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POSTCONFLICT OPERATIONS:
EVOLUTION OF AN INTERAGENCY DOCTRINE

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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15. **Abstract:** Postconflict operations play an essential role in consolidating military accomplishments toward attainment of sustainable national strategic objectives. Clear objectives, defined by the National Command Authority, are used to describe the desired end state—the political, military, economic, and informational conditions required to achieve the objective. In virtually every case, all forms of national power must be integrated to create the desired conditions. Command and Control relationships tend to be very complex in the joint, combined, and interagency arena of postconflict operations. Additionally, transitions of control are a fundamental part of these operations. The principles of objective and unity of effort provide the framework for managing this process. Extensive interagency planning, coordination, and cooperation are required to achieve strategic success in this environment.

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Postconflict operations play an essential role in consolidating military accomplishments toward attainment of sustainable national strategic objectives. Clear objectives, defined by the National Command Authority, are used to describe the desired end state—the political, military, economic, and informational conditions required to achieve the objective. In virtually every case, all forms of national power must be integrated to create the desired conditions. Command and Control relationships tend to be very complex in the joint, combined, and interagency arena of postconflict operations. Additionally, transitions of control are a fundamental part of these operations. The principles of objective and unity of effort provide the framework for managing this process. Extensive interagency planning, coordination, and cooperation are required to achieve strategic success in this environment.
INTRODUCTION AND THESIS

The post-cold war environment has proved to be more complex, uncertain, and unstable than expected. Recent experience with erupting regional crises has clearly demonstrated the requirement to integrate all elements of national, and often international, power to achieve sustainable solutions. This is true in the hostilities phase of a crisis and it is a fundamental part of Post-Conflict Operations (PCOs). PCOs play an essential role in accomplishing national objectives. They can be expected to be undertaken in coordination with a variety of joint and combined military forces, government agencies, Humanitarian Relief Organizations (HROs), and host nation agencies. When conducting such operations, Command and Control (C^2) relationships tend to be extremely complex and convoluted amongst such a conglomeration of organizations and interests. Furthermore, the nature of PCOs requires transition in these relationships throughout the process. Success in this environment demands careful planning and coordination to develop consensus on objectives, end states, and responsibilities from the outset. The ability to achieve unity of effort in the joint, combined, and interagency arenas is essential for strategic success in this era. This thesis will be examined by exploring the nature of PCOs and associated interagency coordination issues; discussing the need to carefully apply key principles; reviewing recent PCOs; and, presenting conclusions.

THE NATURE OF PCOs AND THE INTERAGENCY IMPERATIVE

The term "postconflict operation" describes a typical phase in a campaign during which military accomplishments are consolidated toward achievement of strategic objectives. In fact, Joint Test Pub 3-57 also uses the term "consolidation operations." Although this phase is

* The generic term Humanitarian Relief Organization (HRO) will be used throughout for simplicity. It is meant to include Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), which are European based, Private Voluntary Organizations (PVOs) which are U.S. based, Regional and International Organizations (ROs/IOs).
normally dominated by Civil-Military Operations (CMOs), it does not necessarily occur in a benign environment. Rather, it may begin before the conflict is over, as was the case with PROMOTE LIBERTY in Panama; or, it may occur in a relatively hostile environment, as did PROVIDE COMFORT in Northern Iraq. It is clear, however, that some form of transition, or PCO, will always be required following the use of armed force. The key to sustainable strategic success often lies in properly defining and structuring this transition phase. Joint Test Pub 3-57 states that PCOs extend from simple transition and redeployment to those where:

...the military commander might exercise full executive, legislative, and judicial authority over a conquered or otherwise unruly population. This range of possible missions and relationships requires corresponding flexibility in organization, planning, and operational concepts to achieve maximum applicability and effectiveness in the support and implementation of national policy. Commanders...should coordinate with other USG agencies through recognized civil government or agencies and the US Country Team abroad, based on the mission requirements...¹

Success in war must be measured by the achievement of enduring political, not strictly military, objectives, the aim for which the war was fought. The feasibility of achieving military victory is an insufficient basis for the decision to use armed force. The National Command Authority’s (NCA’s) decision must be based on the coordinated military and diplomatic assessment of the ability to consolidate and translate those victories into sustainable strategic success. This is the essence of PCOs. According to Joint Pub 3-0:

...defeating an enemy military force is rarely sufficient, in and of itself, to ensure a long-term solution to a crisis. Properly conceived conflict terminations criteria are key to ensuring that victories achieved with military force endure....Since the nature of the termination will shape the futures of the contesting nations, it is fundamentally important to understand that conflict termination is an essential link between national security strategy, national military strategy, and posthostility aims—the desired outcome.²

PCOs also often involve fulfillment of a commander’s responsibility to comply with international and U.S. law and treaties. These legal and moral responsibilities require such actions as may be necessary to:
control dislocated civilians, maintain order, prevent and treat disease, provide for relief of civilian suffering [this includes shelter, food, clothing, basic public safety and services...], and provide maximum protection and preservation of property and other resources.

It is a period of transition from conflict and military operations in preparation to turn over responsibility to a capable, acceptable host government or other designated civil authority. Preparation for this turnover may require assumption of many or all governmental and civil responsibilities while assisting to properly constitute a capable host government consistent with U.S. objectives. The transition to peace "requires early planning and coordination both at the national level and in theater among diplomatic, military, and political leadership."

In planning for PCOs, national objectives must be analyzed to determine the forms of national power applicable to achieving the desired end state and the relative emphasis between them. In most cases, PCOs are concerned with what Joint Pub 3-0 defines as the "broader end state" which requires integration of the various instruments of national power (military, diplomatic, economic, informational). PCO responsibilities may include such diverse issues as peace negotiations, managing refugee problems, rebuilding vital infrastructure, maintaining general security, and assisting to constitute a credible government with popular support. Military capabilities can be applied to many of these tasks while others may be better accomplished by government agencies, various HROs, or existing host nation agencies. The on-scene military commander may often be required to assume initial responsibility for all required functions. During the transition process, functions are transferred to appropriate civilian authorities as soon as they are capable of assuming them and security conditions permit. The proper coordination of such complex operations and transitions of authority requires extensive planning and preparation.
The greatest ambiguity in C² relationships exists during transitions of authority. These periods require the most planning, coordination, and flexibility. The U.S. lines of responsibility in a foreign country may be confused and contentious, even in peacetime. This confusion is intensified in the crisis environment of war termination and may be exacerbated by a lack of trust and understanding on all sides. One of the most critical relationships for success of the PCO is that between the geographic Commander in Chief (CINC) and Ambassador. Adherence to the specific C² relationships defined by law and policy will help to reduce this confusion. By designating a lead agency during each phase of the operation, integrating other agencies in a supporting role, and ensuring close coordination throughout, ambiguity is removed and unity of effort is possible.

**PRINCIPLES FOR PCOs**

An important part of the transition from combat operations to PCOs involves a change from the traditional nine principles of war to the six currently cited as governing operations other than war.⁶ While all six principles are vitally important to the conduct of PCOs, this discussion will focus on the principles of Objective and Unity of Effort, the two which tend to be the most elusive and the most critical to success in the interagency arena.

**Objective:** Direct every military operation toward a clearly defined, decisive, and attainable objective. Clearly defined objectives are the only foundation upon which effective planning can be built. The NCA must enunciate national strategic objectives from which are derived corresponding theater strategic and operational objectives. A critical but easily overlooked challenge in this process involves defining end states for the transition of control in various phases of the operation. Examples of these types of end states include defining the conditions that should exist when refugee care can be turned over to HROs; when maintenance
of law and order can be assumed by host nation police forces; or, when control of the PCO can be passed from the CINC to the Ambassador. Agreement on these objectives and conditions must be reached through interagency planning. In the absence of clearly defined national objectives or consensus on end states, the CINC may need to articulate them as he understands the situation and then seek NCA concurrence. The need for proper policy flow and mutual understanding of end states is described by Joint Pub 3-0.

The desired end state should be clearly described by the NCA before US Armed Forces are committed to an action....Defining the end state, which may change as the operation progresses, and ensuring it supports achieving national objectives are the critical first steps in the estimate and planning process....Commanders at all levels should have a common understanding of the conditions that define success before initiation of the operation.7

Clearly defined objectives are a prerequisite for the second principle, unity of effort, which must be established in order to synchronize and harmonize diverse civil-military resources in PCOs.

