

A Word from the



Moving into Afghanistan,
Operation Anaconda.

55th Signal Company (Keith D. McGrew)

Chairman

This issue of *Joint Force Quarterly* starts its 10th year of publication. Over the past decade the journal has become widely read among both military professionals and defense analysts in this country and abroad. As such, it serves as an influential forum for discussing joint warfighting.

In this anniversary year, I want to review the state of the joint force and where we must go. The Armed Forces have made significant progress as a team over the last decade. Nonetheless, we are not where we should be. The rapidly changing international environment and the

global war on terrorism require that we create joint capabilities more quickly. Seams between organizations must be eliminated and service and joint core competencies integrated more effectively. Next, data must be shared among warfighters, civilian agencies, and coalition partners more efficiently. Finally, a faster decision-making process must be fully realized based on these initiatives. The result will be a decision-superior force—one that makes the right battlefield decisions faster than any enemy.

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A Decade On

Rereading the first issue of *JFQ* reveals what has and what has not undergone change in the last 10 years. In 1993, the services were enforcing no-fly zones over Iraq, protecting the Kurds in northern Iraq, patrolling the Persian Gulf to bar illegal Iraqi oil exports, enforcing an embargo in the Adriatic Sea with NATO allies, and conducting a humanitarian relief mission in Somalia.

Those missions have evolved. The Kurdish safe haven is temporarily secure, but Iraqi air defenses routinely fire on Allied aircraft; an expanded multinational coalition continues to interdict illegal Iraqi oil exports; and our primary military presence in the Balkans has transitioned from the air and sea to land as Americans participate in peace operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. Finally, we have resumed flying intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance sorties off the Horn of Africa. Although these efforts may have lost their nontraditional connotation, they are vital to our national interests. They contain the same if not an increased level of risk to the forces involved.

But the most significant change in the strategic environment is the global war on terrorism. Though difficult to conceive a decade ago, today this fight is our top priority. We face a challenge that differs from any threat in the past. The al Qaeda network poses a patient, cunning, ruthless, and dispersed threat in over 60 countries. It is conducting detailed planning for an opportunity to strike again. We must not underestimate its hatred of our Nation and value system. And al Qaeda is only one of several international terrorist organizations on the scene today.

The Joint Team

The President has set three objectives to protect the Nation: defeat terrorism, deny terrorists a safe haven, and prevent terrorists from gaining access to weapons of mass destruction. To meet these goals, we must have the mental agility to take the actions needed to defend ourselves and take the fight to the enemy. We must be unpredictable and adaptable in order to prevent future attacks. We must forge creative ways of defeating terrorism around the world. Since September 11, 2001, we have seized the initiative, but we must remain both engaged and vigilant.

As General Colin Powell pointed out ten years ago in the inaugural issue of *JFQ*, "Today, all men and women in uniform understand that we must fight as a team." We must heed his words in fighting terrorism. Our joint team is comprised of service capabilities as defined under Title X. One



U.S. Army (Robert L. Reeve)

Advancing into northern Kuwait, Desert Storm.

of my responsibilities is advising our senior leadership on how to maximize those capabilities without regard to the service which employs them. To fight as a joint team, we must focus service core competencies in ways that make the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

But there is room for improvement. A comparison of Desert Storm and Enduring Freedom demonstrates what I mean.

A decade ago, the joint team fought literally side-by-side, in segregated lanes, with fire-power separated on the tactical and operational levels. The air campaign kicked things off and lasted 38 days. When the ground

campaign began, the Marines attacked in a sector along the coast of Kuwait, Arab coalition forces assaulted the middle sector, and American soldiers of VII Corps and XVIII Airborne Corps swept around the western flank. Many close air support sorties were flown in the spectacular 100-hour ground campaign, but they were primarily used beyond the sight of the forces on the ground. The

joint force operated in the same battlespace, but each component fought a separate fight.

Afghanistan

Operation Anaconda offers a useful comparison. In that case, 1,000 combat-tested enemy fighters occupied terrain of their choice—rugged mountains in eastern Afghanistan (at eight to nine thousand feet above sea level), the same area where the *mujahadeen* had often bloodied Soviet forces during the 1980s. So the enemy was confident and seemingly secure in their positions.

