



Computer screens reflect on Sailor aboard USS *San Antonio* during International Mine Countermeasures Exercise in Bahrain

Globally Integrated Operations **A Reflection of Environmental Complexity**

By DANIEL H. McCAULEY

The real difficulty in changing the course of any enterprise lies not in developing new ideas, but in escaping old ones.

—John Maynard Keynes

Weapons of mass destruction. Accelerating rates of technological change. Transnational organizations. Cyber warfare. Regional and global competitor states. Violent extremism. Anti-access and area-denial threats. Fiscal constraints. These are just a few of the security environmental conditions within which the future joint force will operate. To be effective

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in such an unpredictable, complex, and dangerous world and to protect U.S. global interests, the joint force must operate in smaller units capable of aggregating at a moment's notice, reconfiguring in response to environmental challenges and opportunities, and disaggregating upon mission completion. These adaptable military responses must occur at increasing rates of speed leveraging insightful prepositioning of military forces around the world and rapid expeditionary basing. The ability to operate effectively in such a manner is the basis for the concept of *globally*

integrated operations that General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is promoting as a way to project decisive force to protect U.S. global interests.

Operating in an increasingly interactive and dynamic global environment demands quick decisionmaking and agile command and control systems that enable "resources to be allocated, shifted, and deconflicted fluidly among combatant commanders as strategic priorities evolve."¹ Maladapted organizational structures and systems are not flexible enough, nor can they change fast

enough to respond effectively in uncertain and dynamic conditions. Based on outdated strategic assumptions or an unrealistic understanding of the environment, these organizations are doomed when operating in today's environment.²

As John Maynard Keynes stated, often the most difficult obstacle that must be overcome is one's own legacy, and the comfort that comes in doing things the same way as in the past. Unfortunately, that is the case with current Department of Defense (DOD) organizational structures and processes, which are basically anachronisms left over from the Cold War. Today, resources are too few, the world too complex, and the environment too unstable to maintain such an outdated structure. This article proposes that DOD must reorganize itself so that its processes and actions are more responsive to today's requirements and future global demands. Any organizational design must acknowledge that DOD cannot operate as it has for the past half century as global architects attempting to control events as they unfold. Instead, it must move to a design that focuses on resiliency and the management of global events.³

To understand organizational design requirements for a 21st-century joint force, the role of organizational design is discussed first in this essay. Next, as it specifically relates to the joint force, the strategic operating environment is analyzed. Next, the types of missions expected of the joint force are examined and assessed in the context of the environment. Next, shortfalls or misalignments in the current DOD construct are identified. Finally, broad DOD organizational design needs are suggested.

The Role of Organizational Design

Organizations are goal-directed, deliberately structured social entities linked to the environment that behave in predictable ways.⁴ A deep understanding of the environment shapes and reshapes an effective organizational design through the changing connections, relationships, and patterns of interaction. In essence, organizational design is a kind of geographic intelligence representing the organization's ability to situate itself in time and space relative to the environment.⁵ Leveraging insight and foresight, organizational design is the extension of the organization's goals or mission through the purposeful specification of

the relationships necessary to interact with selected variables within the environment. The dynamics of the interaction between mission and environment are the shaping mechanisms that ultimately define an organization's structure and the degree to which it is formal or informal, centralized or decentralized, flat or vertical, permanent or ad hoc, or some combination thereof.

There are two dimensions to any organizational design: structural and contextual. The structural dimension is the more visible and typically far more prominent, providing the "labels that describe the internal characteristics of the organization."⁶ It is concerned with "the ways in which the tasks of the organization are divided (differentiation) and with the coordination of these activities (integration). . . . It is concerned with patterns of authority, communication, and work flow."⁷ An organization's structural dimension (sometimes referred to as the "hard wiring") typically has six components:⁸

- formalization, which pertains to documentation as expressed in procedures, job descriptions, regulations, and policy
- specialization, or the degree to which tasks are subdivided
- hierarchy of authority and associated span of control
- degree of centralization for decisionmaking
- level of formal education and training of employees
- personnel ratio of people to various functions and departments.

