*A. T. Mahan, Objects of the U.S. Naval War College, 1888*

## Overcoming the “Supreme Nuisance”: Command Relationships in Amphibious Operations

### The Impasse

Joint Publication 3-02, Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations, has been under revision for nearly eight years, held up over the issue of command relationships. The Navy and Marine cannot agree on what relationship between Commander, Amphibious Task Force (CATF) and Commander, Landing Force (CLF) best enables littoral warfare. Within the Corps, factions espouse positions ranging from status quo to reversing the traditional relationship to give CLF operational control of CATF. Navy doctrine writers incorporated landing forces into a new, offensive-minded Composite Warfare Commander (CWC) construct that subordinates CLF to the status of just another warfare commander---a situation to which the Corps will never agree. The naval services can go no further developing the doctrine for joint littoral warfare until they can agree how to command and control forces that come from the sea. Those with the most at stake in the littorals cannot reach Mahan’s “precise agreement” and the resultant impasse has become a “supreme nuisance.”

### Forward...Before It’s 2010: Fight as a Joint Amphibious Task Force in the Littoral

*“...the littoral...a single environment in which the cooperation of units on land, at sea, and in the air is based on a shared vision of what must be done...and an esprit de corps that transcends service identity or occupational specialty.”*

*Operational Maneuver From the Sea (OMFTS)*

*“Link air, land and naval warfare to ensure truly joint warfare.”*

*...From the Sea*

There is, however, a solution that can work for all parties with a stake in littoral warfare. The command and control relationships impasse can be overcome by organizing forces that project land power from the sea as Joint Task Forces (JTFs). The traditional

relationship between CATF and CLF is a sixty-year-old construct from a time when peer naval competitors hazarded fleets and landing forces could not strike inland without building up force beachheads. A seabased force that combines the tenets of OMFTS with the technological possibilities of Network Centric Warfare (NCW) is not limited by force beachheads or endangered by enemy armadas. Its capabilities for expeditionary maritime will far exceed those of the forces that provided the strictly amphibious successes of the 1940's. The force for now and the future is best envisioned as a seabased JTF, with sea, land, air and space forces of two or more Departments either *physically* or *virtually* present. As a JTF, an amphibious force should have available to it the entire spectrum of command and support relationships available to any joint force. Whatever its organization--- by service component, service and functional components or combinations thereof --- it should function as a Joint Amphibious Task Force (JATF) from the very beginning. To go ahead, we must, unemotionally and with a sense of their proud place in history, leave the legacy constructs of CATF and CLF behind. We must re-write our doctrine for commanding amphibious operations as if the force were a JATF.

### **Future Service Visions Anticipate Joint Operations From the Sea**

*"...a combined expedition does not consist simply of an army and a squadron. It is an organism at once more complex and more homogeneous...so essentially is it a single organism, that in practice these various elements can seldom be kept sharply distinct."*

*Julian Corbett, Some Principles of Maritime Strategy, 1911*

*"... "Perhaps operational organizations will become virtual ones..."*

*Network Centric Warfare: Developing and Leveraging Information Technology, 1999*

The services' vision statements agree that "joint" is the construct within which the United States will fight future wars. Service visions of command, control and force organization all focus, as well, on harnessing the possibilities that NCW has to offer. The

services foresee “infospace” unbounded by geography, in which they will support Joint Force Commanders (JFCs) by sharing a common, relevant operating picture. Through their component headquarters, they will provide JFCs with capabilities that need not be *physically* present within the JTF’s battlespace. In pursuit of the most efficient and effective force, the services expect to be able to adapt to a wide range of flexible command and control arrangements, tailored to the mission and the JFC’s requirements.

The Navy’s vision of future warfare recognizes that, while naval forces “have many inherent capabilities that can be used independently,” they “cannot perform independently every military function that our nation may require.” The Navy’s capstone publication asserts that naval doctrine must logically extend joint doctrine and recognizes that warfare in the littorals that “may require rethinking our force organization and our warfighting methodologies.”<sup>i</sup>

The Marine Corps has already rethought force organization and warfighting methodologies. The concepts that support OMFTS envision using the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) outside its historic role of an enabling force in a naval campaign. In the future, MAGTFs will not simply seize lodgments for follow-on forces and transition ashore to become part of a land force. The MAGTF will provide the JFC inherently mobile, seabased forces with which to attack enemy centers of gravity. The MAGTF will be the fighting arm of the Marine Corps component, normally answerable to the JFC, not to another service component commander or one of his subordinates.<sup>ii</sup>