To defeat the Taliban and al Qaeda forces, the American ground commander integrated all elements of the joint team in a superb fashion. He incorporated our Afghan military partners on the tactical level to occupy key blocking positions. He had video and intelligence from various sources immediately available. Then a task force the size of a U.S. infantry battalion (some 500 soldiers) attacked and defeated a defending force twice its size. Air Force fighters and carrier-based strike aircraft, together with bombers and attack

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U.S. Marine Corps (William D. Crow)

CH-53E over Afghanistan, Operation Anaconda.

helicopters, provided air support to soldiers in close combat with the enemy. This joint force destroyed a larger enemy force and secured the mountainside. Although there are many lessons to learn, we and our partners won because of the bravery of the troops involved as well as the synergy gained from fully integrating the lethal effects of our joint capabilities.

One concern is ensuring that joint warfighters have a common picture of the battlefield and communications suite. During Anaconda, for example, air and land component commanders had different pictures of the battlefield. In the fight, tactical air control parties accompanying troops on the ground dealt with the combined air operations center (CAOC), bypassing the land component commander. Though unacceptable, this process was used because CAOC had superior situational awareness. Common command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C⁴ISR) is needed to properly align the chain of command.

Seamless Warfare

On a positive note, there was progress in eliminating barriers between organizations. Joint warfighting has benefitted from more timely and

relevant intelligence. Predator real-time video not only went directly to the air operations center, as doctrine requires, but straight to AC-130s. Also, P-3s flew missions over land to provide immediate intelligence information to ground commanders being deployed against the enemy. Ground liaison officers were onboard and provided immediate readings of P-3 sensors for troops on the ground. Such liaison enabled the joint team to eliminate seams among intelligence, special operations, air, and infantry units. But we must also find ways to apply modern technology to minimize the need for liaison because it is a cumbersome and labor intensive approach to sharing information.

Exchanging people among units is not a new concept. When ground commanders needed better air support to break out of Normandy, Ninth Tactical Air Command provided aviators to ride along with the lead tanks. These airmen gained insight into the tactical situation on the ground and brought expertise from another part of the joint team. The aviators translated the ground situation into language and terminology that allowed P-47 pilots to provide timely and accurate

Interdiction in the Arabian Sea, Enduring Freedom.



Fleet Combat Camera Group, Pacific (David C. Mercil)

air support. The result was a much better integrated air-ground team that destroyed countless enemy tanks and facilitated the Allied advance.

Global War on Terrorism

Sharing information must become more than exchanges between platforms and services—it should extend to the interagency community and coalition partners. The arrest of Abu Zubayda in March indicates that other instruments of national power have a need for timely information. In the case of Zubayda, U.S. and Pakistani law enforcement organizations (aided by civilian and military intelligence agencies) acted on such intelligence and dealt a severe blow to the enemy.

The global war on terrorism requires employing every instrument of national power; thus we must develop the means to automatically share data and intelligence among members of the joint team. Eliminating seams is a key step toward fielding a decision-superior force. Improved C⁴ISR networks are at the core of this capability. These improved, seamless, and expanded networks will enable us to see the enemy, decide a course of action, then act decisively. The record is

quite clear: the side that acts faster wins. This is the essence of a decision-superior force.

Fielding a decision-superior force is a complex process, but the operational benefits make it a top priority. This force is essential in defeating terrorism—an effort that demands employing all possible resources. It will create a more effective and lethal joint team. The result will be better exploitation of the unique competencies of individual services, coalition partners, and all elements of the national security team.

Joint Force Quarterly was launched to enhance joint culture. Do you have better ways of building a joint team? Then enter the fray. Put your ideas on paper and submit them to the journal. For a decade, these pages have served as an outstanding forum for exploring matters of jointness. Let's continue that tradition by stimulating ideas on the new challenges facing the Armed Forces.

RICHARD B. MYERS
Chairman
of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

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