
Information Operations and Deliberate Planning—Battlespace Shaping Before the First Round Goes Downrange—Forgotten Key to Deterrence?

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Editorial Abstract: An oft-repeated lesson learned from recent operations, including Operation ALLIED FORCE, is that U. S. and allied forces failed to integrate and execute an information operations plan early enough to maximize their impact on overall operations. Colonels Rayfield and Eisel propose changes to Theater Engagement Planning that will provide a clear link between national strategic objectives, theater shaping and deterrence activities, and commander-in-chief developed operations plans. Specifically they suggest a proactive approach to planning and executing information operations that can help shape the battlefield prior to the start of hostilities.

“The only thing harder than getting a new idea into the military mind is to get an old one out.”

Captain Sir B. H. Liddell Hart

To proactively include IO in all levels of operations, IO capabilities and related activities¹ must be considered from planning initiation. Much can be done to deter crisis or conflict, maintain peace, and isolate, shape, and prepare prior to the first round going downrange. IO present an excellent vehicle to employ in these endeavors, especially in the area of perception management.² When properly coordinated, integrated, and executed, IO can make decisive contributions to the Commander-in-Chief’s (CINC’s) ability to reduce crises and confrontation, return to peace, and increase and complement all instruments of national power (diplomatic, economic, military, and informational). IO can further serve to delay or eliminate the necessity to commit combat forces. Additionally, IO can readily impact the ability to gain information superiority and provide force sustainment, thus allowing the joint force commander (JFC) freedom and continuity of action.³ If deterrence fails, IO may succeed in

preparation of the battlespace for conflict, acting as a force enhancer for combat operations. Effective IO can also support quick resolution of hostilities on terms favorable to the United States through its ability to influence the perceptions and decision making capability of others.

♦ **Background.** The US Department of Defense has organized its military—trained, equipped, and provided by each

Service—into geographic and functional commands under the combatant command authority of a CINC. Each geographic CINC has an assigned area of responsibility (AOR) in which to promote and protect US national interests per the Unified Command Plan (UCP) and

Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP). The geographic CINCs subdivide their AORs into regions, with varied and multiple countries, cultures, and economic capabilities present.

The UCP and JSCP provide the impetus for the CINCs to develop plans. The two broad categories of plans and planning

“The mind of the enemy and the will of his leaders is a target of far more importance than the bodies of his troops.”

Brigadier General Samuel B. Griffith II, USMC

“Our ability to conduct peacetime military engagement, to forestall or prevent crisis and conflict, and to fight and win is critically dependent on effective IO at all levels of war and across the range of military operations.”

GEN Henry H. Shelton, USA, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

are crisis action planning and deliberate planning. Within crisis action planning exist campaign plans and operation orders (OPORDs). Within deliberate planning, on a (perceived) unequal status, are operation plans (OPLANs), concept plans (CONPLANs), functional plans (FUNCPLANs), and theater engagement plans (TEPs).

By definition, the TEP is a deliberate plan intended to shape the security environment in peacetime.⁴ The TEP is primarily a strategic planning document intended to link national strategic objectives with CINC-planned regional engagement activities.⁵ The TEP is a recognition that there needs to be a link between stated US national security objectives and the day to day operations performed by the geographic combatant commanders to influence appropriate political leaders, deter aggression, and foster relationships amiable to US interests. Most of the theater (warfighting) CINCs have diverse AORs – diverse in terms of cultures, languages, races, etc. For example, Commander-in-Chief, United States Central Command (CINCCENT) has identified four distinct regions within his AOR: Arabian Peninsula and Iraq; Northern Red Sea States; South and Central Asia; and, Horn of Africa.⁶ In this example, we have one CINC’s AOR encompassing Arabs, Persians, Asians, and Africans. Commander-in-Chief, United States Pacific Command (CINCPAC) TEP issues and problems (an AOR covering 52% of the world, 43 countries, and 60% of the world’s population⁷) would be only exacerbated.