**Unity of Effort:** Seek unity of effort in every operation. Unity of effort may be very difficult to attain given the great diversity of players involved in PCOs. It begins with agreement on objectives and end states and extends to agreement on responsibility for achieving them. Joint Pub 0-2 states that "unified action...starts with unified direction."8 However, since unity of command will rarely be possible in this complex organizational environment, a lead agency should be appointed as an initial step toward unity of effort. The designated lead agency often changes as the operation evolves. The designation and transfer of lead agency responsibility is a process which must be flexible and responsive to unfolding conditions. End state criteria for each phase of the operation provide a basis for the mechanism of transition. Extensive and continuous interagency coordination is required to accomplish this goal. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) can be invaluable to the CINC in effecting this coordination. Joint Pub 3-07, for Low Intensity Conflict, states that the CJCS and the CINC
"must insist that the NCA place a specific agency in charge" and Joint Test Pub 3-57, for Civil Affairs (CA), states that the CJCS is responsible for:

Requesting from the Secretary of Defense, when the outbreak of hostilities appears imminent or other circumstances warrant, establishment of an interagency CA committee to assist in the coordination and execution of CA activities and operations.\(^9\)

Interagency coordination could be accomplished through special or ad hoc committees or through the structure of the National Security Council. Regardless of the forum used, a national level interagency body is necessary to develop a comprehensive strategy which integrates the elements of national power in both the planning and execution of CMOs (civil-military operations).

**INTERAGENCY COORDINATION IN RECENT OPERATIONS**

The development of doctrine governing PCOs and national and international interagency coordination has not kept pace with emerging requirements. Although such doctrine is rapidly evolving, it remains fragmented and incomplete. However, the lessons learned from two recent operations, PROMOTE LIBERTY and TASK FORCE FREEDOM, provide a solid foundation for developing the needed doctrine.\(^9\)

**PROMOTE LIBERTY:** PROMOTE LIBERTY, associated with JUST CAUSE, the invasion of Panama, began almost simultaneously with the invasion and continued for just over a year. Unfortunately, planning for these two related operations was conducted separately and without adequate coordination. The two plans were never truly integrated. Subregional campaign plans were, in fact, being developed by U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) when the process was interrupted by the ultimate crisis in Panama.\(^1\) As a result, the two

\(^{**}\) Many of the references cited and much of the doctrine discussed in this paper did not exist at the time of PROMOTE LIBERTY. Doctrine has evolved rapidly based on the experience of recent operations. The first working draft of Joint Pub 3-08, *Interagency Coordination in Joint Operations*, was completed in December of 1994.
independent Operation Plans (OPLANS) were not coordinated under the umbrella of a single campaign plan with a coherent concept for achievement of strategic objectives. This flaw not only resulted in the lack of strategic focus during execution, it also denied a coordinated transition between the two operations. The SOUTHCOM J-5 did, in fact, establish criteria for this transition; however, "JTF-South’s OPLAN specifically ignored BLIND LOGIC’s [PROMOTE LIBERTY] requirements and General Thurman did not alert the XVIII Airborne Corps planners to that fact."¹²

The OPLAN for PROMOTE LIBERTY envisioned the possibility of establishing a civil-military administration, although it assumed that there would already be a functioning government in place and that the lead responsibility for the PCO would be transferred to the Embassy within 30 days. The incorporation of this arbitrary and unrealistic time constraint, rather than an end state transition analysis, contributed to a short-sighted focus which hampered efforts to marshall necessary resources. SOUTHCOM’s recommendation that the CINC be in charge of a transitional military government, if required, did not receive a response. The final plan was not even approved until a day after execution began.¹³ In the absence of clear, timely direction from the NCA regarding both the objectives and who was responsible for achieving them, a great deal was left ambiguous and open to interpretation.

