Letters . . .

Interservice Food Fights

To the Editor—Bravo to Col Whitlow and *Joint Force Quarterly* for publishing "JFACC: Who's in Charge?" (*JFQ*, Summer 1994). This treatment of a highly volatile issue reveals the interservice food fights which are motivated by parochialism rather than enhancing jointness.

We were snared by this issue during Desert Storm, one of us with CENTAF/Special Plans (Black Hole) in Riyadh and the other with a cavalry squadron in the 24th Infantry Division (Mech). Later, as students at the Armed Forces Staff College, we learned that no effective system exists to communicate requirements and capabilities in a timely way. The target nomination system implies that someone else understands battlefield requirements better than the commander. The tactical air control center desperately tries to grasp what is happening on the battlefield while those in the field desperately try to communicate the situation up the chain of command. The outcome is diminished confidence in the ability to either communicate or fulfill requirements. The solution is a system that allows communication without the unbelievable number of filters we now have, empowering commanders to fight with the joint force commander's intent. A shared situational awareness is the challenge since once it is accomplished everything else is moot.

Col Whitlow correctly points out that percentages reflect a fundamental misunderstanding of airpower. All airframes cannot do all things. A–10s are not the same as F–15s, so why are they included in some percentage allocating sorties? It is as simple as this: the joint force commander indicates the main effort and supporting efforts by assigning areas of responsibility and designates supported and supporting commanders. After that subordinate commanders assist the supported commander in his mission. Victory—on land, at sea, or in the air—is the focus, not competition between components. Though there is a difference of opinion over Battlefield Air Interdiction, the fundamental premise in the article about "givens, main effort, and priorities" is right on.

Who's in charge? The person assigned the main effort by the joint force commander, the one on the scene with the best information who is held responsible for success. Everyone else helps. That framework, supported by mutual awareness, avoids food fights and leads to decisive victory.

Finally, Col Whitlow simply reignites the age-old debate over who controls the battlefield effects of a system—whether it is an Air Force air-to-ground platform or the Army Tactical Missile System with its ability to fire at operational depths. Is close air support a responsibility of a land force commander? Is the Marine Air-Ground Task Force the real model for fighting fires on the 21st century battlefield? How this issue is resolved will determine whether the adage "joint warfare is team warfare" is real or just a bunch of empty words. We look forward to future articles in *JFQ* on this and other joint issues.

—Maj James R. Hawkins, USAF
U.S. Strategic Command
LTC Joseph C. Barto III, USA
Joint Warfighting Center

To the Editor—While I read Col Whitlow's article entitled "JFACC: Who's in Charge?" (*JFQ*, Summer 1994) with interest, its flaws gave me concern. It contains false assertions about JFACC operations that reveal an unwillingness to accept the maturing character of the JFACC concept and a single-service focus that is the antithesis of operating in a joint environment.

The author starts off with the old argument over the JFACC as *commander* or *coordinator* and suggests that this is an issue on which many disagree. This is not the case. The JFACC is a commander except in those reticent circles of the Marine Corps where the concern is over keeping Marine aircraft under Marine control rather than ensuring the effective use of airpower throughout the theater of operations. (The Army-Air Force AirLand Battle concept, it should be noted, is not now nor has it ever been Air Force doctrine as the article suggests, but is an Army concept employed for corps operations on a conventional, linear battlefield.) Fortunately, Whitlow then makes a very important point. A commander must have the authority to direct the actions needed to accomplish the mission. If the JFACC was a coordinator he would lack the authority required to use airpower to accomplish the joint force commander's objectives. As a joint component commander, the JFACC must understand airpower as well as land and naval forces so that those capabilities work in a cohesive way. To get the best results from airpower, the JFACC must be a commander.

The discussion of apportionment correctly condemns the emphasis on percentage allocation of air assets. The JFACC should receive and issue mission-type orders to air forces. But the idea that air superiority and close air support operations require constant levels of support is nonsense since both enemy force composition and the level of ground engagement vary greatly. In addition, the article fails to address how strategic attack sorties figure in apportionment. The bottom line is that emphasis in air operations depends on phases of a campaign, with more or less emphasis on certain types of missions (viz., strategic attack, air superiority, interdiction, and close air support) resulting in a shift in the number of sorties. As Whitlow points out, CAS should be a given, but not by dictating a constant percentage as he thinks necessary. Airpower always provided ground commanders with CAS when needed. It always will and with all aircraft in theater if required. It is better to use airpower in ways that will eliminate the call for CAS. To accomplish that, airpower must be commanded by a single air-minded commander—the JFACC. Complicating this job by creating a separate target planning system for a corps commander's AO and depleting resources by dedicating aircraft to the corps only reduces the effectiveness of airpower.