♦ **TEP Format.** Incorporation of IO into the TEP, in its present form is difficult at best. The TEP is not in the same format (Joint Operation Planning and Execution System [JOPES]) as the

Areas of Concern

- **TEP Format**
- **CINC staff organization**
- **JSCP methodology**

other plans and orders. Hence, military planners are often unfamiliar and uncomfortable with the TEP planning format. The TEP is composed of a Strategic Concept and designated Activity Annexes. It has no equivalent to Appendix 3, Information Operations, to Annex C, Operations, of a JOPES-based OPLAN, CONPLAN, or OPORD.

♦ **CINC Staff Organization.** To compound matters, the current unified command staff structure does not facilitate the proper direction and supervision of the TEP. Within the common structures of joint staffs, the operations directorates (J3s) and plans directorates (J5s), as configured, are better suited for traditional planning and

warfighting. The J5s and the J3s do not always integrate and interface in such a manner as to facilitate coordination and transition between plans and orders. Currently, J3s and J5s are not organized to devise, implement, and supervise regional peacetime strategies. (See Figures 1 and 2). It is not realistic to expect one Director of Operations or one Director of Plans to stay conversant with the multiple cultural, political, economic and other considerations that drive national and regional perceptions. The intelligence community has long recognized this. Within intelligence directorates one will find individuals devoted to one or two countries, with each region supervised by one individual.

♦ **JSCP Methodology.** Lastly, the JSCP recognizes two planning processes, deliberate and crisis action. Within deliberate planning, there has always been the mandate for warfighting plans in either OPLAN or CONPLAN (abbreviated OPLAN) format. In 1999, the JSCP required designated CINCs to