The Corps’ agrees that NCW’s worldwide systems, networked together in a seamless command architecture, can link the MAGTF with senior and subordinate elements, joint and combined forces, government agencies and even academia. The linkages and

connectivity will be “transparent” and form a “vast array of resources” from which the commander can forge “formidable coalitions” using entities that are either *physically* or *virtually* present.<sup>iii</sup> The concept for command and coordination in OMFTS relies on “virtual collaboration” among both information and actor agents within a networked infostructure.<sup>iv</sup>

The Air Force’s vision describes a future battlespace “not defined in terms of traditional, centralized, geopolitical boundaries” but rather “four-dimensional, virtual battlespace” where a web of networks provides capabilities that might be only virtually present. The Air Force will integrate forces from outside the geographic bounds of the theater into the joint force without having to deploy them forward.<sup>v</sup> For the Air Force, “capabilities based in the continental United States will likely become the primary means for crisis response and power projection as long-range air and space-based assets increasingly fill the [JFC’s] requirements.”<sup>vi</sup> While Air Force forces might have a small in-theater presence---planning and coordination cells on the JTF staff--- the service is committed to being “virtually present” in future JTFs.

The Army expects to deploy lighter forces to future contingencies and then fight as part of an integrated joint force, networked together with the other services and support facilities outside the JTF’s battlespace. Army forces will move by a combination of air and maritime mean to the theater, land and fight ashore as the JFC’s “war-winner.” Army pre-positioned and fast sealift ships are vital to the Army’s vision of moving forces quickly to a crisis spot; tomorrow’s Army depends on sealift.<sup>vii</sup>

The services are much in agreement over how the United States will organize, command and control forces on the future battlefield. Yet, to move towards realizing

these visions in future littoral warfare, we must update the sixty-year-old concepts of command and control found in the Joint Pub 3-02. To do so, we must dispense with four legacies of our World War II *amphibious* successes and replace them with premises that will enable future *joint* littoral victories by JATFs.

### **Premise #1: Amphibious Operations No Longer Accomplish Naval Objectives**

*"Whether the superior staff will incline towards the naval or military view will depend on whether the greater danger likely to be incurred is from the sea or on land."*

*Julian Corbett, Some Principles of Maritime Strategy, 1911*

*"In theory, the planning of a joint amphibious operation should centre on the requirements of the ground forces and their mission. In practice many factors combined to ensure that this logic was lost in a morass of confusion, disorganization and disharmony"*

*Carlo D'Este, Bitter Victory: The Battle for Sicily*

Forces landed from the sea no longer accomplish the strictly naval missions of seizing and defending advance naval bases. In the most likely contingencies, they will aim at affecting centers of gravity that are on land, not on atolls in the center of a vast ocean. Like the Inchon masterstroke, they will aim at objectives "more strategic than tactical."<sup>viii</sup> While operations to seize a port for the introduction of maritime prepositioning ships are likely, it is equally possible that forces from the sea could seize airfields for airlanded forces of the JTF. Amphibious operations, such as might be conducted on the Korean peninsula or in the Middle East, would come from the sea, but would do so in support of a JFC's campaign. As did MacArthur, future JFCs will remain well aware that a "full-scale amphibious operation is a high-stakes enterprise" that "should be used selectively when gains outweigh the risks."<sup>ix</sup> JFCs may be unwilling to delegate the authority for such an enterprise to a service or functional component, especially if there is any significant risk to the overall joint force mission should it not succeed.

Many landings during World War II were conducted under Navy command to seize naval objectives, but a significant number both then and since have been made with a JFC “at the helm.” In Sicily, Normandy, at Inchon, in Somalia and Haiti, Army officers were in overall command as the JFC, and the amphibious operations became a “seaward extension of land force.”<sup>x</sup> Even Eisenhower---a commander sensitive to service issues if there ever was one--- saw that the “naval plan” for OVERLORD was basically “general protection, mine sweeping, escorting, supporting fire” and logistics tasks in support of the joint force mission.<sup>xi</sup>

A sensible revision of Joint Pub 3-02 would take the inherent jointness of littoral operations into account. It would de-emphasize the centrality of the Navy in planning and conducting future littoral operations and emphasize, instead, the role played by the JFC. A “naval campaign,” such as the one conducted in the Central Pacific, is no longer part of our service lexicon. Future campaigns for “large and medium sized contingencies” will occur under “an overarching joint command framework.”<sup>xii</sup> While the theater may have a maritime dimension, JTF objectives will normally relate to decisive points ashore. A JFC’s littoral objectives will be attacked by “all facets of seapower... synchronized in support of this effort that is more *green* than *blue* in character....”<sup>xiii</sup> A revision of Joint Pub 3-02 with any hope of lasting significance would emphasize the JFC’s role in selecting objectives, assigning missions, dividing up battlespace and deciding command relationships. The “basic decisions” in amphibious operations that were once CATF’s should, doctrinally, become the JFC’s. The JFC should determine the task force mission and landing force missions, approve the concept of operations ashore and select the D-Day and H-Hour in support of the joint force

overall. Doctrine should reflect reality. The reality, today and in the future, is that the JFC is the warfighter.

