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# BUILDING

## a Joint Training Readiness Reporting System

By JOHN C.F. TILLSON

**T**he warfighting commanders in chief (CINCs) and services are working to become “fully capable of operating effectively as a joint team.”<sup>1</sup> Toward that end, the commander in chief, U.S. Atlantic Command (ACOM), has designed a joint training program to enhance the capability of the Armed Forces to deploy and operate immediately upon arriving overseas.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately neither the CINCs nor services are likely to know if and when they achieve that goal since there is no way of measuring or reporting key elements of joint training readiness.<sup>3</sup> This article outlines a system that could provide both CINCs and services with the information to assure force readiness.

Readiness can be viewed like a business situation in which the customer is always right. If combatant CINCs are seen as customers to whom the services supply forces, CINCs must create demands (or define requirements) and communicate them to suppliers. Otherwise the services may supply forces untrained for customers' needs. Supporting CINCs<sup>4</sup> are like wholesalers who help customers determine their requirements, then decide what will meet them, then communicate those needs to the services who supply forces.

Currently, CINCs as customers can identify only a few general needs at best and have no consistent way of informing suppliers of specifics. The services as suppliers thus cannot be sure they are providing forces capable of performing joint tasks. Nor can CINCs as customers predict whether the suppliers can provide forces that meet their needs. CINCs have access to reports on training readiness of units assigned or apportioned to them—for example, the joint reporting structure status of resources and training system (SORTS)<sup>5</sup>—but the reports present problems for both suppliers and customers:

- Customers get a generic view of training readiness from SORTS, but they do not know a unit's capability to perform joint missions or even specific service tasks or missions. They do not know the training readiness of large formations such as Army corps or Navy fleets, logistics organizations, or critical enablers such as supporting CINCs and service/joint battle staffs.

- Although suppliers use a common rating system (C-ratings) to report the status of their units, its meaning differs among and even within services. In addition, it allows suppliers to use any one of three uncoordinated measures of training readiness<sup>6</sup> that make it even harder for a CINC to determine if his needs are being met.

- The ratings have little predictive value. External events like personnel turbulence can destroy training readiness overnight.

- Some services have no generally accepted way to predict the time needed to increase training readiness levels to qualify for deployment ready status. This has led to troublesome controversies over the ability of

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Air Force security police personnel disembarking in Jordan.



U.S. Air Force (Paul R. Caron)

Army National Guard divisions or brigades and Naval Reserve air wings to meet customer needs.

- Neither CINCs nor services have a way to link mission readiness to estimates of the resources needed to maintain it.

- Neither CINCs nor services have a way to estimate future training readiness.

CINCs thus have a poor basis on which to report to the Secretary of Defense on their readiness or on needed resources. They can clearly insist on better information. According to chapter 6, title 10, of the U.S. Code, a CINC has responsibility for the *preparedness* of his forces and also has the authority to give directions to subordinate component commands and forces “necessary to carry out missions assigned to the command.”

Subordinate component commands include all operational forces within the Department of Defense. Thus the commander in chief, U.S. Atlantic Command, for example, has charge over the U.S. Army Forces Command, which includes all Army forces within CONUS (except for special operations forces, which are subordinate to U.S. Special Operations Command). He also controls

air forces under the Air Combat Command, naval forces under Second Fleet, and Marine forces under Marine Forces Atlantic. Regional CINCs, such as the commander in chief, U.S. European Command, have charge over all forward-deployed forces within their areas of responsibility.

Service secretaries and chiefs have similar but broader responsibilities. Though not under CINCs, they are subject to the provisions of chapter 6. Each secretary has a legal responsibility to respond to requests from CINCs on preparedness—either through responsibilities of the secretary to component commanders or directly to CINCs. These conflicting duties have not been resolved in law or practice.

### The Right Tasks

A potential solution to these problems has three parts. First, CINC joint mission essential task list (JMETL) and service METL systems should be connected to provide two-way, mission-related information flow between CINCs and operational forces. That would allow CINCs and services to communicate more exactly tasks for which CINCs need forces and enablers to perform. It would also allow for essential feedback.

### CINCs have a poor basis on which to report on their readiness or on needed resources



U.S. Air Force (Liam Robson)

F-16s and KC-135 tanker during Cope North 94-1.