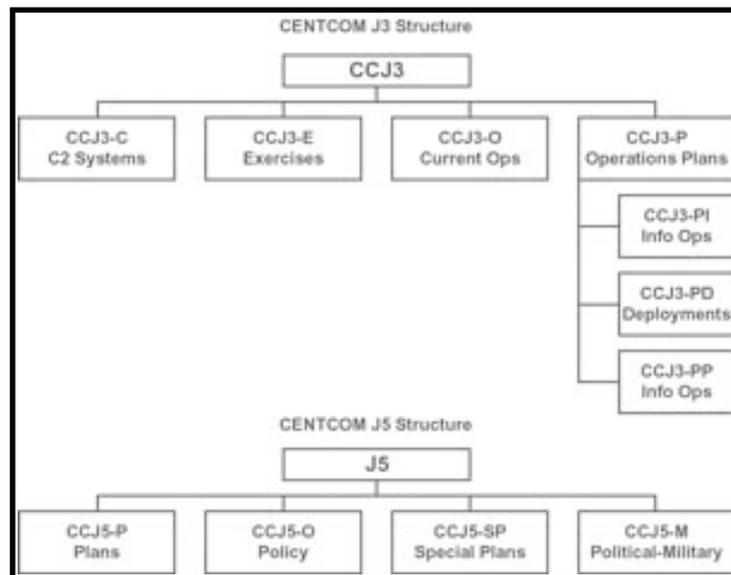


Figure 1. CENTCOM J3 and J5 Structure⁸



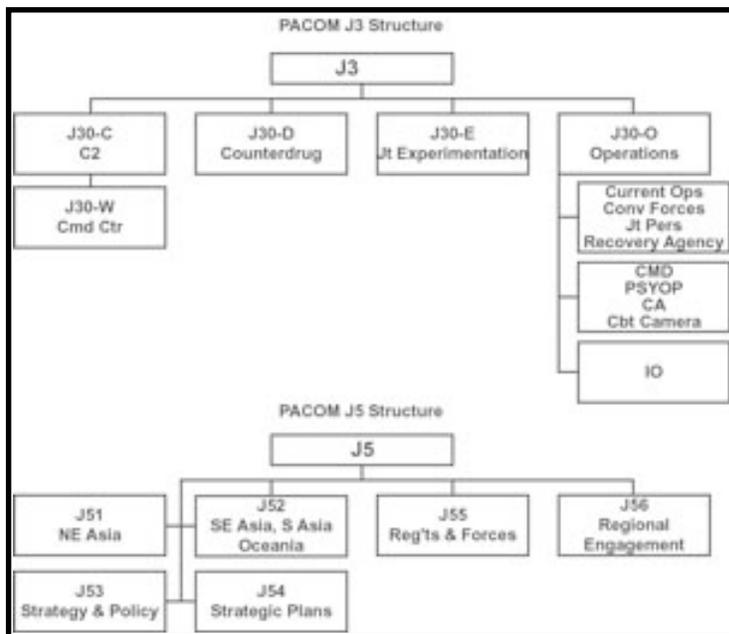


Figure 2. PACOM J3 and J5 Structure⁹

develop TEPs.¹⁰ The JSCP, as currently codified, has TEPS as a separate staff planning drill that is uncoordinated with war plans. The TEPs, as designed, appear to be an adjunct and included as a parallel staff exercise. Further, the existing JSCP direction does not provide a linkage between an effective TEP and the logical sequels—theater/regional OPLANs/CONPLANS. The Joint Planning Process establishes logical relationships among traditional plans. TEPs, however, appear to be in a “plans vacuum.” This absence of a relationship between the TEP and other plans, and subsequently orders, exacerbates the ability to provide a coherent IO focus throughout the planning process. See Figure 3.

How can IO be effectively incorporated into deliberate planning? How can we use IO as a deterrent to shape the battlespace before the first round goes downrange? The following recommendations offer potential solutions to more closely aligning proactive peacetime plans, and crisis/conflict activities. Additionally, it will standardize certain staff functions within CINCs vis-à-vis TEP responsibilities. Lastly, and perhaps more importantly, it will give primacy to peacetime shaping

strategies instead of the reactive formula currently embodied in the JSCP.

The first solution lies in development of an overarching keystone plan that is part of the same planning system (JOPES) as the other plans and orders. Secondly, we must proactively include IO in initial planning by reorganizing CINC staffs to facilitate TEP development, implementation, and supervision. Finally, the JSCP direction needs to be examined and revised to facilitate coherent linkage from the national security strategy and national

military strategy (captured in the JSCP and UCP) to the CINC plan and the supporting regional plans. This will place peacetime planning efforts (TEPs) as the keystone, with other deliberate plans subordinate to and derived from the peacetime strategy. This revised JSCP direction, combined with an all-encompassing planning system and reorganized CINC staffs, would subsequently facilitate a smooth, seamless transition to operation orders.

Recommendations

- **Revise TEP format->Theater Integrated Shaping Plan (TISP)?**
- **Reorganize CINC staff**
- **Revise JSCP methodology**

- ♦ **Revise TEP Format...a Theater Integrated Shaping Plan (TISP)?** A need exists for some form of document, concept, or plan that serves to translate a CINC’s theater-specific guidance downward within the AOR to provide coherence to disparate regional requirements. This will facilitate the transition from plan to execution, providing viable courses of action to maintain the existing state, shape the

