

Maximizing Joint Targeting Synergy within the USINDOPACOM AOR

How to gain and maintain proficiency in leveraging joint capabilities during Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) in order to win against a near-peer adversary in preparation for tomorrow's conflict.



“The United States Armed Forces are at a crossroads, facing both institutional and operational challenges. The character of war continues to change at a quick pace, requiring military leaders to reassess some of their core beliefs. This situation has led to the testing and refinement of concepts, capabilities, and people to ensure U.S. forces are ready for the conflicts of today and tomorrow. Without doubt, any future conflict will be increasingly complex and distributed, involving actions across multiple domains—land, air, sea, space, and cyber—by multiple military services, at times simultaneously.”

*- General Robert Brown
Commander, United States Army Pacific*

Military operations are becoming more complex with the increase of kinetic and non-kinetic options available to commanders, as well as the rising threat to the U.S. by formidable near-peer adversaries. In the next major conflict, the United States military will not only contend with bullets and bombs, but with computers, satellites, and information as well. The expansion of military operations beyond air, land, and sea domains to include the space and cyberspace domains has broadened the targeting community necessity for cyberspace technicians, electronic warfare (EW) officers, information operations (IO) officers, and special technical operations planners.

Integrating the aforementioned expertise to achieve operational effectiveness and maximize joint targeting synergy against a complex, adaptive enemy resides with the Joint Force Commander (JFC) and his staff. During joint operations, the JFC habitually employs air, land, maritime, space, and cyberspace capabilities to present an adversary with multiple dilemmas and overwhelm their ability to decide and act. Historically, the JFC grants the Joint Forces Air Component Commander (JFACC) specific authorities that facilitate the synchronization and integration joint fires across all domains. The JFACC's method of performing these tasks and maximizing joint targeting synergy is by, with, and through the Air and Space Operations Center (AOC).

Joint Force Delegated Authorities

The 5th Battlefield Coordination Detachment (BCD) continues to enrich the partnership within the 613th AOC by combining forces to address the challenges the U.S. military faces in the Indo-Asia Pacific Theater. The 613th AOC Commander and the 5th BCD Commander have determined that a common misconception plagues our force. That misconception can be characterized by a single, yet complex statement within Joint Publication 3-0 – The Joint Force Commander normally delegates coordination authorities to the JFACC. The true significance of this statement has been lost in the simplistic lexicon, but we must examine the root to all associated coordination authorities that the Theater JFACC (TJFACC) currently shoulders within the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) area of responsibility (AOR). The JFC designates the following joint coordination authorities to the TJFACC: (1) Targeting Coordination Authority, (2) Information Operations /Non-Kinetic Coordination Authority, (3) Airspace Control Authority, (4) Collection Coordination Authority, (5) Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Coordination Authority, (6) Area Air Defense Commander, (7) Electronic Warfare Coordination Authority, (8) Jamming Control Authority, (9) Space Coordination Authority, (10) Director of Cyberspace Forces (DC4), (11) Director of Mobility Forces (DM4), and (12)

Personnel Recovery.

The conundrum the joint force faces is the ambiguity within doctrine that states the JFC normally designates the aforementioned authorities and delegates target coordination authority. Although the JFC may reserve all of the aforementioned authorities, the likelihood of that occurring is diminutive. The joint force has consistently established a precedent for all these authorities to be delegated to the JFACC. The JFACC's "weapons system" to execute all of the authorities resides with the AOC. The JFC historically authorizes the JFACC to synchronize and integrate joint fires because the AOC has the command and control infrastructure, adequate facilities with a certified targeting center, joint planning expertise and a robust intelligence apparatus.