Second, services should adopt a common measure of training readiness that is mission and task oriented. Given the varied missions and associated tasks assigned to CINCs, such a cross-service reporting measure will provide CINCs and services the necessary mission-oriented training readiness data. The measure should be based on the percentage of METL tasks trained to standard. That percent is one of three ways SORTS provides for reporting training readiness.

Third, CINCs and services should employ modern data base management systems and the global command and control system to integrate joint and service data. The appropriate CINC or service should maintain the data bases while providing access to noncustodial CINCs and services.

There are numerous reasons for the poor exchange of mission, task, and training readiness information among CINCs, component commanders and services, and assigned forces:

- CINCs have not had a tool for analyzing their missions in terms of tasks to be performed by forces and enablers under them.
- CINCs have recently developed a process for identifying their JMETL, but do not transmit it to their components.
- Components have their own METL process and train on service-defined tasks but do not coordinate their METL with CINCs.

The universal joint task list (UJTL) can provide a framework for enhancing CINC-service communications. It lists the full range of tasks a CINC might have to perform.<sup>7</sup> CINCs use UJTL to create a JMETL for each mission assigned. CINCs are still developing this capability and do not use it to communicate their needs to the services. But they could.

Each service has a process for determining the tasks that their forces must perform as well as for building a service-oriented METL. Each process allows service commanders to tell units about these tasks. These processes have little or no connection to CINCs or other services.

- Army and Marine Corps ground force commanders use a METL process to tell subordinate commanders which tasks to train on, but neither process is linked to CINCs. Ground unit commanders generally develop their own METL without explicit review from the Army or Marine component commander.
- Navy type commanders (COMSURFLANT, COM-SUBLANT, COMAIRLANT) on each coast identify specific tasks that ships, squadrons, and submarines are to train on. Many are Navy-specific, such as convoy escort, and may not be relevant to CINC missions.
- Air Force commanders of the Air Combat and Air Mobility Commands specify the tasks units are to train and manage the training readiness system.
- The Marine Corps air combat element uses a centralized process for determining mission essential tasks, training syllabus, and training readiness measures for each type of aviation unit.

These processes are not based on CINC JMETLs nor coordinated with them, but they also could be.

The lack of communication on training status between CINCs and forces might be solved through a system that uses the existing chain of command and links the CINC JMETL and service METL processes. CINCs would receive their missions and force allocations, conduct their own analyses to identify JMETLs for each mission, and determine what missions should be given to subordinate component commanders. They would then assign missions to component commanders and communicate their JMETLs to them. The services could also use this process to identify "core competencies" (for instance, convoy escort) that remain important even if no CINC has an immediate need for them. It can also ensure that service forces are trained in the wide range of tasks necessary for overseas deployment with no certain destination or mission.

The component commanders would conduct their own mission analyses, identify their own METLs for each mission, and assign missions to their subordinate organizations, which in turn would conduct their own mission analyses and identify their METLs. Part of each commander's analysis would be to compare his METL with that of his higher commander and reconcile any differences. Every commander would ensure consistency. In this way missions up and down the chain of command would fit those assigned to

combatant CINCs, and every commander would have a METL that aligned with every other. Each commander would train his unit in its METL tasks to the standards specified. Knowing his tasks, each commander could identify the resources needed to train his unit to standard in each task. This proposal expands on practices described in Army training manual FM 25-100.

This process would require that each service or component commander tentatively identify the active and Reserve organizations and units to be assigned to a CINC for a given mission. This step alone should focus the efforts of subordinate

units on specific missions and tasks. It could be particularly important to Reserve units that often have no clear idea what missions to train for. It would also

force CINCs and services to resolve conflicts in cases where, for example, units may be assigned to more than one CINC or to so many mission essential tasks they cannot meet training standards.

The mission analysis process could also be used to identify the conditions under which, and the standards to which, a task must be performed. The feedback process would help commanders at every level to train their units to the conditions and standards set by the CINC or service component commander. It would also allow CINCs and services to assure both cross- and intra-service consistency.