## **Premise #2: An Amphib Operation is as Complex as any other Joint Operation**

*“Admiral Horne, commander in chief of the fleet, delivered a brilliant exposition stressing the importance of timing to the amphibious landings of the future. Not only did we have to co-ordinate the landing boats...but perfect co-ordination of naval gunfire and air support was vital...”*

*A. A. Vandegrift, in reference 1934's amphibious experiments*

A frequently heard justification for having Navy officers in overall command of amphibious operations suggests that their complexity mandates a particular Navy expertise. Considering how few potential CATFs---numbered fleet commanders, carrier battle group commanders and other group commanders---have amphibious background, this line of reasoning makes little sense. Of the Navy's three Amphibious Groups, only one even includes the term “CATF” in its mission statement. PHIBGRU ONE will fight as the PHIBFOR for 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet---“responsible for the conduct of amphibious operations.”<sup>xiv</sup> PHIBGRU TWO “staff plans the loading, transport, landing and support of a brigade-sized landing force” and exercises “OPCON and TACON” of amphibious forces---the CWC role of amphibious warfare commander---not that of CATF.<sup>xv</sup> PHIBGRU THREE intends to “fight forward as CATF.”<sup>xvi</sup> By the CWC Manual, during amphibious operations, CATF is the “Officer in Tactical Command (OTC).”<sup>xvii</sup> PHIBGRU THREE's assertion that somebody would designate COMPHIBGRU THREE as CATF, and hence, OTC/CWC, is unlikely to come to pass as long as there are carrier battle groups around. Even in the remaining repository of amphibious expertise, the PHIBGRU---the doctrinal, Richmond Kelley Turneresque, all-powerful CATF of World War II---is nowhere to be seen. He has passed from the scene, replaced by a CWC embarked on a carrier or Aegis cruiser.

The “complexity” of amphibious operations to which Joint Pub 3-02 refers involves, in the main, controlling *platforms* during ship-to-shore movement. The Navy control organizations responsible to CATF are vestiges of an era when hundred of transports closed to within 2000 yards of a defended beach, under fire, to disgorge thousands of landing craft. The common relevant operating picture offered by NCW will, in the words of one historian of amphibious operations, “mark the end of the traditional, parade ground formations that lumber, wave after wave, fitfully towards a broad beach in daylight behind an open control boat.”<sup>xviii</sup> The same battlespace awareness that will give the JTF a common air picture will also deconflict platforms transiting the comparatively clutter-free environments of air and sea.<sup>xix</sup> In Desert Storm, we deconflicted “122 air refueling tracks, 660 restricted operation zones, 312 missile engagement zones, 78 strike corridors, 92 combat air patrol stations and 32 training areas” without benefit of NCW.<sup>xx</sup> Over 250 craft landed in the first 30 minutes at Okinawa, controlled without benefit of NCW. In 2010, there will be some 36 amphibious ships in the Navy---one-fourth the number of transports at Inchon and over 1300 fewer ships than supported the Sicily landings.<sup>xxi</sup> The Corps is buying only about a thousand AAV’s, some 250 of which can fit aboard the ships that would support a brigade-sized landing. They will, with on-board GPS technology and communication suites, self-deconflict based on a common operating picture and a network “rules set.”<sup>xxii</sup> Order of magnitude reductions in the scale of the landings from those of World War Two and the benefits of automated deconfliction will make the legacy idea of “control” obsolete.

Our amphibious platforms and landing craft are too few and too expensive to risk them at another Tarawa. Landing in the face of beach defenses is not how OMFTS will

project forces onto a hostile shore. In the future, forces, not platforms, will maneuver at sea to a position of advantage. In OMFTS, the landing force battlespace begins in the ocean; the lines of departure are at the well deck and flight deck, not in boat lanes within sight of the beach. Troops in craft are not the “inert passengers and cargo” that they were in 1944.<sup>xxiii</sup> Maneuver from the sea will be based on the situation ashore, not on a schedule for landing troops and equipment at a prescribed place, in a predetermined sequence, under the Navy’s positive control.