According to Joint Publication (JP) 3-60, the primary purpose of Joint Targeting is to integrate and synchronize all weapon systems and capabilities. The synchronization of cross-domain targets in the USINDOPACOM AOR is facilitated by the target and effects team (TET), a critical team within the AOC. TET produces the draft Joint Integrated Prioritized Target List (JIPTL), which forms the foundation for the integration and synchronization of cross-domain effects. The AOC is also the lead for the coordination, tasking, and execution of cross-domain effects via the master air attack plan (MAAP) and air tasking order (ATO). Currently, the AOC is the only operations center in the USINDOPACOM AOR capable of coordinating across all components and space, cyber-space, air, maritime, and land domains. This cross-component/cross-domain coordination is made possible by the presence of component and functional representatives

within the AOC – Marine Liaison Element (MARLE), Naval and Amphibious Liaison Element (NALE), Special Op-erations Liaison Element (SOLE), Director of Space Forces (DS4), DC4, DM4, and BCD.

The "grey area" forms when service components are unclear of the roles and responsibilities incumbent to those authorities and coordination tasks delegated to the JFACC. Additionally, the service components are hampered by the lack of doctrinal knowledge of the Joint Air Tasking Cycle (JATC) and how it supports the Joint Targeting Cycle (JTC). The JATC is the TJFACC's process for effective and efficient employment of joint air assets and capabilities. It provides a repetitive process for planning, coordination, allocation and tasking of joint air missions that corresponds to JFC guidance. More importantly, the JATC is a systematic, iterative and responsive process that translates operational guidance into tactical plans. It is an analytical approach that focuses targeting efforts on supporting operational requirements. The JATC promotes flexibility and versatility with a series of ATOs and related products, which the JFACC can respond during execution at any time to changes in the operational environment. Those that are not familiar with the JATC often argue that this process does not offer flexibility and should be updated to provide more responsive Fires – be it kinetic or non-kinetic. Those that are against the JATC are merely focused on the deliberate aspect of targeting and do not take into account the dynamic targeting perspective. Each service component must rely heavily upon their representation within the AOC to overcome these hurdles and promote joint targeting synergy. The JTC and JATC are separate but integrally related processes (see Figure 1).

Service Components and their Liaisons to 613th AOC

As mentioned earlier, the AOC is where the art and the science of integration, synchronization and deconfliction of weapon systems and capabilities throughout all domains ultimately reside. The AOC systematically analyzes and prioritizes targets for all of the service components and conducts weaponeering of those targets to create specified desired effects, both kinetic and non-kinetic, that achieve the JFC's objectives. The Army Forces (ARFOR) Commander in the Pacific relies heavily on the 5th BCD to ensure all requirements are

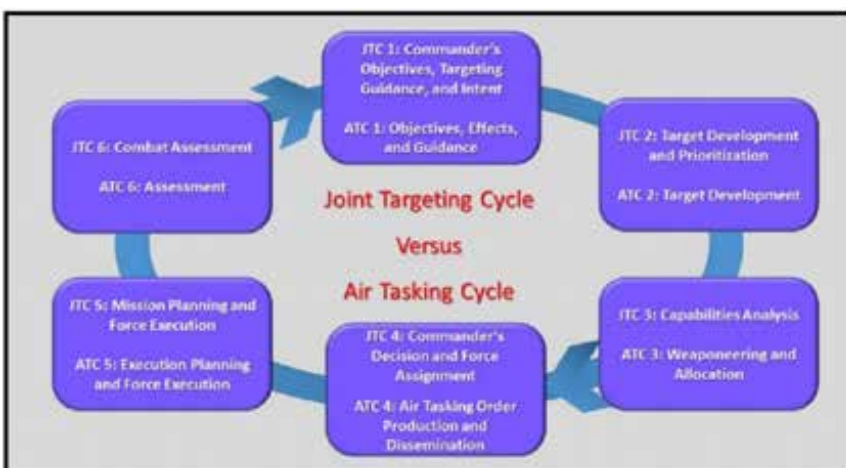


Figure 1

translated and represented in the AOC, and the ARFOR's scheme of fires (SoF), scheme of maneuver (SoM), commander's intent, and guidance are also represented timely and accurately to the TJFACC and JFC.