### Measuring Readiness

It is not enough to connect JMETLs to METLs. The second element of the proposed reporting system is a common, mission-oriented joint training readiness measure that could be used by CINCs, services, and joint enablers such as JTF battle staffs.

Each service either has or is working on a training management system that tracks training by tasks and associates resources to tasks. One is the standard Army training system (SATS). The Navy uses the type commander readiness management system (TRMS) for surface ships, and it is developing a similar system for aviation units. The Air Force keeps track of its pilots through the graduated combat capability (GCC) system, a measure of the tasks for which a pilot or aircrew is trained. The Marines monitor the combat readiness percentage (CRP) of their pilots in an automated scheme called the aviation training and readiness information management system (ATRIMS). They are also working on an overall training management procedure called

the Marine Corps training readiness support system (MCTRSS). It may be that these systems can be modified to fit the joint community.

Because each service uses from one to three measures of training readiness, none of which are specifically oriented to a CINC's mission, the information CINCs receive does not offer a consistent, mission-oriented view of unit preparedness.

A cross-service training readiness measure tied to each CINC's JMETL would provide a common basis on which to evaluate the training readiness of the forces and enablers for a particular mission. It would allow CINCs and services to work together to identify key training tasks, training priorities, and training shortfalls both generally and for specific CINC missions. It would provide a consistent, cross-service measure of training readiness that reflects the importance of different tasks for different missions for different CINCs.

The Marine Corps CRP system is a potential model for such a cross-service measure. It is an explicit survey of the percentage of mission essential tasks trained to standard. The Marines have long used it for aviation units and are now expanding it to ground units. It could be applied to staffs, individuals, crews, and units of all sizes.

CRP has various characteristics that are important in the proposed joint training readiness reporting system (JTRRS):

- based on mission analysis
- task oriented and used to indicate performance to standard for each task
- applicable for both individual and collective training
- reflects the impact of personnel turbulence because it is tied to individuals
- provides a way to link resources to training readiness because each task has an associated cost, described in terms of both time and money
- details the training events, cost, and time needed to move a pilot or squadron to a "fully trained" status.

CRP as currently employed has three major shortcomings for joint training readiness:

- based on generic and fixed missions and tasks and may not reflect the missions and tasks of concern to a CINC
- applied to individual pilots and crew members only. There is no CRP rating for battle staffs or complex organizations with many capabilities or systems
- gives equal weight to all pilots in a unit and does not explicitly recognize the need to have some who are better trained, such as flight leaders and mission commanders.

The Navy training system for ships and aircraft and the Air Force system for aviation units are similar to the Marine Corps system. What

## mission analysis could identify the standards to which a task must be performed

**units require multiple training readiness scores—one for each mission assigned**

they lack is a way to convey the training information to joint commanders. That is the purpose of a training readiness measure usable by all services. Given multiple CINC's with multiple missions, most units will be responsible to multiple CINC's and for multiple missions. Units therefore require multiple training readiness scores—one for each mission assigned. For example, a unit might be ready for peace operations but not for a major war. Current systems do not reflect this difference. But they could.

Building on the Marine CRP and similar Navy and Air Force systems, we have designed a DOD-wide joint training readiness measure

directly from firing range scores. In others, commanders and subject matter experts might determine the scores.

The accompanying table shows how a commander with three missions and the same three tasks<sup>8</sup> for each mission might assign weights to each task for each mission, resulting in a different TRP score for each task and mission. A unit or subunit would receive an absolute score for each task reflecting its training status. If the task is fully trained to standard, the score is 100 percent. If it is partially trained, the score is less. If a unit receives an absolute score of 75 percent for task A and the task weight for mission 1 is 33 percent, the TRP score is the product of 75 percent and 33 percent, or 25 percent. For mission 2, regardless of the absolute score, if task B is not relevant to the mission, then the weight is zero and the TRP score for that task for that mission is zero. The unit is fully trained in task C and gets full credit for that task for each mission. Since task C is relatively unimportant to missions 1 and 3, this high absolute score does not translate into a high TRP score for these missions. The overall unit TRP score for each mission would be the sum of the TRP scores for each task.

More complicated techniques for assigning weights could be built into the METL-building software and could quickly become a routine task for commanders as they build their METLs for each assigned mission.