I also take exception to the claim that the JFACC does not have a *purple* perspective. This assumes that because the JFACC is normally a component commander he will emphasize the needs of his service to the detriment of other components and services. What is the basis of this claim? There is no suggestion that the joint force commander is parochial because he belongs to a specific service. Is a joint force land component commander parochial because he comes from the service with a preponderance of land assets? Then why make similar assertions about the air component commander? The decision on what to do will be based on operational needs in the theater, not on the JFACC's service. Anyone in a joint position must inherently act in a *purple* way.

The dream of independent service operations in a notional scenario at the end of the article is fantasy—an entirely Navy/Marine air war, with strategic bombing by B–52s as an afterthought. On land, of course, marines storm the beaches—something that has not been done in forty years. Miraculously, the "Army forces are present in theater and operational." No mention of how they got there. Where is the joint forces land component commander? Quite naturally, "boundaries are drawn and separate AOs for land forces unfold." One wonders if this is for span of control or to ensure that each land service gets a "fair share." This scenario needs

to come to grips with reality. Col Whitlow "talks the talk," but his vision of combat is all too familiar and service-oriented.

—Col Michael A. Kirtland, USAF
Chief, Military Doctrine Research
Airpower Research Institute

The Fog of Wargaming

To the Editor—Peter Perla did us a great service by brilliantly summarizing the advantages and the disadvantages of wargaming ("Future Directions for Wargaming," *JFQ*, Summer 1994). One hesitates to challenge such an expert, but the article does prompt one question and two objections.

Where is the evidence that military wargamers are enamored of virtual reality and other high-tech "gee whiz" gadgetry? At the Naval War College—which holds over fifty events a year—this is not the case. But even if we were so enamored, consider this. The military was accused in the early 1980s of gold plating weapons to the detriment of operators and mission accomplishment. But the same Desert Storm which Perla trumpets as a success demonstrated that those gold plated weapons were a success. Thus my skepticism that the military, by relying on (if in fact they were) high tech gadgetry and "gee whiz" systems, would jeopardize the value of wargames.

During the July 1994 Global War Game—an annual event at the Naval War College—several advanced models were used to assess two nearly simultaneous MRCs. At one point, data from an extremely sophisticated air-to-ground attrition model rendered enemy losses in excess of 80 percent during one early 24-hour engagement. The assessors, to the doubtless pleasure of Perla, greatly tempered what they saw as erroneous data. Skeptical military players in the game, again to Perla's probable delight, demanded explanations from the assessors. An admiral in one cell wanted to know who was "smarter than the CINC." These examples demonstrate a healthy tension between players and assessors.

The article's comment that "the services cannot remain introspective as in the past" ignores current efforts. Last year the Naval War College gamed events across the spectrum from a relief mission in Nigeria to coalitions with 16 navies in the Western Hemisphere, Partnership for Peace initiatives in the Baltic, U.S.-Japanese actions, and two MRCs. All creatures great and small, therefore, are subject to gaming.

A caution on touting the Program Objective Memorandum Wargame: that game is viewed by the executors (galley slaves) as a charade used to justify various N- programs. But Perla must be commended for trying to keep wargaming honest. Such an authority should not be ignored.

—CDR M.K. Murray, USN
Naval War College

To the Editor—As a wargamer for ten years, I found Peter Perla's article excellent in almost every respect. But I disagree with his assessment of the Navy's BFTT program as a superior wargaming venue. My problem is the phenomenon described as "the fog of war," which accounts for basing decisions on incorrect assumptions and incomplete or erroneous data. When participants use actual equipment for tactical applications, wargame controllers cannot in good conscience allow the fog of war to fall too thickly since the result would be incorrect and invalid operational training, wasted time and resources, and even the wrong lesson for players.

In a wargaming facility, however, with the congruent displays and effective interfaces, the players are free to make critical errors and play them out to their conclusions. In debriefs, players can be apprised of their options, successes, and failures, as well as the influence of the fog of war. The post-Cold War environment facing decisionmakers is ambiguous enough to keep the fog of war issue relevant for the foreseeable future.

—William R. Cooper
Pacer Systems, Inc.

To the Editor—Peter Perla's article was interesting, though it reminded me of some disquieting facts about wargaming. In my limited experience games are counterproductive, at least in the case of those dealing with multinational peacekeeping, since they teach the wrong lessons—not wrong by design, but rather because of the law of unintended consequences.