Deconfliction considerations are no justification for organizing a force or deciding who commands. JFCs “organize forces to accomplish the mission” while “maintaining the tactical and operational integrity of Service organizations”--- not to make centralized control possible.<sup>xxiv</sup> As written, Joint Pub 3-02 centralizes positive control under Navy organizations, some of which, while doctrinally CATF’s, now belong to the CWC. Our doctrine should reflect decentralized execution, self-control and the possibilities of future automated deconfliction. Our amphibious experts, both Navy and landing force, should focus their efforts on advising JFCs and CWC/OTCs how service and functional components can best accomplish their missions. The Joint Pub 3-02 should reflect this advisory role rather than gratuitously assert the “experts” will find themselves in charge.

### **Premise #3: Maritime Componentcy No Longer Achieves Unity of Command**

*“...the Marine Corps of the navy is a highly useful organization...”*

*Lawrence Perry, Our Navy in the War, 1918*

*“...provide fleet marine forces of combined arms...for service with the fleet in the seizure and defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign.”*

*Role of the Marine Corps, Title 10, United States Code*

When the Marine Corps and the Navy developed amphibious doctrine, there was little question of who would command a “naval overseas expedition.” Doctrine specified that

a naval overseas expedition would be part of a naval campaign, conducted by a task force of the fleet and commanded by a Navy flag officer. Command relations were taken for granted, "...since the Fleet Marine Force was by definition under the administrative command of the navy, many of these latent difficulties were theoretically eliminated. Consequently, the Tentative Landing Manual devotes comparatively little space to the question."<sup>xxv</sup> Because the doctrine writers of the 1930's envisioned threats to the fleet from peer naval competitors, they designed amphibious operations with a decidedly maritime flavor. Land-based aircraft merely supported maritime campaigns in a manner dictated by Navy commanders; their use seemed inefficient and it irritated airmen.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Much has changed in sixty years. The Marine Corps is no longer under the administrative command of the Navy. The Corps is a separate naval service, and provides a service component commander to any JTF that includes Marine Corps forces. Marine Corps forces *may* fight as Fleet Marine Forces---as a type commander under a Navy fleet---but that is no longer the sole method of fighting the Corps.<sup>xxvii</sup> Marines may just as easily be tasked by a JFC via their service component. Marine Corps doctrine implies that tasking through the Marine Corps Forces component commander is the preferred method of tasking the MAGTFs.

On the surface, tasking MAGTFs through the Marine component commander might appear to violate the Title 10 role of the Corps. It does not.<sup>xxviii</sup> Title 10 does not specify "service with the fleet" is the only method of employing the Corps. In fact, standing, forward-deployed landing forces serve with the fleet every day. General Vandegrift, arguing for the Corps' survival in 1947, might easily have been describing today's Amphibious Ready Group (ARG) and Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations

Capable) when he spoke of a force for “minor expeditions, such have frequently occurred in the past.” Vandegrift reminded Congress that “lives and money were often saved, both to the United States and to the countries assisted, by the prompt availability of a subordinate naval land element.”<sup>xxxix</sup> As far as ARG/MEU(SOC) goes, the Corps recognizes that “small contingencies, of a coup de main nature, might be hindered by jointness” for jointness’ sake.<sup>xxx</sup> Even the foremost advocates of retaining CATF/CLF recognize that ARG/MEU(SOC) operations differ from the large-scale amphibious operations discussed in the Joint Pub 3-02.<sup>xxxi</sup> The Corps remains committed to the ARG/MEU(SOC) team. Revising Joint Pub 3-02 to account for littoral operations in a joint environment is not the same as bowing out of “service with the fleet.”

The Air Force, is, as well, a separate service, responsible to the JFC for the conduct of many facets of air operations that the doctrine writers of the 1930’s could not imagine when they described CATF’s role. Unity of command in air and space operations under a CATF is unlikely if the forces involved are flying from outside the geographical bounds of the theater in support of a joint force air tasking order. In fact, the JFC may establish a JFACC to which CATF finds his aircraft subordinated in order to ensure unity of effort among the air forces of the JTF.