In the USINDOPACOM AOR, the 5th BCD serves as the senior liaison from the Theater Joint Force Land Component Commander (TJFLCC) to the TJFACC. The 5th BCD is uniquely positioned in the 613th AOC as the land component's advocate for equities with regards to targeting. Despite the fact that 5th BCD is fully integrated into the 613th AOC, 5th BCD cannot represent the TJFLCC within certain areas, specifically cyberspace, space, EW, and IO. The same compounding issue resonates within the other component liaisons as well. 5th BCD's modification table of organization and equipment (MTOE) aligns with all of the 613th AOC divisions with the exception of the specialty and support teams that process the majority of non-kinetic effects requests. However, the 5th BCD has submitted an MTOE change that addresses the ever increasing demand for cyberspace, space, EW, and IO personnel in order to address critical gaps within the organization. Until these critical gaps are filled, the integration, synchronization, and deconfliction of those capabilities resides with one person within 5th BCD – the 131A Targeting Officer. Therefore, the targeting officer becomes the “single point of failure” for the ARFOR with regards to integrating, synchronizing, and deconflicting cyberspace, space, EW, and IO unless augmentation is provided to 5th BCD. This problem set is not limited to 5th BCD, but encompasses all six BCDs (four active and two National Guard).

Another limiting factor can be summed up by one word – interoperability. Most of the service components are unable to interface their mission command systems into Theater Battle Management Core System (TBMCS), which provides a systematic connection for all information to flow horizontally thereby creating the current operations picture (COP) / current intelligence picture (CIP). The service components have their own distinctive culture, as well as systems that do not communicate with each other, thus forming the foundation to a “stove-piped approach” to joint targeting. One of the six principles of mission command outlined in Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0 is to “create shared understanding.” Army doctrine of mission command states that “a defining

challenge for commanders and staffs is creating shared understanding of their operational environment, their operation's purpose, its problems, and approaches to solving them.” The Army is infamous for producing COPs on systems that are not utilized by the rest of the joint force (i.e. Command Post of the Future (CPOF), Enhanced Common Operating Picture (ECOP), Command Post Computing Environment (CPCE), etc), which further promotes accounts of mass centralization.

Within the USINDOPACOM AOR, CPCE is the primary means for the TJFLCC to produce a COP and promote shared understanding. CPCE is not a joint COP of record. The only joint COP of record is Global Command and Control System – Joint (GCCS-J). CPCE does not feed GCCS-J properly despite having been designed to do so. CPCE is nested with Google Chrome, which is not part of every service component's Secret Internet Protocol Network (SIPRNet) baseline image. To this point, Google Chrome is not part of 613th AOC's baseline. Therefore, 5th BCD must request that Google Chrome be installed by Air Force information assurance personnel, as well as submit specific firewall exemptions that normally takes 90 days or more to process. Another compounding issue is that CPCE has not been tested to provide a COP over a wide area network (WAN). Thus far, CPCE has operated over a local area network (LAN). It has been successful during previous exercises because all participants were utilizing Multinational Information Sharing (MNIS) network. MNIS is one network that is geographically located within the TJFLCC's foot-print which all stakeholders have direct access to the server. CPCE has not been tested to demonstrate that a unit geographically separated from the TJFLCC can access data across other service components networks, thereby degrading shared understanding amongst the targeting enterprise.

Consequently, the lack of shared understanding contributes to the inability to efficiently answer a simple question asked by decision makers at all levels – “What should we do?” This question, although seemingly minor, is the predecessor to a plethora of significant decisions to come. Although the Air Force may move away from TBMCS to other options, such as Kessel Run, the Army has an obligation to ensure operations conducted by the land component are visible by the joint force. Each service component must improve upon the horizontal and vertical automated

dissemination of the Joint COP /CIP to promote shared understanding.

Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF) vs the Air Operations Directive (AOD) and ATO

The addition of the MDTF and its intelligence, information, cyberspace, EW, and space (I2CEWS) battalion adds yet another element of complexity to achieving joint targeting synergy. The mission of the MDTF is to protect friendly forces and critical nodes, and strike critical enemy assets with multi-domain fires to support the JFC's strategic objectives. The purpose of the MDTF is to create windows of advantage by neutralizing adversarial Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) capabilities. The MDTF integrates organic and joint counter air, counter fire, cyber, and space capabilities to hold an adversary at risk which facilitates freedom of action for the joint force. The command relationship between the MDTF and its higher headquarters (JFC, JFLCC, Joint Task Force (JTF) Commander, Joint Forces Maritime Commander (JFMCC), or a different subordinate command) will affect how target nominations are integrated and executed, as well as how the MDTF is employed to service targets.