I participate in many military-run peacekeeping operations simulation exercises, usually as part of the control or "political" team. By and large, I find these exercises to be well designed and sophisticated—serious attempts to deal with the ambiguities of multinational operations. But I also find them disappointing. The unavoidable contradiction between training and policy leads to the subtle dominance of the former over the latter. Conventional wisdom (*doctrine*) governs the play, since control teams and senior officers who sponsor games insist on conformity with doctrine. This is perfectly sensible in respect to training players but it quickly kills any prospect of using the game to explore alternative options. An elaborate game played over days or weeks with numerous personnel of various ranks is driven by a training imperative and soon falls into step with approved doctrine. There is nothing wrong with this development as long as everyone knows what is going on. But there is a tendency to gussy up exercises with a "policy analysis and exploration" label.

Secondly, in exercises involving extensive resources, utilizing them dictates game play and control decisions. This parallels the pressure of doctrine controlling play. Presumably the assets for a game are chosen because doctrine indicates that they may be required. Marines sailed around without being landed during Desert Storm, and in the Caribbean other marines went home without invading Haiti. In a game, political decisions of this type—no military deployment or action—are not permitted. The lesson is that everyone who shows up gets to play.

Yet in political-military situations military deployments depend on political decisions and do not automatically follow from them. But the exercises in which I participate treat political decisions as a prefatory task to be performed quickly and perfunctorily in order to get on to the military game (the *real* game). While this process is understandable in terms of play, and game organizers make it clear that it is part of the artificiality of simulations, the fact is that it reinforces anti- or unpolitical attitudes on the part of many military professionals.

A recent large-scale game that I attended demonstrated all these problems. The dynamics of doctrine and the devoted resources exacerbated by the senior rank of major participants produced a game scenario in which the players embraced mission creep. Possibilities for exploring discreet, small-scale, combined political-diplomatic-military operations were discarded impatiently by control and senior players in a rush to deploy the "big battalions." In one sense that game may have only hinted at a more fundamental problem, that wargaming is inappropriate to multinational operations. Wargames deal with national crises that require mobilizing resources to obtain a specific, concrete outcome. They are about controlling a battlefield.

JFQ welcomes your letters and comments. Write or FAX your communications to (202) 475–1012/DSN 335–1012 or send them via Internet to JFQ1@ndu.edu

Multinational peace operations are not. Instead they are concerned with real but limited national interests which we determine to pursue with other nations. This is not just a consideration: it is *the* defining quality.

My experience may be atypical. But wargames on multinational peacekeeping seem to me to be teaching the wrong lessons: unilateralism rather than multilateralism; strict military solutions rather than political-military integration; and the virtue of quick answers rather than coping with the ambiguities of peace operations. The tragedy is that the outcome may be the exact opposite of what is needed. I leave it to wargamers to decide if this result can be avoided.

—Ambassador Edward Marks
Visiting Fellow
National Defense University

On the Software Front

To the Editor—Being a software expert I found fault with Peter Emmett's "Software Warfare" (*JFQ*, Summer 1994). He implies there is a difference between software complexity and software functionality. As a rule, the more functionality in a system, the more complex the software. The design of a battlefield system that meets all the needs of a user would be incredibly complex. For a soldier on the ground to modify, on the fly, the code needed to manage the battlefield, it must have the requisite logic built in and thus simply provide the interface for a user to choose what change to make. Even with highly trained programmers on the front line, the time needed to modify and test software does not lend itself to a rapidly changing battlefield.

Another concept Emmett raises—that of AI working tactical problems on top of a database containing operational doctrine and scheme of maneuver—sets us up to become predictable. If the software reads and interprets the battlefield and database correctly, the generated reaction will either be the same or follow the same operational concept for every similar engagement.

But there are valid points in the article. Imbedded systems and software must be capable of surviving on a battlefield that operators cannot see with their eyes. The electromagnetic spectrum will be an area for future conflicts. Launching TLAMs against a target, only to have them rendered useless by high energy radio frequency weapons that damage the critical electronic circuitry, makes the software issue meaningless.

—1 Lt Chris A. Golden, USAF
Air Force Materiel Command

A Fallow Challenge to Civilian Control?

To the Editor—The superb essays by A.J. Bacevich and Mackubin Thomas Owens published in Out of Joint ("The State of Civil-Military Relations: Two Views," *JFQ*, Autumn/Winter 1994–95) demonstrate that serious minds are concerned about civilian control of the military. But like Kohn, Luttwak, Weigley, et al. analysts assume that strong civilian control is universally accepted as an unqualified civic virtue. Increasingly, however, it appears that a number of Americans aren't so sure.