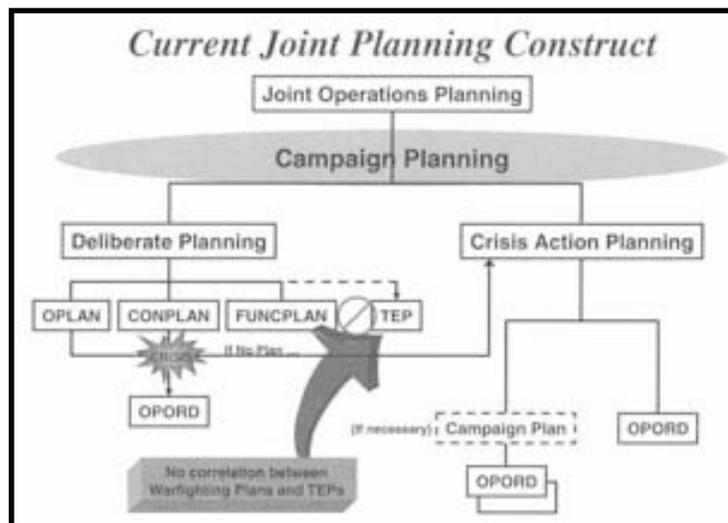


Figure 3. Current Joint Planning Construct

region, or move the region towards the desired endstate. This form of document, concept, or plan would serve to outline the means to deter crisis or conflict and form the basis for the isolation, shaping, preparation, and domination of the AOR, region, or any portion thereof—the “battlespace”¹¹. Further, this document, concept, or plan could be developed in such a format as to permit logical transition to other types and levels of plans and subsequently to operation orders.

TEPs currently require a CINC’s Strategic Concept with supporting Activity Annexes. (We understand the Joint Staff has put a “hold” on TEPs, and may be eliminating Activity Annexes, Theater Engagement Planning Management Information System [TEPMIS], etc.). Figure 4 indicates an alternative to the current format. The overarching theater plan for a CINC, the keystone theater planning document, would be a peacetime shaping plan that would integrate and encompass the peacetime shaping activities of the subordinate regions of the AOR. This plan would not be an “engagement” plan (usually connoting kinetic activities) but rather a Theater Integrated Shaping Plan (TISP) that incorporates the Prioritized Regional Objectives (PROs). The revised format would have the CINCs develop an overarching *theater* strategy, in JOPEs (OPLAN/CONPLAN) format. We selected JOPEs as it is an approved, understood, and workable process that most on the CINC staff and Joint Staff are comfortable with. As the CINC has divided his theater into regions, the staff would develop supporting regional strategies, also in JOPEs (OPLAN/CONPLAN) format. The following example uses the four regions currently identified by USCINCCENT in his present TEP. The objectives, IO objectives, etc., are fictional. This method allows direct, observable linkages of CINC theater objectives with regional objectives and provides continuity throughout the plans.

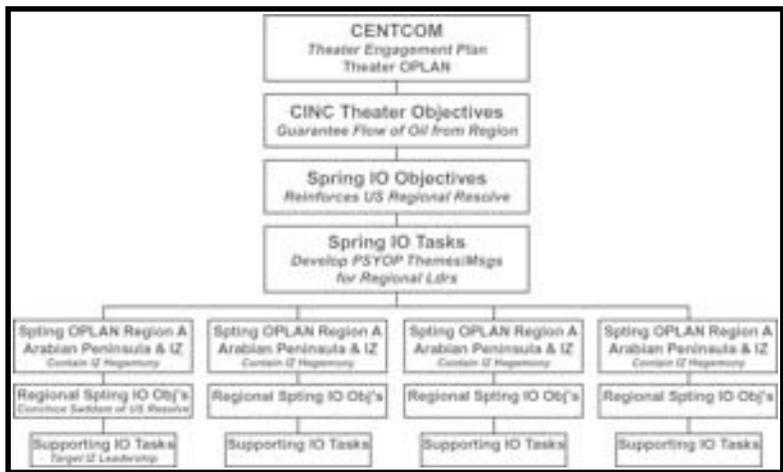


Figure 4. Proposed TISP (formerly TEP) Format

♦ **Reorganize CINC Staff.** As demonstrated in the examples in figures 1 and 2 (CENTCOM and PACOM), CINC Operations and Plans Directorates are most suitable to traditional current operations and execution of deliberate/crisis action planning products. If TISPs (formerly TEPs) assume a preeminence, then a restructuring of the J3 and J5 may be called for. The proposal below combines some of the traditional functions, and may require enlarging the J3 (and J5). For implementing and supervising regional peacetime strategy plans, the J3 would **create Deputy Director for Operations** positions for each of the identified regions within the theater (Figure 5). This would place a senior, experienced officer (perhaps flag or general officer?) in charge of overseeing a region’s supporting strategy plan. Fully cognizant of the CINC’s

theater objectives, he/she would gain and maintain a regional focus and expertise that would provide the CINC with a level of continuity and certainty heretofore not seen at the unified command.