**Multiple Reports**

A mission-oriented JTRRS is very complex. A unit may have to be proficient in multiple tasks associated with multiple missions assigned to multiple CINC's. For JTRRS to work, a unit needs a way to keep track of its multiple tasks and to report its mission-oriented training readiness to its multiple masters. Each service needs to manage forces and resources to optimize the training readiness of its multiple units and organizations to meet multiple needs of multiple CINC's. And CINC's need a way to keep track of the readiness of forces allocated to each of their multiple missions. These requirements would have made such a system impossible prior to the computer age, data base management, and communications systems.

Accordingly, we propose that JTRRS exploit both new communications and data base management systems to integrate service and joint data bases and to provide communications up and down the chain of command. These systems



II MEF Combat Camera (R.A. Phifer)

Marines during CJTFEX '96, Camp Lejeune.

known as the training readiness percentage (TRP). It is intended to retain the commander's responsibility for assessing the training readiness of his unit while simultaneously allowing all services to describe training readiness on a common basis that would be directly related to a CINC's assigned missions.

Here is how a TRP scoring system might work. As part of the mission analysis process, commanders could assign weights or values to each JMETL or METL task based on its importance to assigned missions. That weight would be the TRP METL percentage score for that task. By definition, the sum of task weights in a METL would be 100 percent. A unit that is fully trained for a mission would receive the maximum TRP score for that mission—100 percent. The weights assigned to tasks at each level would be subject to review as part of the JMETL/METL consistency assurance process described above.

The score for each task would be measured much like training readiness scores are determined today. In tasks where objective measures are possible, as in gunnery, the tally could come

**Table: Assigning Task Training Scores**

Tasks for each mission	Absolute score for each task	Mission 1		Mission 2		Mission 3	
		Task weight	TRP score	Task weight	TRP score	Task weight	TRP score
A	75	33	25	50	38	10	07
B	40	50	20	00	00	75	30
C	100	17	17	50	50	15	15
			—		—		—
			62		83		52

Sample TRP calculation for unit or subunit with three missions (in percent).

would track multiple JMETLs and METLs, monitor training status by task, and allow CINCs and services to maintain a real-time record of mission training readiness by CINC, mission, and unit. Such a system might work as follows:

*CINCs and services would keep track of pertinent data.* CINCs would monitor missions, the associated JMETLs for each mission, and the training by task of those forces and enablers for which they are responsible. For example, each CINC would keep track of the training readiness of his battle staff and supporting communications units.

Each service would oversee the missions, associated METLs, and training, by task, of the forces and enablers for which it is responsible. For example, the Air Force would keep track of all task training by unit and also by air operations centers that support component commanders.

*Once JMETLs/METLs and task training status are in appropriate data bases, any participant with approved access can compare JMETLs and METLs to ensure compatibility and to compute a mission-oriented training readiness status.* Each participant will be authorized access to some data in all other participants' data bases. For example, a CINC may be given access to service METLs and training readiness data at every level from large organizations down to battalion, ship, or squadron level

though not lower. CINCs will be able to look at service METLs to ensure that organizations assigned or allocated to them are trained appropriately. They will also have access to data needed to compute the mission-oriented training readiness of assigned and allocated forces.

In most cases a CINC will most want to know the mission readiness of large organizations such as Army divisions or Navy battle groups—a capability that does not exist now. He might also want to know the mission readiness of units at

the level of battalions, ships, and squadrons, as is possible today.

Services will have access to CINC data bases to identify mission-oriented JMETL of each CINC and the conditions and standards associated with tasks. As they build force packages in real time for contingencies, CINCs and services will have access to one another's data bases to identify the units best trained in an emerging mission.

The impact of this system at unit level should be small. Virtually all units use computers to monitor training on a task basis. All units keep track of their SORTS status and send the data to a higher headquarters. Under this system, units would continue that practice. New software could simplify unit reporting.

JTRRS could assist military departments and CINCs in exercising training and personnel management responsibilities. A key issue facing DOD is the need to estimate training readiness. Today there is no way to reliably project it. With JTRRS, it may be possible to project peacetime training readiness a year or so in advance and to project how long it should take either an active or Reserve component unit to train to standard in its METL tasks.