Formally associated with the structural dimension is the concept of centralization, which refers to the level within the organizational hierarchy with authority to make decisions. In centralized organizations, decisions tend to be made at the top; in decentralized organizations, lower levels make similar decisions. As organizations grow larger and involve more personnel, the sheer number of decisions required would overwhelm senior leaders if some delegation did not occur. Thus, larger organizations permit greater decentralization. To ensure consistency, however, "larger organizations adopt more formal procedures to improve control" because direct "personal control becomes problematic as size increases."⁹ In smaller units, every decision effectively can involve the commander and thus these

organizations are typically highly centralized. With smaller size, however, comes less formalization and the ability to react and adapt more quickly because of a flatter organizational structure.

Unfortunately, an organization only defined by its hard wiring represents an impoverished view of design because it ignores the contextual dimensions, or "soft wiring." Contextual dimensions are "the less visible aspects that play a crucial role in determining organizational behavior and performance."¹⁰ The whole organization and surrounding environment display characteristics of the contextual dimensions. There are five classically recognized components of the contextual dimension: size, as measured by the number of employees; the tools, techniques, and actions used; the environment outside the organization's boundary; the goals and strategy defining organizational purpose and describing resource allocation; and culture and the underlying set of key values, beliefs, and norms.¹¹

The compatibility or fit between an organization's hard and soft wiring drives organizational performance. An organization's design directly affects personal performance in three main ways: it can motivate behavior through job definition and the use of rewards systems; it can facilitate behavior by providing methods and procedures and by placing personnel proximally to others for communication; and it can constrain behavior by limiting information, instituting formal procedures, and through the separation of groups or units from one another.¹² A consciously integrated organizational design thus considers both the hard and soft wiring of an organization.

The Strategic Environment

The organizational environment consists of those elements outside the boundaries of the organization to which it is sensitive and responsive.¹³ Those outside elements include technological, economic, legal, political, demographic, ecological, and cultural factors and are the primary drivers of environmental and organizational change. A comprehensive understanding of the strategic environment helps determine organizational structure(s) and, along with a keen understanding of the organization's mission, enable the development of a more focused set of factors that makes these broad environmental variables more relevant.¹⁴

Globalization has made the strategic environment essentially an open system. Either external or internal stimuli can compel change, and the permeability of the organizational boundaries enable “new demands, technologies, skills, and values to affect the system.”¹⁵ General Dempsey provided an assessment of the future operating environment in the Capstone Concept for Joint Operations (CCJO). In the CCJO, the Chairman describes the future security environment as “likely to be more unpredictable, complex, and potentially more dangerous than today.”¹⁶ The primary generator of the future security environment is the accelerating rate of change of many of the environmental variables.¹⁷

The worldwide flow of information and capital through digital networks, along with an equally mobile global population, markedly differentiates the future environment from the past. In this new global environment, the dynamics of these interrelated challenges create complex threats and security challenges. The many dimensions of future security challenges will cross-cut existing boundaries and command structures¹⁸ requiring a more highly developed worldview. Some of the future global trends include changing demographics and expectations, globalization, economics and national and international financial institutional health, increased energy demands, food and water scarcity, global population increases, environmental pollution, climate change and natural disasters, and advancements in space and cyberspace.

In addition to these global trends, a number of other contextual considerations must be accounted for in the strategic environment. Regional powers and rising global powers such as Brazil, Russia, India, and China present unique challenges for Washington. These countries possess military capabilities ranging from conventional forces to antiaccess and area-denial capabilities to cyberspace operators to nuclear weapons, and they must be accounted for in the development of environmental understanding. Other factors such as weak and failing states, radical ideologies, transnational criminal networks, terrorism, piracy, and urbanization add further complexity and dynamicity to an already dangerous operating environment.¹⁹ Still other factors that drive organizational redesign are changes in U.S. strategy, new technology,

changing fiscal constraints, and ineffective organizational operations.²⁰

A consolidated understanding of strategic conditions, trends, and other factors provides a comprehensive initial understanding of the operating environment for the joint force. Prior to developing a joint force organizational structure capable of operating within this environment, however, an analysis of the organization’s mission or anticipated mission sets is needed.²¹