♦ **Revise JSCP Methodology.** To ensure integrated IO planning, the methodology of deliberate and crisis action planning directed by the JSCP needs to be restructured. By designating TISPs as keystone plans (see Figure 6), addressing comprehensive theater requirements, it should logically follow that OPLANs and CONPLANs would have direct links to theater objectives—developed as a logical transition from the TISP. They would be developed as a logical sequel to the battlespace isolation, shaping, and preparation actions of the peacetime TISP. The OPORD would remain the crisis action planning transition-piece from the OPLAN. Using

TISPs as a basis for war planning, CINCs would have both a logical progression of how deterrence failed as well as a “desired end state” already defined for conflict.

With the above construct, campaigns (the series of related military operations aimed at accomplishing a strategic or operational objective within a given time and space) and campaign planning, terms previously associated with combat operations planning,

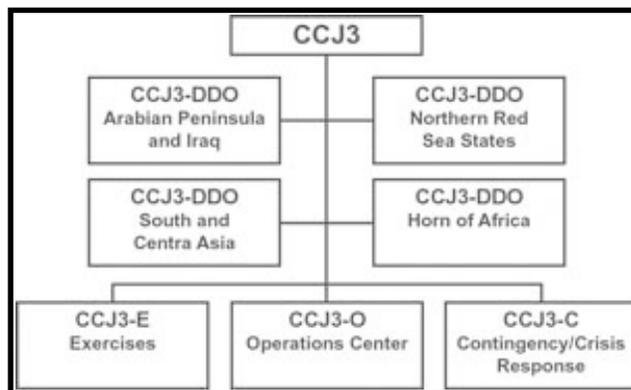


Figure 5. Proposed CINC Staff Reorganization (CENTCOM J3 Example)



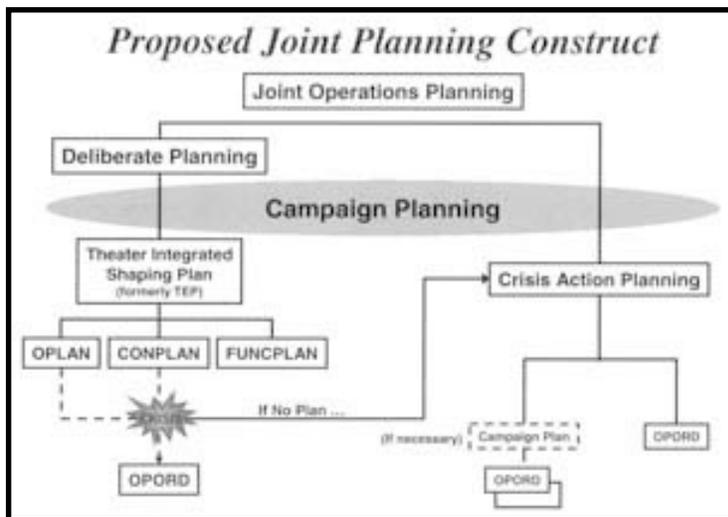


Figure 6. Proposed Joint Planning Construct

could now be applicable to both peace and war.¹²

♦ **Conclusion.** As the nature of conflict and state interactions evolve, so too must the way the nation prepares for war. Proactive peacetime strategies, supported by related and integrated war plans, will help to ensure the US is less likely to be surprised, and if deterrence fails, more likely to resolve any conflict on terms congruous with US interests. These proactive strategies will enable the full integration and use of all instruments of US national power—informational, diplomatic, economic, and military. None of the recommendations herein—TEP revision and migration to a TISP, reorganization of the unified command staffs, or revision of JSCP direction—constitutes a revolutionary shift or change. Rather, they are evolutionary in nature, and require few, if any, changes

in the staff and planning processes with which today's military planners are familiar. This paradigm also permits taking advantage of the full range of options available to military planners. This shift will better enable us to either fight and win, or not have to fight and still win.