Poll after poll indicates a growing antipathy towards elected officials, including those who exercise civilian control. Most of government is seen as bloated, scandal-ridden, and ineffectual. In contrast, the Armed Forces in the wake of the Gulf War, with approval ratings at all-time highs, succeeded in gaining the attention of a public looking for government that actually works. Indeed, traditional antimilitarism that underpinned civilian control since the Revolution has not only ended, it has been replaced by what might be called *postmodern militarism*.

This does not mean that our society is militarizing, nor that Americans are adopting martial virtues. Rather, it reflects a conviction that the Armed Forces are the only public institutions that altruistically and productively work for the national good. Predictably, the military is becoming the agent of first recourse for the U.S. Government's thorniest problems both at home and abroad.

The Armed Forces remedied—with startling effectiveness and speed—diplomatic disasters around the globe, from Panama to the Persian Gulf, Rwanda to Haiti. Domestically, the military succeeds at myriad tasks that befuddle civilian leaders. Be it performing disaster relief, conducting counterdrug operations, quelling civil disorder, providing medical care to disadvantaged localities, counseling troubled teens, building playgrounds, or tutoring failing students, a can-do military gets the job done. So striking are the achievements of the Armed Forces that their reputation remains untarnished despite a variety of controversies and embarrassments.

Many current issues concerning civilian control can be traced to the Vietnam era. Collective national guilt over the appalling post-war treatment of Southeast Asian veterans helped to transform the popular image of the conflict from a military fiasco to a virtual betrayal of the Armed Forces by incompetent officials. That memory of ineptitude by those who exercised civilian control lingers on today: when the public sensed that denying armored vehicles to Americans led to a disaster in the back alleys of Mogadishu in October 1993, the Secretary of Defense was soon forced to resign.

Vietnam also complicated civilian control by altering the self-image of the American officer. No longer prepared to leave policy decisions to civilians of uncertain competence, many officers now see their responsibilities as extending beyond purely military matters to a very broadly defined notion of national security. Indeed, they consider themselves as much national leaders as military commanders. While many might agree with Bacevich that George Marshall's apolitical deference to civilian authority remains an exemplar, they would nevertheless likely argue that a dearth of able civilian leaders leaves senior military officers little choice but to fill the void.

With a sophisticated war-college education which Owens describes as heavy in politics and economics, officers in the late 1990s are well armed to challenge civilian leaders in many arenas. When the still-sizable charter of the military is broadened to include nontraditional operations other than war, the insinuation of the Armed Forces into highly-political policy matters is unsurprising. Abetting that development are bitter partisan battles that fragment political power and undermine the moral authority of civilian leaders. This allows the military to exert considerable influence while appearing to remain above the fray.

The shift in attitude by so many officers from military affairs to broader national concerns undermines Owens' contention that purported policy setbacks are proof of the vitality of the current state of civilian control. Almost all military leaders, for example, believe that defense budgets well below the heyday of the 1980s are necessary for the Nation's economic health. Thus, interservice squabbling over allocating resources should not be mistaken for opposition to budget reductions. And who can say that resolving issues such as women in combat and gays in the military means defeat for the military? Might it not be argued that the real stratagem all along was to merely slow the pace of social change in the Armed Forces to a more palatable rate? The point is that in the era of postmodern militarism it is unwise to underrate the poise and sagacity of senior military officers.

Americans do not realize that the Armed Forces are fundamentally unlike other institutions. The military is an unapologetically authoritarian establishment uniquely designed to counter man's darker impulses with savage fury when required. Its professional focus on violence and its effects creates fewer synergies with civilian society than those in the thrall of postmodern militarism may suppose. Since order and control

are quite literally life or death matters in war, the military loathes permissive individualism which in civilian settings stimulates creative social evolution. Likewise, because instantaneous and unquestioned obedience is imperative in combat, the military is deeply distrustful of the intellectual entrepreneurship that fuels advanced democratic societies.

The paradox of postmodern militarism is that it is ascendant as society's familiarity with all things military is diminishing. The lack of a draft along with downsizing and expulsion of ROTC from the campus have conspired to leave most Americans with little if any first-hand knowledge of people in uniform. Thus few grasp the potentially nefarious implications of reliance on military-derived solutions. Postmodern militarism celebrates the military without really understanding it.