Functional components are not necessarily a part of all JTF’s, yet the Joint Pub 3-02 asserts de facto existence of a maritime component commander whose authority extends to all landing and air forces within a geographic region. JFCs *may* create functional components to “centralize selected functions within the joint force” but should “strive to avoid reducing the versatility, responsiveness and initiative of subordinate forces.”<sup>xxxii</sup> In a JTF where the landing force is composed of Army forces---the case if “adaptive

force packaging” is ever again attempted---the CATF/CLF relationship will be difficult to justify or enforce. Army component commanders may be reluctant to place *land* forces that will *fly* to their objectives from *seabased* platforms OPCON to CATF. It is not difficult to imagine an Army Forces Component/Joint Forces Land Component Commander marrying up with pre-positioned ships within the geographic boundaries of an Amphibious Objective Area. The difficulties of placing those forces OPCON to CATF are obvious; OPCON would certainly reduce the initiative of the Army forces flying in to marry up with their gear. Yet, by our doctrine, the ARFOR/JFLCC in this case would find himself OPCON to the CATF. Joint Pub 3-02 offers no other possible command relationship. The OTC/CWC’s staff in this case would find itself integrating Army officers, since, by doctrine, “functional component commanders staffs should reflect the composition of the functional component command...to effectively employ the forces made available.”<sup>xxxiii</sup>

The CATF/CLF relationship is an anomaly in joint doctrine. It defaults, as well, to de facto OPCON of one service by another. Elsewhere in joint doctrine, OPCON of a service component is the province of the JFC. The longstanding tradition of placing all forces operating in the same medium (land, sea or air) under a single commander in the name of unity of command is “nothing more than ‘management by molecular medium.’”<sup>xxxiv</sup> JFC’s influence actions by assigning missions and designating the priority effort, not by managing who owns what molecules.<sup>xxxv</sup> In a NCW environment, it makes no more sense to place landing forces OPCON to the Navy simply because they come “from the sea” than it would to place P-3’s hunting submarines OPCON to the JFACC, simply because they fly “in the air.” The degree to which we have practiced

with the “support” and “cooperate” relationships make OPCON of one service or functional component by another less and less attractive. In fact, of the 51 operations conducted by U.S. military forces from 1991 to 1995---mostly joint (including Navy forces) and mostly in the littoral---the majority used the “support” relationship.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

Joint Pub 3-02 starts to get it correct when it says a “combatant commander will participate in planning, theater integration and support” for an amphibious operation in order to ensure unity of effort and operational coherence.<sup>xxxvii</sup> Revisions to Joint Pub 3-02 should take into account that when “airborne, amphibious and air assault operations are combined, **unity of effort is vital** (emphasis in the original).”<sup>xxxviii</sup> Unity of effort does not necessarily imply unity of command below the level of the JFC. Even in the littoral, a JFC might employ the entire range of possible command and support relationships without hazarding unity of effort. Our update to amphibious doctrine should preserve the province of service component commanders to maintain OPCON of their forces whenever possible, and our revisions to Joint Pub 3-02 should include the broadest range of possible command and support relationships.

#### **Premise #4: CATF No Longer Commands His Battlespace**

When doctrine writers developed the idea of CATF, they decided to empower him with control over all aspects of operations within his battlespace. As ADM Blandy pointed out in 1951, this degree of authority (in the Central Pacific, at least) extended to control of land based aircraft operating in the objective area.<sup>xxxix</sup> CATFs controlled shore bombardment and transport groups, minesweeping and screening groups, even the carriers that supported the amphibious operations---at least in the Pacific. CATF existed to fight his way into a naval objective area, keep the enemy fleet at bay, and land the

landing forces. The threat posed by the Japanese fleet and the military geography of the Pacific confirmed the wisdom of these ideas.

Today, and in the future, the chain of command in the littoral looks less like that for an island attack in the Central Pacific and more like the one used for OVERLORD.<sup>x1</sup> Air forces, commanded and coordinated by a JFACC, will strike targets in support of the JFC's mission. They may come from land bases far outside the JFC's theater. Carrier aviation may, as it did in the Adriatic in 1999, fly the JTF's air taskings, not those of a Navy commander. Long-range surface-to-surface fires, air launched cruise missiles, special operations forces and non-lethal fires may be delivered within, through or in proximity to what would have been, sixty years ago, CATF's discrete chunk of "air, sea and land space necessary for the conduct of amphibious operations"---an Amphibious Objective Area (AOA). Forces may land by sea and air to attack objectives chosen by the JFC. No longer is the CATF responsible for---or even capable of---controlling the entire scope of operational functions or tactical actions that will occur within his AOA. As importantly, the naval threat that might require CATF fight his way into maritime battlespace, unaided by a CWC or JFC, no longer exists.