Given a systematic, task-based understanding of unit training readiness, cognizance of the tasks that need to be trained for a projected operation, and estimates of time and resources needed for training each task, each service may be able to predict pre-deployment training time and future peacetime training readiness. In other words, given certain assumptions about the availability of personnel and training resources, JTRRS could include two additional indicators:

- an estimate of how long it will take a unit to go from its current training readiness status to 100 percent TRP, a threshold TRP, or an appropriate TRP for some other mission
- the future training readiness of a unit given assumptions about the availability of personnel and training resources.

**it may be possible to project peacetime training readiness a year or so in advance**

Both projections could be maintained in the same data system as the standard JTRRS.

These indicators should help identify the impact of the personnel management system on unit training readiness. JTRRS will allow unit commanders to determine the specific implications of turbulence on units and may improve personnel policies. This system could demonstrate the relative consequences on training readiness of policies such as the individual replacement system compared with the Army cohesion, operational readiness, and training (COHORT) system or the Marine unit deployment program—two policies designed to enhance unit readiness and solidarity.

JTRRS should also help CINCs and services manage other training resources. When component and unit commanders know their missions and tasks to be trained, they will have an explicit basis for allocating training funds and resources. Unit commanders will have a credible, objective basis for requesting training resources. CINCs will know which units are trained in which tasks and will have a basis for discussing training and resource allocation with the services. Units, both active and Reserve, can be told to maintain different levels of training readiness and can be held accountable. Finally, wartime planning can include specific plans and resources for pre-deployment training for both the active and Reserve components.

Much of what needs to be done to build JTRRS is already underway.

- CINCs, with the Directorate for Operational Plans and Interoperability (J-7), Joint Staff, are developing a task-based, mission-oriented system for building JMETLs for assigned missions.

- ACOM and J-7 are identifying JMETLs for JTF battle staffs.

- ACOM and J-7 are building JTF battle staff training systems.

- The services have or are developing task-based training and reporting systems:

- The Army and Marine Corps are developing task-based training reporting systems for ground forces.

- The Navy is converting to a METL system, and the type commander readiness management system (TRMS) will provide Navy component commanders task-based training readiness information for ships, submarines, and aircraft.

- The Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force, have been using task-based training readiness systems for aircraft for years.

But this is not enough. Building effective JTRRS requires initiatives to:

- coordinate and connect CINC JMETL and service METL efforts

- develop a compatible cross-service training readiness reporting measure based upon CINC JMETLs and service METLs

- design a data base and management system for training that is in sync with the global command and control system

- expand, within each service, the METL or equivalent systems to cover large organizations, battle staffs, and other enablers

- develop a METL system for joint battle staffs and other enablers

- design and conduct tests of any proposed training readiness reporting system in order to demonstrate its feasibility, validity, and reliability.

These are issues that pose challenges to the joint world. JFQ

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Report on the Roles, Missions and Functions of the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington: Joint Chiefs of Staff, February 1993), p. III-4.

<sup>2</sup> Clarence T. Morgan, "Atlantic Command's Joint Training Program," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no. 8 (Summer 1995), p. 120.

<sup>3</sup> Training readiness is the component of overall readiness that reflects the ability of a unit to perform assigned tasks to a given standard. We have defined joint training readiness as that of military units and enablers from different services working together to accomplish a mission that requires the coordination of their forces. It includes the training readiness of the joint headquarters and of the assigned and supporting service forces working together.

<sup>4</sup> Supporting CINCs include those who provide services to combatant CINCs (for example CINCTRANS, who provides strategic air and sealift), and other warfighting CINCs who furnish forces or other support to the CINC with primary responsibility for a mission.

<sup>5</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 1-03.3, *Joint Reporting Structure Status of Resources and Training System* (Washington: Government Printing Office, August 1993).

<sup>6</sup> The three measures defined in the JCS SORTS directive are percentage of mission-essential tasks trained to standard, percentage of crews mission qualified, and training time in days required to bring unit performance in mission-essential tasks to standard.

<sup>7</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, JSM 3500.04, *Universal Joint Task List* (Washington: Government Printing Office, May 15, 1995).

<sup>8</sup> These tasks might be primary mission areas for Navy ships and aviation units.