The challenge to those who seek to reinvigorate civilian control of the military is to assure a politically alienated public that it is desirable to do so. They must develop and articulate practical as well as philosophical arguments in support of civilian control. Given the American penchant for short-term thinking, the power of postmodern militarism, and apparent intractability of resentment borne by the public toward government, this challenge is profound indeed.

—Col Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., USAF
U.S. Strategic Command

Missing an Issue?

Copies of back numbers of *JFQ* are available in limited quantities to members of the Armed Forces and institutions. Please send your request to the Editor at the address or FAX number listed on the masthead. JFQ

To the Editor—A.J. Bacevich's article, "Civilian Control: Still a Useful Fiction," only fans the embers of a misguided debate over civilian control of the military. If there is an underlying theme in this debate, it seems not to be civil-military relations but some distress over leadership traits and a redistribution of power in the defense establishment. Bacevich chides Washington "experts" for concluding that "nothing of substance had changed," which makes it all the more necessary to learn what, if anything, in fact has changed to incite a crisis in civilian control. There is no constitutional cause for alarm. The Constitution still empowers Congress to declare war and to control the purse. And the President clearly remains the Commander in Chief.

There have been legislative changes in the military. Indeed, much of the distress expressed in this debate suggests that Congress, by enacting Goldwater-Nichols, abdicated civilian control to the Chairman and Joint Staff. Nothing in the letter or spirit of this law suggests such a conclusion. The preamble to the DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 (PL 99–433) states as its purpose and intent: "To reorganize the Department of Defense and *strengthen civilian authority* in the Department of Defense, to improve the military advice provided to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense . . ." [emphasis added]. While the Goldwater-Nichols Act consolidates a lot of military authority in CJCS which arguably abraded the influence of the services, it in no way altered the principle of civilian control.

The core of this so-called crisis appears to be not in the law but in its application, and in the dynamic manner in which both Colin Powell and John Shalikashvili have functioned as chairmen. Here some will point to policies on homosexuals in the military and U.S. intervention in Bosnia as cases of the military overstepping its authority. The gays-in-uniform issue was resolved only after lengthy discussions among the President, Chairman, and service chiefs. And having listened to his military advisors, Congress, and the public, President Clinton adopted a policy at variance with his position during the 1992 campaign. Similarly, the administration's posture on Bosnia was formed after consulting with military leaders, again despite Clinton's statements on the campaign trail.

Politicians often find it wise, once elected, to modify their previous positions. This should be no surprise to anyone familiar with electoral politics. The fact that positions on defense matters are changed after consulting the military is reassuring. Were senior military officers guilty, under these conditions, of subverting presidential intentions? Yes, if one defines subversion as trying to change the President's mind. Clearly not, however, if one accepts that the military leadership has an obligation to provide candid advice.

Did the military bypass the chain of command? Absolutely not. The established chain was followed. Civilians made the ultimate policy decisions. Military leaders did exactly what the law requires: provide advice to civilian leaders and carry out the resulting decisions. As far as contact with members of Congress is concerned, there is confusion between acceptable, often mandated contacts and subversive attempts to wrest control from civilians.

Bacevich turns to George Marshall to exemplify how things ought to be, but ignores other examples of threats to civilian control. The Truman-MacArthur row and the firing of a Chief of Naval Operations offer relevant precedents. Recently a Secretary of Defense—after consultation with the President—dismissed an Air Force Chief of Staff for exceeding his authority. Moreover, the President did not follow the advice, according to some accounts, of CJCS and CINCCENT in the early days of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait because he thought it overly-cautious.

Observing the military, we do find change. Arguably the political power of the military is a zero sum game: constitutional and legislative constraints have not forfeited civilian control, nor are they likely to. What has changed is the balance of power within the military. Goldwater-Nichols intentionally consolidated many service prerogatives under the Chairman. Prior to that act, in times of growing or stable budgets, one could divide resources among the three military departments and make the best of it. In times of shrinking budgets and a strong CJCS who, by enhancing the Joint Requirements Oversight Council process, has further consolidated the statutory powers that Goldwater-Nichols intended, the services (and entire communities within them) feel threatened. Thus, the true debate today is along inter-service and intra-military lines, not civil-military lines.

We agree with those experts who summarily dismissed Kohn's argument. In fact, nothing of substance has changed. The issues which Bacevich raised are not difficulties of civilian control. They are criticisms of decisions made by civilian leaders or a misguided perception of the authority vested in the Chairman and Joint Staff. Although these are absorbing and provocative subjects, the military remains firmly under civilian control.

—CDR Timothy C. Young, USN
Office of the Judge Advocate General
Department of the Navy

Col John S. Burkhart, USAF
National Defense University