Moreover, one of the challenges for integrating targets developed and / or nominated by the I2CEWS battalion into the ATO is that the majority of authorities required to implement the aforementioned capabilities reside at the National level. This means the approval process can potentially take weeks and will extend beyond the time required to add those non-kinetic effects into a daily ATO. This problem plagues, not only the MDTF, but the rest of the information related capabilities (IRC). Therefore, the MDTF and service components must integrate IRCs early in crisis to discern necessary authorities and permissions and provide time for planning, preparation, and execution. It is noteworthy to state that the planning and coordination of space and EW assets are directly synchronized with air.

The JFACC's written guidance to ensure air, space, EW, and cyberspace operations effectively support the JFC's objectives while retaining enough flexibility to adjust to the dynamics of the range and phases of military operations are authored within the AOD. The AOD also provides the JFC's operational objectives, tactical objectives, and tactical tasks in order to prioritize the respective components' target nominations to be submitted for inclusion into the draft

JIPTL. The AOD is published 96 hours prior to execution of the associated ATO.

The ATO is a method used to task and disseminate to components, subordinate units, and command and control agencies projected sorties, capabilities and/or forces to targets and specific missions. The ATO normally provides specific instructions to include call signs, targets, controlling agencies, etc., as well as general instructions. This essentially informs the pilots which targets they are going to service, where to refuel, which munitions to carry, etc. The 5th BCD monitors the execution of the ATO, specifically in reference to land component kinetic targets, and requests re-attack of targets when the desired effect was not achieved. However, targets to be serviced by non-kinetic means are synchronized by the Non-Kinetic Duty Officer (NKDO) within the AOC. The NKDO is responsible for executing applicable portions of the ATO and making C2 decisions to ensure the commander's objectives and intent are satisfied. The NKDO closely coordinates with other members of the current operations division within the AOC and directly manages the employment of cyberspace, space and EW capabilities. Problems arise when targets circumvent the targeting process. This has become all too common with targets that are to be serviced by non-kinetic means.

Service components are aware of the target approval process but fail to understand the coordination portion of the process. More often than not, when integrating cyberspace, space and EW, service components do not coordinate those effects through the JFACC (despite the fact that the JFACC has been delegated multiple coordination authorities by the JFC as discussed earlier). For example, every joint exercise that has been conducted within the USINDOPACOM AOR over the past two years have not exercised the coordination process pertaining to the IRCs. Service components failed to submit cyberspace effects request forms (CERF), Space Service Requests (SSR), and / or Electronic Attack Request Forms (EARFs) to accompany those type of non-kinetic effects. Therefore, the respective liaisons within the AOC are not able to provide necessary information to the NKDO. The aforementioned request forms are necessary to properly integrate, synchronize and coordinate non-kinetic effects provided by national level assets throughout the

