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Taking Joint Intelligence Operations to the Next Level

Army and Air Force personnel receive intelligence briefing for Exercise Atlantic Strike V

2nd Communications Squadron (Stephen Otero)

By TYLER AKERS

The Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC) at U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) achieved initial operational capability in January 2006. After 18 months, it is already setting a new standard for joint intelligence operations in the Pacific. Aggressive collaboration and integration with operators, planners, and the broader Intelligence Community have enhanced capability, improved predictive analysis, and, most importantly, provided operators with the intelligence support they need.

Today, we continue to press for further gains in the effective execution of theater intelligence operations. Our main efforts follow two primary lines of operation. First, we focus on processes. We must continue to drive intelligence out of "intel-only" quarters and into venues that operators and foreign partners can use. Integrating all available intelligence into theater operations is our goal. Second, we must continue to develop a culture that empowers our talented workforce and enables us to master the intelligence environment. Effective intelligence operations depend on more than sophisticated sensor technologies. Delivering the full potential of intelligence assets requires bold analysis, innovation, and vigorous collaboration.

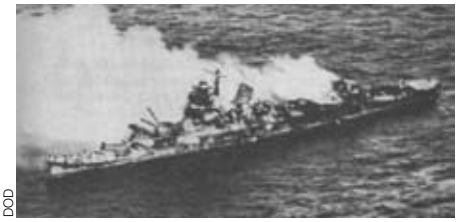
Captain Tyler Akers, USNR, is Chief of the U.S. Pacific Command Joint Intelligence Operations Center Futures Branch.

Rethinking Intelligence

The JIOC concept was created by an initiative to improve intelligence support to military operations. The initiative, "Remodeling Defense Intelligence," was issued in 2003 by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence. It examined intelligence performance during major operations, including *Iraqi Freedom*. The study also examined the strategy, operations, and manpower requirements needed to master intelligence for tomorrow's fight. In particular, the study found defense intelligence—though quite capable of locating conventional military forces—lacking in its ability to determine objectives, methods, and operations of nontraditional threat groups such as al Qaeda. It challenged defense intelligence to break down bureaucratic and technological barriers to intelligence integration among Department of Defense agencies and specifically encouraged the elimination of obstacles between the Intelligence Community and operational end-users.

Moreover, the initiative directed the establishment of JIOCs, which were charged with responsibility to synchronize capabilities of the Services, components, and agencies; streamline processes; and improve intelligence tradecraft by increasing the analytic depth of our workforce. By exercising these responsibilities in the Asia-Pacific, we are enabling more

agile intelligence operations and providing the sound intelligence that underpins effective theater military plans and operations—across the full spectrum of operations, from planning for pandemics, to monitoring proliferation of fissile material, to providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.



DOD

DOD

Left: Japanese battleship on fire after Battle of Midway
Right: Japanese fleet under attack at Midway

The Concept

One question that inevitably arises during JIOC command briefings is how the USPACOM JIOC is different from its predecessor, the Joint Intelligence Center Pacific. While the transition has transformed organizational processes, the highest impact change has been the shift in mindset at JIOC, which welcomes cross-agency collaboration and demands routine operations and intelligence interface, creating the energy and momentum that allow our new processes to succeed.

U.S. Pacific Command has a long history of aggressive intelligence and operations collaboration that was forged in World War II and is illustrative of the modern JIOC concept. At Midway, for instance, intelligence operations played a pivotal role in the outcome of the epic naval battle. In the spring of 1942, the U.S. Pacific Fleet was badly outmatched by the Japanese navy. Eighteen ships had been sunk or damaged during the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the aircraft carrier USS *Lexington* had been lost during the Battle of Coral Sea.

The JIOC portion of the Midway story begins on Station Hypo at Pearl Harbor, where U.S. Sailors were attempting to break the Japanese naval code in collaboration with fellow code-breakers in Australia and Washington, DC. By early May, naval intelligence was confident that the Japanese navy was planning a major operation at an objective known as "AF." Midway was suspected, but the precarious position of the U.S. Pacific Fleet demanded a higher degree of confidence in the intelligence assessment. In collaboration with operators and planners, the intelligence team formulated a plan that directed U.S. forces on Midway to send out an uncoded message stating that the water distillation plant there had broken down. Within 48 hours of sending the false report from Midway, a Japanese naval message was decrypted that indicated AF was short of water. Further coordination among cryptanalysts and all-source intelligence teams allowed them to predict when and where the Japanese strike force would appear. This, in turn, enabled Admiral Chester Nimitz to marshal U.S. forces at the right time and place to engage and defeat the Japanese.

At Midway, collaboration among theater, national, and allied intelligence professionals, across all intelligence disciplines and absent information barriers, was essential in anticipating the Japanese threat and providing warning of the impending attack. Close integration among operators, planners, and intelligence analysts allowed the United States to improve the confidence of intelligence estimates and generate actionable products that led to victory at Midway and turned the tide of the war in the Pacific.

"Remodeling Defense Intelligence" found defense intelligence lacking in its ability to determine objectives, methods, and operations of nontraditional threat groups

To create the JIOC, we concentrated on aligning our operations with theater priorities, implementing processes designed to improve theater intelligence, and building a culture committed to aggressive collaboration. Most significantly, we grouped major analytic efforts into four divisions aligned along theater priorities: China, counterterrorism, North Korea, and the Pan-Pacific. To break down internal barriers, we embedded within each division not only all-source intelligence analysts but also planners; collections, targeting, and foreign disclosure experts; and graphics and collaboration experts. Recognizing that 21st-century intelligence challenges require a more agile and mature workforce, we also raised grade and experience levels for all key positions.