General Thurman (CINC) readily acknowledged that JUST CAUSE, the hostilities phase, received most of the focus until problems with the PCO actually began to emerge. As he stated:

...I think the proclivity was to leave the fighting to the warfighter and the restoration to the people who were in country. SOUTHCOM should have been more attentive to the transition from one phase to the other, but I readily admit it was the last priority on my agenda at the time....¹⁴

Rather than assume the lead in the PCO, General Thurman preferred to provide military support to the Embassy so that it could take the lead role. However, the Chargé d’Affaires was in no
position to take the lead role at a time when the Embassy was without an Ambassador and the staff had been effectively reduced from 120 to just 15. Responsibility was transferred to an Embassy unprepared to receive it and without the benefit of effective advance coordination. This lack of prior coordination is especially troubling in light of the fact that General Thurman wanted to rely largely on the Embassy and other government agencies for postconflict restoration. In fact, interagency planning and coordination, although requested, was specifically avoided for operational security (OPSEC) reasons. While OPSEC concerns for JUST CAUSE were certainly valid, interagency coordination for PROMOTE LIBERTY, the PCO, could have greatly improved overall effectiveness.

Many reasons are cited for the problems described above. Much of the problem, however, can be traced back to one key omission. Unlike the combat operations in JUST CAUSE, strategic objectives for the PCO were never translated into tangible statements of desired end state. Had this been done, the process might well have revealed numerous weaknesses in the plan. First, it would have been obvious that all sources of U.S. power needed to be applied to achieve the desired end state, thus demonstrating the necessity of interagency planning and execution. Second, it would have been clear that substantial military involvement would be required for much more than the assumed 30 days. Third, it would have demonstrated the need to resolve the issues surrounding funding sources and limitations that hampered operations once the conflict ended. Fourth, the scope and nature of the requirements would have provided a strong case for the reserve call-up so badly needed for robust civil affairs support. Finally, it would have allowed for the development of a mechanism for transfer of control as required end states were achieved. This operation exposed critical weaknesses in existing doctrine and training for PCOs. Ultimately, the success of the operation can be attributed to the
professionalism and determination of those involved who were able to overcome flawed planning.

**TASK FORCE FREEDOM:** TASK FORCE FREEDOM (TF-Freedom), commanded by Brigadier General Frix, U.S. Army Central’s Deputy Commander, was established to conduct PCOs in the Kuwaiti Theater of Operations (KTO), which included Kuwait and Southern Iraq. The PCO began as DESERT STORM drew to a close. The first phase continued until the situation was stabilized and responsibility for restoration was turned over to the Defense Reconstruction Assistance Office (DRAO) under the command of Army Engineer Major General Kelly. One of the key lessons learned in Panama was the necessity of interagency planning for PCOs. Consequently, in the Gulf War, DOD and DOS jointly established a lead PCO planning team with interagency oversight. This team, designated the Kuwait Task Force (KTF), was formed in Washington D.C. primarily from personnel of the 352d CA (civil affairs) Command. Despite some problems with C^2 relationships, the KTF proved very effective in developing unity of effort through interagency planning, thus, contributing significantly to the overall success of the PCO.

The KTF operated in Washington under the supervision of a DOD/DOS steering committee group and its subordinate working group which included staff officers from both departments. Its task was to conduct a CMO estimate of Kuwait and develop a detailed CA annex for U.S. Central Command’s (CENTCOM’s) OPLAN. The KTF made a conscious decision to conduct its planning in the unclassified mode so that it could freely coordinate with the Kuwait Emergency Recovery Program (KERP), a 20 man team sent from the Kuwaiti government to plan for reconstruction. Based on lessons learned in Panama, Lieutenant General Carns, Secretary of the Joint Staff, ensured that the KTF fully involved other appropriate U.S.
agencies. As a result, 27 separate federal agencies were involved in the planning process.\textsuperscript{17} This combined interagency/host nation planning effort was a tremendous innovation which dramatically improved the PCO planning process. One serious flaw in the organizational structure, however, limited its effectiveness: the KTF was not placed under the CINC's command until it arrived in theater, after the war had begun. The KTF was not privy to CENTCOM's current or ongoing plans. This isolated the KTF from the commander's planning guidance, caused significant gaps in the commander's concept of operation, and precluded the straightforward integration of their plan with the CINC's. However, interagency coordination and cooperation were greatly enhanced by the KTF's planning effort, despite this serious organizational shortcoming.