End Notes

¹ **Information operations.** Actions taken to affect adversary information and information systems while defending one's own information and information systems. Also called IO." JP 3-13, *Joint Doctrine for Information Operations* (Oct 1998). "IO are conducted through the integration of many capabilities and related activities. Major capabilities to conduct IO include, but are not limited to, OPSEC, PSYOP, military deception, EW, and physical attack/destruction, and

could include CNA. IO-related activities include, but are not limited to, public affairs (PA) and civil affairs (CA)." JP 3-13.

² **Perception management.** Actions to convey and/or deny selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, and objective reasoning; and to intelligence systems and leaders at all levels to influence official estimates, ultimately resulting in foreign behaviors and official actions favorable to the originator's objectives. In various ways, perception management combines truth projection, operations security, cover and deception, and psychological operations." JP 1-02 *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Sep 2000).

³ **Information superiority.** The capability to collect, process, and disseminate an uninterrupted flow of information while exploiting or denying an adversary's ability to do the same." JP 1-02. **Force sustainment.** Capabilities, equipment, and operations that ensure continuity, freedom of action, logistic support, and command and control." Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 5-12C, *Marine Corps Supplement to the DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (July 1998).

⁴ **Theater engagement plan.** Deliberate plans for all military activities involving other nations intended to shape the security environment in peacetime. Based on guidance from NCA and CJCS, the CINCs develop plans and employ forces in peacetime to protect and promote US interests and regional objectives. A TEP is comprised of the CINC's TEP Strategic Concept plus TEP Activity Annexes. The geographic CINCs and Executive Agents develop TEPs; the Functional CINCs, Services, and other Defense agencies as required develop supporting/ coordinating plans." CJCSM 3113.01A, *Theater Engagement Planning* (31 May 2000)

⁵ Page A-1, CJCSM 3113.01A.

⁶ Page 3, *Strategic Concept for USCINCENT Plan 1250-01, Engagement for the Central Region Theater*, dated (1 April 1999).

Conclusion

Information Operations with their inherent strengths in perception management and influence management disciplines, may now serve as a supported strategy. The variety of flexible deterrent options, often considered when crisis is imminent, may be employed routinely and proactively. Information Operations-included from the outset in deliberate planning, can have a decisive impact in battlespace shaping and deterrence-before the first round goes down range.

“The talk you hear...about adapting to change is not only stupid, it’s...dangerous. The only way you can manage change is to create it. By the time you catch up to change, the competition is ahead of you.”

Professor Peter Drucker

⁷ PACOM Home Page, *Pacific Command Mission Briefing*, Slides 3-5, as of 6 Mar 2001.

⁸ CENTCOM Home page, SIPRNET, as of 6 Mar 2001.

⁹ PACOM Home Page, SIPRNET, as of 6 Mar 2001.

¹⁰ Page A-1, CJCSM 3113.01A.

¹¹ **“Battlespace.** The environment, factors, and conditions which must be understood to successfully apply combat power, protect the force, or complete the mission. This includes the air, land, sea, space, and the included enemy and friendly forces, facilities, weather, terrain, the electromagnetic spectrum, and information environment within the operational areas and areas of interest.”

