

PRESIDENT'S FORUM



It is said that when Vice Admiral Horatio Lord Nelson put to sea and opened his secret sailing instructions, the small slip of paper stated simply, “Act in the best interests of the King.”

THE KING'S ORDERS TO NELSON underscore the remarkable degree of independence and latitude historically exercised by a captain at sea. By tradition, ships have roamed freely on the high seas and responded as events dictated without further guidance. As a matter of practice driven by limits of communications at sea, mariners of previous generations seldom relied upon consultation, cooperation, or collaboration. Indeed, the U.S. Navy successfully organized itself and operated this way for most of its history.

But globalization has changed the nature of war, and fourth-generation warfare has changed its rules. (See my “President’s Forum” in the Autumn 2005 *Naval War College Review*, page 8.) America’s military forces require a range of capabilities that enable them to conduct operations throughout the entire spectrum of conflict, and they require close collaboration with coalition forces and nonmilitary organizations to do so. Future military operations will be conducted by composite forces that effectively bring into concert the capabilities of the land, air, space, and sea services of this nation and of its friends and allies. Planning and operating with forces from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps is defined as “joint”; when other nations’ forces are included, it is proper to speak of “joint and multinational” operations. When we include the other agencies of government—as well as certain nongovernment organizations—to ensure focus of resources on a particular mission and to bring into strategic and operational alignment the diplomatic, economic, and information components of national powers, the effort also becomes “multiagency.” Coordinating and synchronizing activities across these components emerge as key functions of a joint force commander (JFC). Significant efforts are now underway at the Naval

War College to improve the way in which maritime forces are integrated into joint, multinational, multiagency planning and operations.

This requirement for coordinated and synchronized employment of these forces in both peacetime and wartime dictates the existence of a very sophisticated command-and-control (C2) capability and a comprehensive system that develops Navy leaders able to use it. These leaders must be strategically minded, capable of critical thinking, and skilled in naval and joint warfare. There is also an expectation that they will be able to articulate the role of the maritime component in the design, planning, and command and control of joint and multinational campaign plans to achieve the effects desired by the JFC. These officers will require a high degree of confidence with the concepts, systems, language, and processes necessary to employ naval forces effectively in joint, multiagency, and multinational environments.

Our efforts at the college seek to develop such officers through a mix of joint and Navy-specific professional military education (PME), experience, and training. PME is at the heart of this process because the schoolhouses are the linchpins of organizational and cultural changes. It must occur across a well-defined and broadly understood learning continuum that begins at the accession level and ends with senior naval leadership fully prepared to operate and lead forces in the most challenging environments. With this objective in mind, and as we have discussed in this forum in earlier *Reviews*, the College is restructuring curricula and its programs. At the top end of a continuum designed to improve the way maritime forces are integrated, commanded, and controlled in the multidimensional context of today's battlefield is a cluster of educational, analytic, and training initiatives associated with the "joint force maritime component commander" (JFMCC).

The JFMCC (pronounced "jiff-mick") is a senior sea-service officer with the cognitive and physical capabilities to exercise command and control over a much larger and more complex force than expeditionary or carrier striking groups. This C2 concept involves both the individual and technical capabilities required for the effective and efficient exercise of command and control. Most of these capabilities reside within what is referred to as the Maritime Operations Center. The leadership of our Navy has recently embraced the JFMCC concept as the way to optimize the employment of both naval and other military capabilities within the joint force. The JFMCC is the joint force commander's maritime warfighter and reports to and advises the commander on the proper employment of maritime forces. The JFMCC exercises command and control of the maritime portion of a joint operation by organizing, synchronizing, and integrating the efforts of subordinate tactical commands as well as those of peer

(land, air, and special warfare) components. Because operating within this joint construct has become the norm for U.S. forces over the past decade, quick and effective implementation of the JFMCC concept increases the relevance of naval forces, especially in littoral joint operating areas. This is also true in the multinational environment when the U.S. Navy operates with the maritime forces of our friends and under the command and control of a *combined* force maritime component commander (CFMCC).

At the operational level, the C/JFMCC must function smoothly within the context of a larger joint and coalition force. This requires an organization that: can be formed quickly from U.S. and coalition forward-deployed forces; is led by a capable naval commander and staff; and is able to function in the role of a supported command to plan, synchronize, and execute maritime portions of a campaign. For these reasons, a maritime component must be able to organize and integrate seamlessly with other forces. The capabilities that naval forces bring with them to major combat operations are significant in this regard; however, the cognitive and physical demands of commanding and controlling these forces and translating desired operational-level effects into tactical tasks in a way that achieves operational objectives are challenging, particularly since the techniques, procedures, and systems required to meet these demands are still being developed.

As I mentioned in the Autumn 2005 issue of the *Review*, maritime forces also have a tremendous capacity to play a role in strategic shaping in the early phases of a conflict and during transition. *Shaping* refers to the wide range of activities—diplomatic, informational, military, and economic—that encourage global, regional, and local developments favorable to our interests. In contrast to land or air forces, naval forces under the command and control of a C/JFMCC have the persistence, agility, mobility, adaptability, scalability, and low geographical and political profile that make them particularly applicable to the tasks associated with shaping.