While the KTF was a major step forward in interagency planning for PCOs, it benefitted tremendously from fortunate circumstances. Three key individuals were ideally positioned when Iraq invaded Kuwait to provide synergistic coordination of their respective agencies. First, as Fishel explains:

\begin{quote}
Randall Elliot was a senior analyst in the Near East division of State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (INR). Elliott's desk at State was literally across the hall from that of his good friend Edward "Skip" Gnehm, the Ambassador designate of the United States to Kuwait. Colonel Randall Elliott, U.S. Army Reserve, was the operations officer of the 352d Civil Affairs Command.\textsuperscript{18}
\end{quote}

Colonel Elliott's position and experience in DOS and the 352d not only allowed him to recognize the need of formal interagency planning for PCOs in Kuwait, it also allowed him to orchestrate creation of the KTF to accomplish it. Second, Ambassador Gnehm was intimately involved in the planning process from its inception and a strong supporter throughout its execution. Finally, Colonel Elliott designated Major Andrew Natsios, U.S. Army Reserve, as his Executive Officer. In his civilian capacity, Major Natsios was the Director of the Office of Foreign Disaster
Assistance (OFDA) of the Agency for International Development (AID). In addition to the funding and support of OFDA, Major Natsios, brought an OFDA-contractor team of refugee assistance experts which proved extremely useful during the operation.

The successful experience of the KTF, clearly demonstrated the necessity and efficacy of the interagency planning process. However, success must not hinge on the good fortune of having such capable individuals so ideally placed. Rather, interagency planning and execution must become a fundamental part of policy and doctrine for CMOs. In this case, the KTF’s interagency planning efforts were not under the CINC’s direction. Interagency efforts must be integrated with the CINC from the outset. Training must be provided to create understanding and interoperability for all vital participants. In short, rapid establishment of such interagency organizations must become routine for future operations.

The smooth transition of control was one of many great successes in this campaign. This was made possible by masterful application of the two key principles, objective and unity of effort. First, interagency planning provided the proper forum to translate the national objective of restoring the legitimate government of Kuwait into theater level objectives and to develop a shared vision of the "broader end state." There was a clear recognition of the long term commitment required to achieve this end state. As a result, the operation was divided into two primary phases, emergency restoration and reconstruction, and organizations were established to take responsibility for each. Transitional end states were developed to synchronize these phases. Furthermore, the PCO was fully harmonized with the host nation since both planning and execution had the full support and active participation of the Kuwaiti government.

Secondly, the adaptive C² arrangements and flexible organizational structures adopted were instrumental in establishing unity of effort. Combat operations seamlessly transitioned to
PCOs under TF-Freedom's dual hatted commander. One of TF-Freedom's subordinate elements, Combined Civil Affairs Task Force (CCATF), contained nearly the entire spectrum of organizations needed for PCOs, including combined military forces, other governmental agencies, HROs, and contractors. Among CCATF's subordinate elements were the KTF, OFDA, and DRAO's lead engineer element. This diverse mix of capabilities is ideal for CMO and can be expected to persist in future operations. It facilitates the smooth transition of control between military, civil, and host government authorities. As TF-Freedom completed its mission and the Embassy gradually regained its prominence, control of the operation was successfully transferred to the Corps of Engineers under the DRAO. Elements of CCATF were restructured and placed under DRAO to assist with its restoration mission.\textsuperscript{19} The final transition to peacetime control under the Ambassador and the host nation was also effected smoothly. This success did not happen by accident. Rather, it was the result of detailed interagency planning involving all parties including the Kuwaiti government; and, the organizational flexibility to expand, contract, reorganize, and transfer C\textsuperscript{2} as necessary to accomplish the mission. Clear objectives and superb unity of effort prevailed.

\textbf{DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION}

Since passage of the DOD Reorganization Act of 1986, the U.S. military has restructured, developed and refined doctrine, and repeatedly proven the efficacy of joint and combined operations. During this same period, several operations, not only PCOs in Panama and Kuwait but also operations in Northern Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti, have clearly demonstrated the urgent requirement to institutionalize interagency operations in similar fashion. This requirement, and the evolutionary state of its development, can be seen when contrasting...
the interagency performance in Panama with that in Kuwait which capitalized on lessons from the former. Three conclusions can be drawn from the preceding examination.