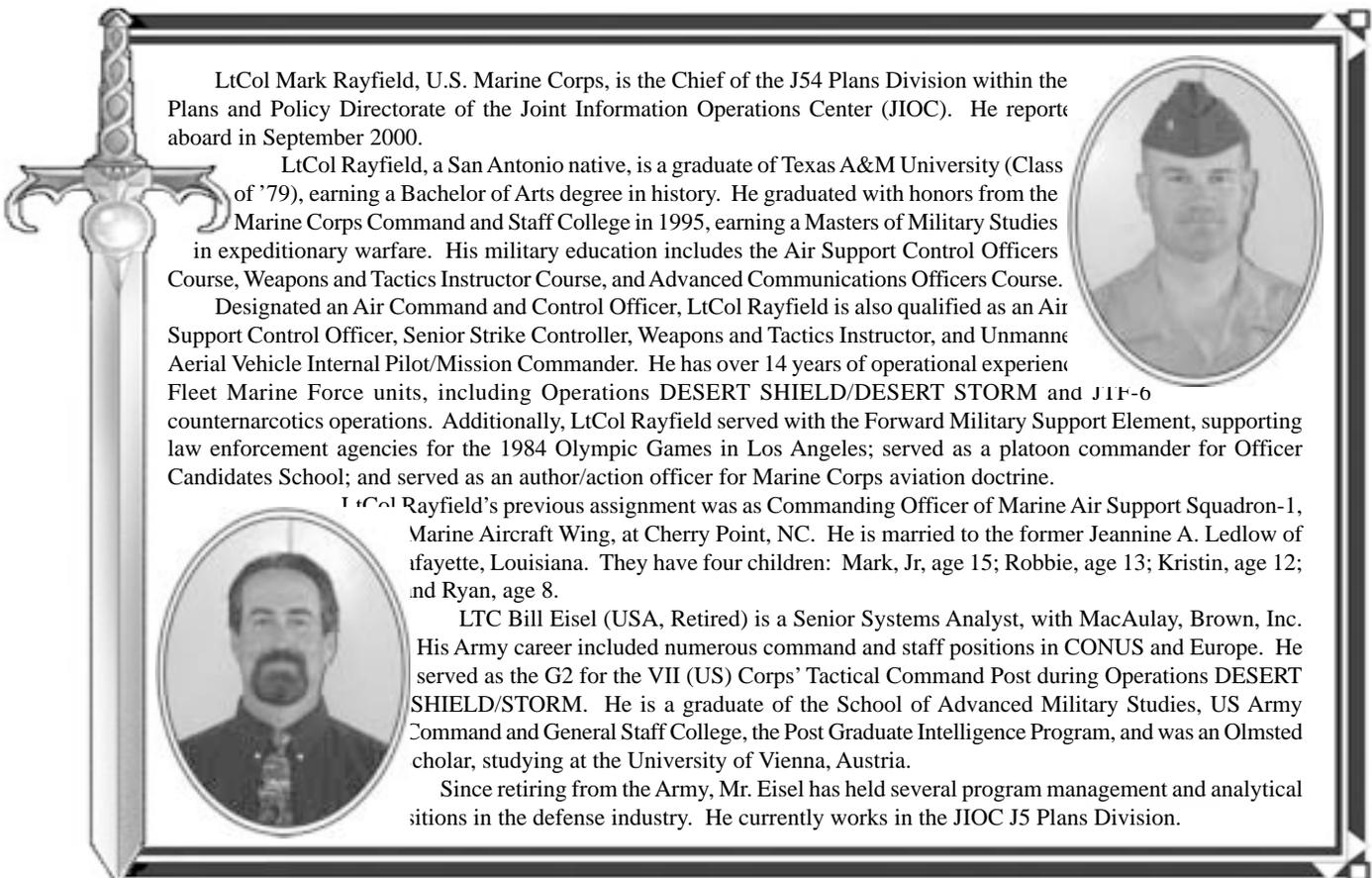
JP 1-02. **“Battlespace dominance.** The degree of control over the dimensions of the battlespace which enhances friendly freedom of action and denies enemy freedom of action. It permits force sustainment and application of power projection to accomplish the full range of potential operational and tactical missions. It includes all actions conducted against enemy capabilities to influence future operations.” MCRP 5-12C.

¹² **“Campaign.** A series of related military operations aimed at accomplishing a strategic or operational objective within a given time and space.”

“Campaign plan. A plan for a series of related military operations aimed at

accomplishing a strategic or operational objective within a given time and space.”

“Campaign planning. The process whereby combatant commanders and subordinate joint force commanders translate national or theater strategy into operational concepts through the development of campaign plans. Campaign planning may begin during deliberate planning when the actual threat, national guidance, and available resources become evident, but is normally not completed until after the National Command Authorities select the course of action during crisis action planning. Campaign planning is conducted when contemplated military operations exceed the scope of a single major joint operation.” JP 1-02.



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