During peacetime operations and the precursor stage to conflict (often called “Phase Zero”), the nation’s strategic interests are usually best served by recognizing and then quickly and quietly removing potential challenges to them in cooperation with friends and allies with common interests and objectives. Examples of C/JFMCC shaping include maritime security cooperation activities during peacetime, strategic and operational deterrence, and, when required, the establishment of maritime superiority in the littorals. Each can be used either to stabilize a situation or to facilitate follow-on phases of a campaign. The demand for a very flexible, capable, and highly adaptive command and control system is obvious. The system must provide a method to identify potential threats and opportunities early enough to be able to conceptualize the effects that are sought, ensure

alignment of those effects with strategic objectives, and then plan and coordinate responses. That, in turn, calls for visibility across the full spectrum of seaborne activity, or *maritime domain awareness*—the detailed and actionable knowledge of all activities associated with the global maritime environment that could affect the security, safety, economy, or environment of the United States. Integrating and operationalizing capabilities on a global basis is a huge new challenge.

During the Cold War, the U.S. military divided its potential employment areas into clearly defined land, air, and maritime operating domains with limited interaction or reliance between the Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard, on the one hand, and the Army or Air Force on the other. This allowed the U.S. Navy to maintain its traditional approach to commanding and controlling its forces. Over the past fifteen years, however, the Air Force and Army have developed a set of common tactics, techniques, and procedures that have evolved as joint doctrine, with the complexities and challenges of conflict in the maritime domain receiving less focus. There is evidence to suggest that the appreciation of the relevance of naval forces to the joint force diminished over time and that war-plan development did not comprehensively incorporate naval capability. Operations over the last two decades provide instances where the role of the Navy was largely that of a force provider, and Navy commanders were not systematically prepared or equipped to insert themselves effectively into the joint command-and-control processes.

Understanding full well the impact that globalization has had on military operations and the requirement to support joint commanders in a set of new missions—in a planning and operational environment where highly focused and synchronized joint C2 processes are the linchpins of mission success—the Navy has responded energetically. The JFMCC systematically enables the high degree of collaborative planning required with other organizations and ensures the execution feedback necessary to assess efforts. JFMCC also improves the ability to analyze and clearly articulate how maritime forces can help achieve the joint commander's objectives, so the commander is fully aware, at all levels and stages of planning and execution, of the effects—critical to campaign objectives—that naval capabilities and unique modes of employment from the sea can yield.

As our connectivity increases through networking, so does our opportunity to employ dissimilar forces in a synchronized manner. To bring together these tailored forces capable of accomplishing coordinated joint actions also requires commanders and staffs to look well into the future and to think in terms of aggregated, strategic effects—or consequences—of discrete actions. This is no small challenge. Properly educated and trained leadership is essential to full exploitation of a networked environment and the organizational improvements it enables. The Naval War College is at the cutting edge of the process to meet that

demand. Our first-ever flag-officer JFMCC Course was held in Newport in August 2005. This course is envisioned as the senior warfighting component of the CNO's PME continuum. It was developed to prepare future JFMCCs. It is also intended to serve as a catalytic agent to accelerate evolution of C/JFMCC concepts, capabilities, processes, and systems by gathering the senior naval leadership in a C/JFMCC-focused forum. Twelve Navy and Marine Corps one- and two-star officers drawn from a targeted audience of former and future carrier and amphibious strike group commanders were selected personally by the Vice Chief of Naval Operations and the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps to attend this course. Follow-on courses will include U.S. Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard officers. The College's faculty—preeminent in the operational art behind JFMCC functions—was augmented by three- and four-star flag and general officers with recent experience commanding joint forces around the world. The College is also developing curricula for an O5–O6 (commander/lieutenant colonel to captain/colonel) JFMCC course and is creating teams that can operate on site in direct support of Navy component commanders as they develop their C/JFMCC capacities. In the near future, NWC expects to establish a senior, flag-level maritime component commanders' course (CFMCC) to include our friends and allies.

Much work remains to be done. The good news is that Navy leadership recognizes the importance of the task and is attacking it with vigor. Operational concepts, the first stage of developing doctrine, are currently being refined. Experiments are being conducted with C/JFMCC organization, processes, and products. Education and training represent a tremendous challenge, as most naval officers have grown up with little appreciation for operational art—a subject that has become a key strength of the NWC curriculum—but, as we have discussed here, the College is at a flank bell.

In the future, military leaders will go forth to “act in the best interests of the nation” as part of a dedicated team of specialists from all military services, with rule sets, systems, and processes evolved to work in an integrated fashion—and naval leaders comprehensively schooled and ready to command and control naval forces in the complex joint, multiagency, and multinational environment that defines today's battlefield.

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