Enablers

There are three critical enablers for JIOC operations: Intelligence Campaign Planning (ICP), Red Teaming, and Open Source Intelligence (OSINT) use.

ICP—the intelligence version of Adaptive Planning—allows the JIOC to improve support to theater military planning. Adaptive Planning is a joint process under development that is designed to make the planning process more seamless and to produce high-standard plans faster. It is also designed to help generate plans that mitigate risk by offering options for changing conditions. At USPACOM, we used ICP to review the intelligence portions of all major theater operational plans. Doing so requires significant collaboration among national and theater intelligence organizations and has proven to be an excellent way to validate the effectiveness of this planning tool.

Another key enabler is Red Teaming, which provides an alternative (non-U.S.) perspective and allows hedging against conventional analysis, which is often constrained by what we know or think we know. Red Teaming taps the expertise of critical and creative thinkers and is designed to encourage consideration of overlooked possibilities, challenge assumptions, and present issues in a cultural context or from a different perspective. The success of our first application of Red Teaming during last year's Exercise Terminal Fury was quickly followed by production of our Red Team's assessment on North Korea: "What if Kim Jong-Il Were Willing to Give Up His Nuclear Weapons?"

Our third critical JIOC enabler, OSINT, is integral to comprehensive intelligence analysis. Open source intelligence considers the enormous amount of publicly available information and is critical to monitoring indications and providing analysis, assessments, and threat warnings across a huge and well-connected geographic area.

Our OSINT effort has been quite successful thanks to a joint approach that leverages the unique capabilities and strengths of the component commands. We credit much of our initial success to U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC). As the USPACOM executive agent for OSINT, USARPAC consolidated existing and emerging OSINT capabilities and is now developing procedures for managing OSINT requirements.

USARPAC leadership in this undertaking illustrates the critical role our components play in building new intelligence capabilities in U.S. Pacific Command. Our other components lead several other OSINT-related initiatives. U.S. Pacific Air Forces lead theater distributed common ground station integration; U.S. Pacific Fleet is charged with increasing maritime domain awareness in the Asia-Pacific; and Marine Forces Pacific play a critical role in theater intelligence security cooperation.

Navy intelligence officers discuss operations with Australian officer during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2007

U.S. Navy (Jeremy L. Wood)

Cornerstones of Culture

The cornerstones of a successful JIOC culture are innovation, collaboration, and "staying low." We are bringing forth smaller, more frequent experimentation and assessment to test JIOC ability to adapt and to see what we can do to meet emerging opportunities and challenges more rapidly. One such recent effort employed Intellipedia, a sort of classified Wikipedia. We experimented with Intellipedia during a December 2006 exercise and quickly improved the speed of intelligence collaboration and delivery. This innovative effort improved the effectiveness and capacity of our people by enhancing their ability to share, work together, and create knowledge that end-users need.

Our focus on aggressive collaboration as part of our culture extends far beyond Intellipedia. It permeates all that we do. An example is our morning intelligence brief, attended by J3 and J5 and their staffs, component intelligence representatives, national agency partners, and JIOC reserve centers. The brief is collaborative and, more importantly, allows time for immediate feedback among intelligence personnel, operators, and planners. Collaboration is further augmented with a monthly Analyst and J5 Desk Officer Forum that ensures exchange of planning and insights. Additionally, analytic divisions, through regular video teleconferences with major theater joint task forces and components, share as much as possible about theater operations and plans. Finally, we employ a Combined Joint Collection Management Board that includes Australia and works to ensure that our collection priorities and outcomes are as efficient and effective as possible.

To facilitate emergence from the legacy, intelligence-only mindset, the JIOC has adopted a stay-low policy to improve the dissemination of intelligence and information to theater and partner nation forces. The two major components of this policy are "Secret Internet Protocol Router Network (SIPRNET) first" and "write for release." *SIPRNET first* means that we make every effort to post our products on SIPRNET rather than on the more-restrictive Joint World-wide Intelligence Communication System. *Write for release* means that we strive to write intelligence products in such a way as to allow release to foreign partners by our foreign disclosure officers.

to create the Joint Intelligence Operations Center, we concentrated on aligning our operations with theater priorities

This stay-low policy is enforced from the top. Use of material not releasable to foreign nationals requires approval from the division chief, and analysts are charged with obtaining releasable products to ensure that our assessments reach the largest audience possible. Today, in the interest of common security concerns, we focus on what we can share rather than on what we cannot. The need-to-know mindset has evolved into a responsibility-to-share mindset.

The Way Ahead

The next steps in the development of the USPACOM JIOC are to assess existing initiatives, adopt successful ones, and discard the others. Our leadership and execution teams are developing and carrying out several initiatives to improve JIOC capabilities. Over the next year, JIOC will focus on creating new capability in five thrust areas:

- deepening and broadening integration of intelligence, plans, and operations
- strengthening integration of national, interagency, component, and foreign partners
- investing in our people to thrive in a complex environment
- institutionalizing practices and standards that deliver ready knowledge online
- pursuing and incorporating best practices and instilling a "learning organization" mindset.

An ambitious new document from the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence, "JIOC After Next," provides a draft outline of the vision for JIOCs from 2010 to 2015. An overriding premise of this vision is that networks are more effective than hierarchies in the intelligence business. We see this network-of-networks vision as a long-term opportunity to enhance JIOC effectiveness.

Although implementing lasting change is difficult, our people have made significant progress. Process and culture changes at the JIOC have greatly enhanced security and stability in the Asia-Pacific. Many challenges and opportunities remain, however, and continued success lies in our ability to think and act anew. It is imperative that we do so. **JFQ**