The physical realities of potential amphibious battlefields may make it impossible to carve out and assign an AOA to a CATF. The Persian Gulf, Adriatic Sea, Red Sea and Korean Peninsula are small, crowded battlespaces when compared to those of the vast Pacific. Furthermore, the geographic commanders for these regions have, in place, organizational structures that may not accommodate a naval "bubble" of sea, air and land space to develop in their midst.<sup>xli</sup> Even N86, the Surface Warfare Division of the United States Navy, recognizes that "maritime dominance" relates more to dominating the

“seaward extension of the littoral to provide joint and combined forces unimpeded access” than it does to simply controlling the sea for Navy purpose. The mission of the Surface Warfare Division includes “land attack” “in support of the land campaign”, in response to OMFTS and in a “commitment to supporting our forces ashore, on a joint battlefield.”<sup>xlii</sup> Surface warriors are looking inland to a joint battlefield, while our concept of CATF remains rooted in the purely naval experiences of the Central Pacific.

Now, and in the future, our advances in communications make it likely that *commanders* will go ashore to get a firsthand perspective, while their *facilities* to command and coordinate the landing force remain safely at sea. In 1997, a fleet commander claimed his communications were seamless “from shore to sea.”<sup>xliii</sup> Doctrinally, an AOA exists until CLF transitions ashore and indicates that he is capable of assuming command. CATFs control AOAs; one does not exist without the other. If CLF never transitions command ashore, the AOA exists indefinitely. Clearly, the architects of CATF/CLF never envisioned that CLF might never transition ashore. OMFTS asserts it will be the norm.

AOAs have specific rules and procedures for control of aircraft and missiles, coordination of fires and coordination of intelligence requirements that apply nowhere else in joint doctrine. The Joint Pub 3-02 spends pages explaining these “amphibious rules” that need no longer apply in an era of self-deconflicting projectiles and networked platforms. The architects of CATF and CLF never imagined that an AOA might abut a JFC’s air, land and sea space where the joint rules applied. The “fixes” applied to Joint Pub 3-02 have created complications where complications need not exist.

In the future, NCW promises to make seaspace nothing more than a different medium in which forces operate. Now, and in even more so in the future, the battlespace belongs to the JFC; we should revise the Joint Pub 3-02 to say so. Without an AOA in which he has control and without the requirement to transition control to a CLF ashore, CATF no longer needs to exist as such.

### **The Commander, Joint Amphib Task Force (CJATF) Replaces CATF and CLF**

*“At the start a new candidate for paradigm may have few supporters, and on occasions the supporters’ motives may be suspect. Nevertheless, if they are competent, they will improve it, explore its possibilities and show what it would be like to belong to the community guided by it.”*

*T. S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 1962*

*“It is, therefore, in its end---war---that organization must find the conditions dictating its character. Whatever the system adopted, it must aim above all at perfect efficiency in military action; and the nearer it approaches to this ideal the better it is.”*

*Alfred Thayer Mahan, Principles of Naval Administration, 1903*

The “Joint Amphibious Task Force (JATF)” described in Joint Pub 3-02, can, with modifications, satisfy all the services’ requirements for command and control of air, land and sea forces in the littoral. The Joint Pub already allows a JFC to exercise command of an ATF directly---which will work. He can, as well, delegate this authority to a service component---though not necessarily the Navy. By the Joint Pub 3-02, a functional component can command the ATF. Finally, a JFC can form a subordinate JTF---a Joint Amphibious Task Force (JATF)---for the purpose of conducting the amphibious operation.<sup>xliv</sup> None of these options mandate that CJATF be a Navy officer. Despite what some advocates of radical reform, particularly in the Marine Corps, might advocate, it is not in the best interest of any of the services to mandate that CJATF be a Marine or other land force commander. The decision on who should be CJATF should rest with the geographic commander in chief, based solely on the requirements of the situation and the task at hand. This is not to say that CJATF might not be a Navy officer, just that he need

no longer be. Cookie-cutter approaches to organizational decisions occur nowhere in joint doctrine---they should not apply in the littoral.

CJATF is best envisioned as a JTF commander, with all the responsibilities and authority inherent in JTF command, to include deciding the command relationships between components of the force. If subordinate to a senior JFC, the CJATF will ensure that the joint mission is the pre-eminent focus of the amphibious force as a whole. He will serve as the common superior who can resolve disagreements between service components and make informed decisions on where and when to accept risk, keeping the mission of the entire joint force foremost in his mind. As the lead element of a larger JTF in a developing contingency, a CJATF can establish the initial battlespace geometry with an eye towards keeping the architecture the same from the opening gambit through decisive combat operations. A CJATF can best integrate the functions of Special Operations Forces, Army forces and Air Force forces that may be required to support or enable the littoral operations, but may only be *virtually* present when the JATF arrives in its operating area. By establishing a CJATF, we eliminate the fits and starts of transitioning command and control from one service or functional component to another that are inherent in our current amphibious doctrine. By establishing a JATF, in a Joint Operating Area, we will eliminate the special rules that apply only in an AOA. The CJATF, the "purple," honest-broker to whom all physically and virtually present land, sea, air and special operations forces report, becomes the personification of unity of effort that will allow future littoral operations to succeed. The JATF staff will include experts who can de-mystify the apparent complexities of amphibious operations, maritime pre-positioning operations, joint air and space operations, joint special operations and other

specialties. The JATF staff, “plugged in” to both service and functional architectures will ensure the benefits of NCW are applied to the littoral. The JATF will replace the traditional construct of CATF/CLF with command and control doctrine that will enable future expeditionary victories.

