

Joint Operations

by

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"Gut-check" time! Those words sum-up an offensive or defensive football team's inner strength as it comes to the line on a fourth-down and goal from the one yard line, with the National Championship in the balance. Each man with his assignment--block, defend, run, receive, blitz, cover, hand-off or pass. As the ball is snapped, success or failure depends upon the team's execution of the proper offensive or defensive play called. We have seen a victorious goal line stand against an awesome offensive opponent. And, we may have witnessed a team absolutely pick apart a so-called superior defense with a brilliant combination of the pass and run.

Does offense or defense win the game? Is the pass more important than the run? The point is that superior performances don't just happen--they are created through a mental and physical process we call "TEAM" building. It is then and only then that a championship caliber team can reach down and produce--individually and collectively--a performance above all expectation.

This process begins during spring training as individual players show their "stuff" and compete for positions. Posturing, friction, conflict, competition--you bet! But that's the "stuff" champions are made of. While the players and strategy may change, the entire coaching process results in a cohesive machine--a winning football team. By the beginning of the season the team, if it is to be successful, must have a balanced attack including both the pass and run, and a defense that is able to respond to either. The ultimate test is that fourth and goal from the one. That is when trust--in each team member's ability-- produces that "gut" performance with each member carrying out his (or her) assignment in support of the team.

The military "team" is no different. We have an awesome potential from which to build and then apply in the right combination to be victorious. Certainly, to account for each situation that we face, the military must change or adapt its strategy and force mix. But, we must ensure the integrity of the team. In the words of General Omar Bradley:

"Our military forces are one team--in the game to win regardless of who carries the ball. This is no time for "Fancy Dans" who won't hit the line with all they have on every play, unless they can call the signals. Each player on this team--whether he shines in the spotlight of the backfield or eats dirt in the line--must be an all-American."

Joint Pub 1 concedes that internal friction between military components is a normal occurrence. In fact, human endeavors to excel, compete, and champion different points of view, are inherent in healthy organizations, and certainly healthy military organizations are no exception. However, Joint Pub 1 also points out there is no place for excessive rivalry and dissonance that, "... seeks to undercut or denigrate fellow members of the joint team." Much is written on the problems of

Service parochialism, and the contentious issues that are fired back and forth between components across self-imposed fire support coordination lines (FSCL). A number of questions necessarily follow: Has our debate obscured more than illuminated? Has inter-Service rivalry driven us further from collaboration and consonance? More specifically, are we tarnishing one of the values in joint warfare listed in Joint Pub 1--**TEAMWORK**.

As Drew and Snow discussed in their book, *Making Strategy: An Introduction to National Security Processes and Problems*, "warfare conducted in the twentieth century is three dimensional." Even with the unique and often independent characteristics of land, sea, and air; battles, operations, and campaigns are inherently joint. It would first appear that the rich American tradition of joint warfare would welcome the synergistic effects of unique capabilities in developing and orchestrating operational strategy. And, yes we often do manage to "muddle" into the right blend of strategy and hardware which leads to success in war. Yet, we then fail to appreciate the reality of what has occurred. In the afterglow of victory, we return to discrete components, seeking recognition for success or making defensive claims of what we could have done "better"--if done our way.

Joint operational strategy is an overwhelming and discriminate use of force, unparalleled in tempo and exploitation of advanced technology. Why then do narrow doctrinal arguments persist in undermining evolutionary advances and risk obscuring facts relevant to future warfare? The simple fact is each component hides behind a veil of doctrine, a comfort zone, afraid that ground will be given away, or that control will be lost. Defensive claims are made by each component that someone else's success in battle resulted from a unique situation. Each war is unique--no more or less than the ones that have gone before. What is truly revealing are the experiences that we are presented and the possibilities for learning from them. "Winning" jointly is not a zero-sum game for the components that compose the whole.

True jointness, in the best of worlds, will always have barriers and create conflict. Drew said it succinctly in his article, "Joint Operations: The World Looks Different From 10,000 Feet." Soldiers, sailors, and airmen have fundamentally different world views which create honest differences over how warfare should be conducted. This different view does not imply a better perspective, only a variation toward a common theme-- victory.

This differing world view idea has much to offer, especially in developing strategic and operational strategy for each "unique" situation. Perhaps, an inherent strength of joint operations is the unique perspective that each component brings to the planning table. Yet, what we need are the strategists, tacticians, and planners who are schooled in their unique types of warfare, but are also schooled in the value of joint teamwork based upon mutual trust.

In order to empower the joint organization to reach its full potential, must we assume the decline in power of each Service organization? The joint document, *A Doctrinal Statement of Selected Joint Operational Concepts*, 23 November 1992, offers a codetermined operational perspective. It states, "The overarching operational concept in Joint Pub 1 is that Joint Force Commanders synchronize the action of air, land, sea, space, and special operations forces to achieve strategic and operational objectives through integrated, joint campaigns and major operations. The goal is to increase the total effectiveness of the joint force, *not necessarily to involve all forces or to*

involve all forces equally." [emphasis mine] However, as we have seen, a great measure of what Joint Pub 1 calls "trust" is required for components to wholeheartedly embrace the view and to overcome the inertia of standard operating procedure or narrow-minded doctrine.

All components must begin to appreciate, not just tolerate joint warfare, only later to criticize the contributions of fellow team members. Once again, Joint Pub 1 defines the value of teamwork through the elements of trust and confidence. Trust is described as, "...total confidence in the integrity, ability, and good character of another and is one of the most important ingredients in building strong teams." In fact, the description continues by stating that it is only through the "...honest efforts to learn about and understand the capabilities each member brings to the team..." that trust is nurtured.

Each war and each operation short of war has its unique aspects. On the other hand, our truly American tradition of joint warfare offers a unique blend of capabilities and characteristics that can be tailored to meet any contingency.

As the document, *A Doctrinal Statement of Selected Joint Operational Concepts*, points out, "Given the appropriate circumstances, any dimension of combat power can be dominant and even decisive in certain aspects of an operation or phase of a campaign, and each force can support or be supported by other forces." The bottom line is, if your team just scored, don't criticize it just because on that particular play you didn't happen to carry the ball.

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