First, interagency planning based on well defined objectives is necessary to coordinate the various elements of national power. Joint Test Pub 3-57 specifies that deliberate policy for CMOs is to be promulgated from the NCA to the CINC.\textsuperscript{20} Observance of this policy flow initiates unity of direction which leads to unity of action. NCA guidance, including clearly stated objectives which can be translated into end states and the delineation of responsibility for them, provide the framework for establishing unity of effort. The procedures to ensure proper policy flow are well established in military doctrine and are inherent in the military planning process. Conflict and postconflict operations should be synchronized by campaign plans which provide the mechanism for strategic coordination, approval, and execution. It is absolutely essential that this planning be done in coordination with other pertinent agencies to develop a shared vision of the desired end state along with the ways and means to achieve them.

Second, transition of control is a vital part of PCOs and unity of effort is essential to success. Therefore, each phase of the operation must have a clearly designated lead agency and well defined conditions which provide a mechanism for transition. Although control of supporting functions generally continues throughout the operation, the primary transfer of lead agency is normally between the CINC and the Ambassador. The CINC should retain control of the operation as long as the military role predominates, while ensuring continuous and complete coordination with the Ambassador and other relevant agencies to achieve unity of effort. The Ambassador, who provides primary policy guidance in-country, must be an integral part of the early planning effort in order to be ready to assume responsibility for operations. This coordination, aided by development of transition end states, will prepare the way for
smooth, congruent transfer to civil authority. Finally, there is no single solution to assigning responsibility and establishing $C^2$ relationships for PCOs. A balance should be achieved between the desire to establish a clear, simple $C^2$ structure and being able to coordinate a complex politico-military operation. Proper planning and coordination must be established with the responsible agencies to ensure the synergy of all elements of national power and the unity of effort required to accomplish the mission. Functional transitions are likely to occur over time as various objectives are accomplished. Therefore, the organization must be flexible enough to expand and contract, taking on additional civil agencies and organizations and withdrawing military forces as appropriate. During this process, failure to achieve unity of effort may well be fatal to success of the operation. It is counterproductive for any element to approach the operation from a parochial perspective with rigid conceptions regarding functional responsibility.

It is the fundamental interest of the military, as one principal element of national power, to ensure that its military victories on the battlefield are consolidated and translated into strategic success. To apply less emphasis to the planning and execution of PCOs than to combat is to risk wasting military success and possibly reverting to a political status quo. In such situations, no one can claim success. The nation will be better prepared to avoid such strategic failures if the requirement to institutionalize interagency coordination, in doctrine, in training, and in practice, is heeded today, just as the joint operations imperative was adopted less than a decade ago.
NOTES


An end state is the set of required conditions that achieve the strategic objectives. There may be a preliminary end state--described by a set of military conditions--when military force is no longer the principal means to the strategic aim. There may also be a broader end state of peace and stability and may include a variety of diplomatic, economic, informational, and military conditions. The relative emphasis among these instruments of national power will vary according to the nature of the crisis.

6. Chapter V of Joint Pub 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations, and chapter 1 of FM 100-23, Peace Operations, provide excellent discussions on the application of the principles for Operations Other than War: Objective, Unity of Effort, Security, Restraint, Perseverance, and Legitimacy. The italicized definitions in the text are taken from Joint Pub 3-0.


Unified action...integrates joint, single-service, special, and supporting operations; in conjunction with interagency, nongovernmental, private voluntary organizations, multinational, or United Nations (UN) operations, into a unity of effort in the theater....Success often depends on these unified actions....Unified action...starts with unified direction....Unity of command may not be politically feasible but should be a goal if at all possible. Although important, it is only one of the components of unity of effort, and the others must be attained in any case.


...their conduct will be governed by DELIBERATE policy developed and promulgated by the NCA...Guidance for specific policies, such as the role of the military force, ROE, and degree of civil-military interaction to be followed in any operational area will be transmitted from the NCA through the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