CATF and CLF are proud legacies of a period when the Navy and Marine Corps team conducted a successful island-hopping campaign across a vast ocean against a peer maritime competitor. Yet, as are many legacies, they are vestiges of an earlier time that need not be retained and cannot be reconciled with our current world-view. Copernicus’ heliocentric world supplanted the Ptolemaic construct of a geocentric universe without retaining any of its features.<sup>xlv</sup> We would not think of designing a mission to outer space that accommodated Ptolemy’s view, yet we retain an aged paradigm---CATF and CLF---out of sentimental attachment to their historic legacy. Eliminating CATF and CLF from our doctrine will be an emotional undertaking, but, as General Vandegrift reminded us in 1947, “Sentiment is not a valid consideration in determining questions of national security.”<sup>xlvi</sup> It is time we replaced CATF’s hold on amphibious operations with the primacy of the JFC. Elsewhere in joint doctrine, the JFC has become the center of the universe. Only in our amphibious doctrine do we hold to an old view of how the world works. By moving beyond this old view, we might approach Mahan’s “perfect efficiency” in the littorals of the future.

## NOTES

- <sup>i</sup> Navy Department, *Naval Warfare*, NDP-1 (Washington: 1994) p. 25, 61
- <sup>ii</sup> Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, *The MAGTF in Sustained Operations Ashore, United States Marine Corps Warfighting Concepts for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Washington: 1998), IV-3 to IV-10.
- <sup>iii</sup> Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, *Beyond C2, United States Marine Corps Warfighting Concepts for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Washington: 1998) V-6 to V-7
- <sup>iv</sup> For a list of examples of "virtual" collaboration and presence, see David S. Alberts, John J. Garstka and Frederick P. Stein, *Network Centric Warfare: Developing and Leveraging Information Superiority*, (Washington, DC: C4ISR Cooperative Research Program, 1999) pp.108-114.
- <sup>v</sup> Sheila E. Widnall and Ronald R. Fogleman, *Global Presence, Joint Force Quarterly*, Spring '95, pp. 94-99
- <sup>vi</sup> Department of the Air Force, *Global Attack in Global Engagement: A Vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Air Force*, Washington, D.C. 1997
- <sup>vii</sup> Headquarters United States Army, "Army Vision Statement" *Army Vision* <<http://www.army.mil/armyvision/vision.htm>>(20 Jan 2000)
- <sup>viii</sup> LtGen B. E. Trainor, USMC (Ret), *Amphibious Operations in the Gulf War, Marine Corps Gazette*, Aug '94, pp. 57-60.
- <sup>ix</sup> Trainor, pp. 57-60.
- <sup>x</sup> Major Chris Bourne, USMC, *Old Joint Team Needs a New Approach, Proceedings*, Apr '98, pp. 47-51
- <sup>xi</sup> D. D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York: H. Wolff, 1948) 237.
- <sup>xii</sup> Steven L. Canby, *Roles, Missions and JTF's: Unintended Consequences, Joint Force Quarterly*, Autumn/Winter '94-95, pp. 68-75
- <sup>xiii</sup> Gen Carl Mundy, Jr. USMC, *Thunder and Lighting: Joint Littoral Warfare, Joint Force Quarterly*, Spring '94, pp. 45-50.
- <sup>xiv</sup> COMPHIBGRU ONE, "Mission" <<http://www.ctf76.navy.mil/mission.htm>>(11 Jan 2000)
- <sup>xv</sup> COMPHIBGRU TWO, "Mission Statement" <<http://www.phibgru2.spear.navy.mil/cpg2>>(11 Jan 2000)
- <sup>xvi</sup> COMPHIBGRU THREE, "Mission" <[http://www.cpg3.navy.mil/mission\\_statement.htm](http://www.cpg3.navy.mil/mission_statement.htm)>(11 Jan 2000)
- <sup>xvii</sup> Navy Department, *Composite Warfare Commanders Manual*, NWP 3-56 (Washington: 1999) para 3.1.4
- <sup>xviii</sup> Col J. H. Alexander, USMC (ret), *Sea Soldiers in the Cold War* (Annapolis, United States Naval Institute Press, 1994) pp. 173-175.
- <sup>xix</sup> Even Martin Van Creveld, no great fan of technological panaceas, agrees that automated deconfliction as promised by NCW is possible at sea and in the air. See his *Technology and War* (New York: Free Press, 1994) pp. 228-229.
- <sup>xx</sup> Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti War: Survival at the Dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (New York: Little, Brown and Co, 1993) p. 78.
- <sup>xxi</sup> For Inchon numbers, see Michael T. Isenberg, *Shield of the Republic: The United States Navy in an Era of Cold War and Violent Peace, 1945-1962* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993) p. 197. For Sicily numbers, see Samuel Eliot Morison's *the Two Ocean War: A Short History of the United States Navy in the Second World War* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963) p. 248.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Even in the comparatively cluttered environment of land operations, networked actors in a complex nodal network can achieve "deconfliction" by applying rules sets as part of their programming. Individual platforms and maneuver units will, if networked and provided a rules set, self-synchronize and self-deconflict. See Andrew Ilachinski, *Land Warfare and Complexity, Part II: An Assessment of the Applicability of Nonlinear Dynamic and Complex Systems Theory to the Study of Land Warfare*, (Alexandria, VA: Center for Naval Analyses, 1996) p. 88-102.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> ADM W. H. P. Blandy, USN (Ret), *Command Relations in Amphibious Warfare, Proceedings*, June, 1951, pp. 569-581.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*(Joint Pub 3-0)(Washington: 1 Feb 1995) p II-10
- <sup>xxv</sup> Jeter Isely and Philip Crowl, *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War* (Princeton, NJ,: Princeton University Press, 1951) pp. 37-38