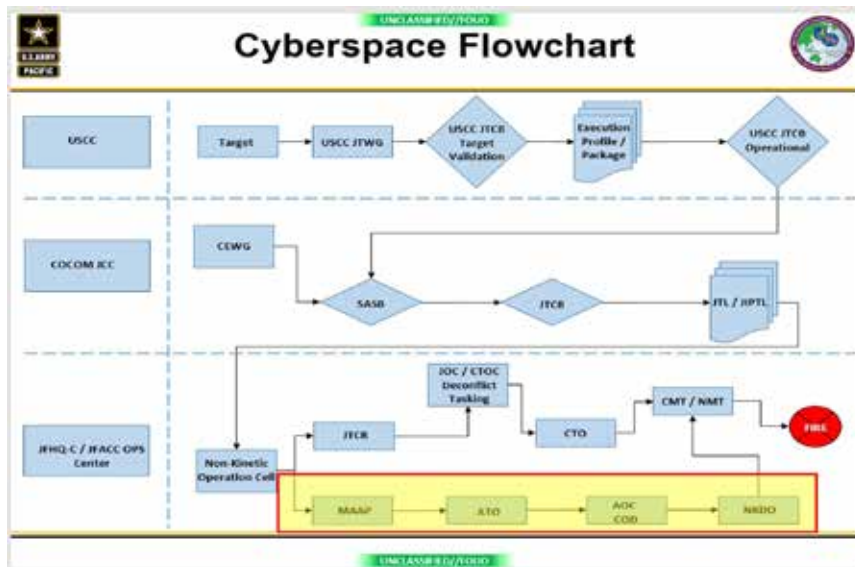


Figure 2

theater. Figure 2 depicts the cyberspace flow-chart and where the coordination takes place within the AOC. The same coordination is required for space and EW.

IRCs must be planned for and integrated early to obtain the necessary authorities and provide adequate time for preparation and execution within the JATC. The planning of non-kinetic operations should be no different from traditional kinetic engagements. However, target development for targets that are being considered for non-kinetic effects will take much longer as opposed to targets to be serviced kinetically. Target system analysis must not be conducted in hindsight. With regards to target development, it is elementary to develop and understand an adversary’s integrated air defense system, but there is a certain degree of difficulty associated with developing the same adversary’s telephony, computer, and industrial control systems. The flow between the physical, informational, and cognitive dimensions through tangible infrastructure and logic data nodes is very challenging. But nonetheless, integrating non-kinetic effects into each stage of the JATC is a challenge that all service components must undertake. It is required to facilitate joint targeting synergy.

Summary

Each service component must take a hard look at how we, the U.S. military as a whole, are conducting joint targeting and multi-domain operations. The U.S. military faces numerous challenges promoting joint targeting synergy. We must better address our “stove-pipe” approach to joint targeting within all domains. One of the most significant challenges is recognizing where the synchronizing of joint targeting happens, and how equities are systematically integrated into the Joint

Targeting Cycle (JTC). Joint targeting synergy hinges on the service components ability to liaise within the AOC and maintain reach back capabilities while fully participating in the boards, bureaus, centers, cells, and working groups (B2C2WG) with the component’s priorities, equities, objectives, and effects represented throughout the JTC.

As the Army places emphasis on MDO, the BCDs will become even more critical to maximizing joint targeting synergy. Thus, within the USINDOPACOM AOR, the PACAF and USARPAC Commanders identified the importance and placement of critical skill sets required by

each service component to successfully confront an adversary in a future large-scale combat operation against a near-peer or peer adversary. Those skill sets are comprised of cyberspace technicians, EW officers and IO officers. These particular skill sets are needed in order to address critical gaps within the BCDs. Having submitted an MTOE change that addresses the critical demand for the aforementioned skill sets, 5th BCD will better align with 613th AOC’s divisions, as well as the specialty and support teams that integrates and synchronizes non-kinetic effects on behalf of the JFC. In short, 5th BCD will be better postured to represent ARFOR’s equities in all domains during MDO.

The service components, not only must master their craft, but also gain and maintain proficiency in leveraging joint and coalition capabilities across all domains simultaneously in order to win against a near-peer adversary in preparation for future conflicts. As a joint force, we must do a better job partnering with other services, as well as federated agencies, to improve upon our weaknesses and accentuate our strengths as a collective force – the basis of joint targeting. The partnerships that are forged with other service components, coalition nations and federated agencies will overcome the United States’ loss of superiority or parity in certain domains. The technological advancements for integrating and synchronizing joint fires requires an equal evolution of tomorrow’s military that will expeditiously apply them across all domains simultaneously. As part of a joint force, we must be able to provide other component’s effects in their domains to overcome their operational challeng-

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es. This means change must focus on greater ability to have cross-domain effects and more seamless and effective integration across joint forces. There is no better place to perform the critical tasks of integrating and synchronizing joint fires and promoting joint targeting synergy than the AOC.

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