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Stay Engaged



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By COL Jeffrey C. Horne

Employment of Space-based capabilities has become so seamless that some aren't consciously aware that we are using them. Even as a Soldier is using his cell phone to call home, it might not occur to him that he's using Space-based technology. Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom provide multiple examples of Space-based combat power enablers:

- First, use of Space control in support of military operations
- Global, embedded, real-time precision navigation and targeting
- In-theater, direct downlink missile warning
- Reliable, wideband, on-demand communications
- National intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance in support of theater commander requirements (Embedded dissemination and processing capability greatly reduced timelines to divisions.)
- Near real-time, accurate geospatial intelligence from Department of Defense (DoD) and commercial venues
- Deployment of cohesive, trained Space units and professionals (See ASJ, April 2004 for more information)

The experiences and lessons from Operation Iraqi Freedom have served to crystallize the need for additional capabilities in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), satellite communications and Space control. We've learned that today's combat operations advance so quickly that our ground-based communications assets can't always keep up - they don't always have the time to stop and set up. One of the Army's top-most priorities for the future is to improve our communications on the move capability. Small numbers of Airmen used Space-enabled communications with their unmanned aerial vehicles

(UAVs) to track down and attack the enemy, run reconnaissance missions and provide battlefield damage assessments - tasks formerly accomplished with large units supporting reconnaissance aircraft, both on the ground and in the air. Enhanced unmanned aircraft supported by worldwide Space-based platforms have enabled our Soldiers and Airmen to be employed in other areas, expanding our warfighting capabilities.

The secretary of defense recently stated, "Space and information are not only enablers, but core warfighting competencies." Space operators have a lot to live up to. We must continue to advocate Space-based capabilities for the land forces and stay engaged with our joint and Army partners to complete our gap analysis and develop joint solutions.

The 2005 Army Modernization Plan states that the Army will use today's capabilities to sustain our current global commitments and expand the search for future force capabilities to enhance our dominance as a joint land force. Space operators must view this task through the eyes of both our operational formations and the work of our research and development teams. We will serve with existing capabilities while seeking the latest, cutting edge technology for early transition to our operational formations. We must do this with constrained resources, within a joint architecture and within a joint concept of operations.

The Army Plan's attitude of "purposeful reliance" requires us to engage and team with branch proponents and the Army staff to ensure that the Army's Space-based needs are met. Space operators and leaders know that Space-based assets enable maneuver, fires, combat service support, mobility, survivability, command and control, and air and missile defense. But, given constrained resources, how does the Army select our most critical and promising capability enhancements?

We must continue to expand our horizons to provide joint task force and combatant commanders with ever expanding options to achieve strategic responsiveness, precision fires and operational maneuver. Partnerships, planning, creation of forums for key decisions at both the Army and joint level are emerging to help us accomplish these tasks.

The Army Space Master Plan (ASMP) and the Army Space Council (ASC) will support this task. Over the past two years U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command's (SMDC's) Directorate of Combat Developments compiled, wrote and coordinated a new ASMP. We anticipate the document to be signed in May 2005, the first update since 1997. The ASMP identifies key Space-related tasks, capability gaps and provides a roadmap for the Army to address the challenges presented. The plan addresses doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel and facilities (DOTMLPF) solutions to Space mission needs, and takes a first shot at integrating our current-to-future science and technology plans. Additionally, the document links various proponent efforts to achieve the goals, objectives and characteristics of the future force and the Army Campaign Plan and links our efforts to DoD efforts, specifically the National Security Space Plan.

The ASMP will assist the Army Space Council, a new three-star forum comprised of key members of the Army Staff, Training and Doctrine Command and SMDC, by identifying key issues and decisions facing the Army. This effort will enhance unity of effort within the Army as we plan, coordinate, integrate, synchronize and execute Space-related activities and interface with the joint community. We anticipate that the ASMP will be used as a basis for Army leaders to constructively engage and approve annual execution plans and coordination of long-term budget decisions.

None of this should hinder cross-proponent integration or decision processes. An example is provided through our work with the intelligence community to optimize the Spectral Operations Resource Center (SORC). Since 1990, it has been using Space-based assets and teaming with the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) and other government agencies to provide geospatial information (image maps and products) to Army Space Support Teams, in-theater warfighters, DoD and government organizations and non-governmental agencies. Over time the SORC was expanded

to include multi- and hyper-spectral analysis. Recently we resolved competing perspectives between various communities by agreeing to expand and transform the SORC into a Measurement and Signatures Intelligence (MASINT) Node supporting U.S. Strategic Command. It will become part of an Army-wide network of nodes supporting regional combatant commands with an initial operational capability by July 2005.

MASINT is technically derived intelligence that detects, locates, tracks, identifies and describes the unique characteristics of target sources. Capabilities include radar, laser, optical, spectral, acoustic, nuclear radiation, radio frequency and seismic analysis. It can be used for military operations, counter-narcotics, fire fighting, treaty verification, environmental monitoring and more. MASINT covers the entire electromagnetic spectrum from low frequency and sound waves through infrared and visible light to high frequency nuclear radiation. The SORC will continue with its current spectral expertise and expand to include capabilities throughout the entire electromagnetic spectrum. This change didn't take away from the SORC's capabilities or its support to warfighters; it merely expanded it.

Partnerships like these enable us to provide our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines with the best tools available. We must continue to expand our horizons to provide joint task force and combatant commanders with ever expanding options to achieve strategic responsiveness, precision fires and operational maneuver. Partnerships, planning, creation of forums for key decisions at both the Army and joint level are emerging to help us accomplish these tasks. While we expect great fiscal challenges, we believe the future of Space professionals and the capability they provide is very bright due to the efforts we've discussed here and the great work all of you are doing in the field. Space operations is on the cutting edge of the Army's future thanks to Space professionals around the world.