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- <sup>xxvi</sup> Kenneth Allard, Command, Control and the Common Defense, (Washington DC, National Defense University, 1991) pp. 99-113.
- <sup>xxvii</sup> Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, Componency (Marine Corps Warfighting Publication 0-1.11) (Washington: 1998) pp. 6-8, 11-39.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Maj Henry Black, USMC, *Don't Forget the Fleet*, Proceedings, Nov '98, pp 33-34.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Gen A.A. Vandegrift, USMC and Robert Asprey, Once A Marine (New York: Ballantine Books, 1964) p. 256.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Canby, p. 68-75.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> RADM L. F. Picotte (Ret.) and CAPT Kendall King, USN (Ret.), *Amphibious Redux*, Proceedings, Jun '97, pp. 63-65.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Joint Pub 3-0, p. II-11
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)(Joint Pub 0-2)(Washington: 24 Feb 1995) p. IV-19
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Gen C. C. Krulak, USMC, *Doctrine for Joint Force Integration*, Joint Force Quarterly, Winter '96-97, pp. 20-22.
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Joint Pub 3-0, p. II-15
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Col R. K. Dobson, USMC, *Comment and Discussion re: "CNEF, We Hardly Knew Ye"*, Proceedings, March '98, p. 12-13
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Amphibious Operations (Joint Pub 3-02)(Washington: 8 Oct 1992) p. II-3.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> JP 3-0, p. IV-10.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> Blandy, p. 574.
- <sup>xl</sup> ADM Blandy uses ADM Ramsey's "command" of the "naval task and assault force" and RADM Kirk's authority over LtGen Bradley's landing forces during the landing phase of NEPTUNE/OVERLORD as examples of CATF's proper role. In fact, by our doctrine, since neither officer had control over air operations, neither officer was a CATF. See Blandy p. 574-575 and Picotte, p. 63.
- <sup>xli</sup> LtCol T. X Hammes, USMC, *Let CLF Do It*, Marine Corps Gazette, Mar '97, pp-19-21.
- <sup>xlii</sup> N86, Surface Warfare Division homepage <<http://www.surfacewarfare.nswc.navy.mil>>(11 Jan 2000)
- <sup>xliii</sup> ADM Archie Clemins, USN, *Info Superiority in the Pacific Fleet*, Joint Force Quarterly, Winter '97-98, pp. 67-70.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Joint Pub 3-02, p. II-2.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Thomas S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, 2d ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1962) pp. 156-157. Kuhn is the inventor of the modern usage of the now overused word "paradigm." Kuhn's "paradigm" relates to a world-view that is held as irrefutable fact...until something comes along that better explains how the world works.
- <sup>xlvi</sup> Gordon W. Keiser, The U.S. Marine Corps and Defense Unification 1944-47 (Baltimore, MD: The Nautical and Aviation Publishing Co. of America, Inc., 1996) p. 56.

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