Missions

The 2010 National Security Strategy states that the United States seeks a “world in which individuals enjoy more freedom and opportunity, and nations have incentives to act responsibly, while facing consequences when they do not.”²² From this global vision connecting security and prosperity, the National Military Strategy describes the joint force mission as one that “provides military capability to defend our [n]ation and allies, and to advance a broader peace, security, and prosperity.”²³ Linking the global military mission to the strategic environment, senior military leaders characterize the future security environment as involving “the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the rise of modern competitor nation-states, violent extremism, regional instability, transnational criminal activity, and competition for resources.”²⁴ These threats have created new and far more dangerous conditions than in the past.

Whereas the joint force previously operated in a relatively stable, state-centric environment, the recent diffusion of advanced technology means that small or middleweight militaries and nonstate actors have capabilities that only superpowers once possessed. This proliferation of technologically advanced weapons and munitions places the global commons at risk, threatening forces at their points of origin and as they deploy to operational areas. In addition, command and control capabilities and processes are radically changed as connectivity is greater between national authorities and tactical operators, but they are also far more vulnerable. Given the accelerating rates of change, the proliferation of weapons and communications technology, and an adversary’s ability to operate across multiple domains, the U.S. joint force must operate promptly across and through vertical and horizontal echelons.²⁵ Given the varied

conditions and threats that make up the strategic environment, DOD identified 10 primary joint force missions necessary to protect U.S. national interests:

- Counter terrorism and irregular warfare.
- Deter and defeat aggression.
- Project power despite antiaccess/area-denial challenges.
- Counter weapons of mass destruction.
- Operate effectively in cyberspace and space.
- Maintain a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent.
- Defend the homeland and provide support to civil authorities.
- Provide a stabilizing presence.
- Conduct stability and counterinsurgency operations.
- Conduct humanitarian, disaster relief, and other operations.²⁶

The range of missions illustrates the complexities of the tasks facing the joint force. Unfortunately, none of these security challenges corresponds to current geographic and functionally based organizational structures.

Current DOD Organizational Design Misalignment

During peacetime, the operating environment is generally stable and processes are easily standardized. During war or other operations, the environment is dynamic and speed is of the essence. Rapid adjustments are necessary to facilitate timely decisions, which typically require circumvention of traditional structures and reliance on informal communication and collaboration.²⁷ As persistent conflict underscores the current security environment, the four traditional instruments of national power are involved in any proposed solution. Ambiguities in today’s security environment, lack of strategic clarity, and absence of an interagency integrating mechanism enable events or actors to evade traditional recognition processes or avoid detection by legacy organizations.

As described in the CCJO, DOD is too heavily invested in the formal and centralized components of its hard wiring. The current structure is too rigid and lacks the agility to respond quickly to the complexities associated with the range of security challenges. DOD exhibits a number of the

warning signs associated with a misaligned and unfocused organization:

- Strategic plans are not put into practice.
- Change is slow or stifled.
- Strategy execution is not placed within a formal planning and measurement structure.
- There is a diffusion of purpose and intent as commanders at all levels try to understand the strategy and figure out how they will be affected and what they will need to do to make it happen.
- There is inadequate coordination of interagency and DOD-wide projects.
- Attention is not focused on the right activities to gain the most resource leverage or effect.
- There are noticeable political dilemmas.
- Priorities are often unknown.
- Conflicting requirements for resources result in misallocation.
- Change initiatives are not completed.
- There is a general lack of strategic and operational perspective in the organization.

Typically, when warning signs such as these appear, most organizations “react by changing the organizational chart. They apply structural solutions to behavioral or process challenges,” attacking the specific symptoms rather than the underlying dynamics of the symptoms.²⁸ Tomorrow’s challenges, however, will overwhelm any simple structural reorganization.

To meet the challenges of the strategic environment, the Chairman is advocating an operating concept called globally integrated operations. In this operating concept, “Joint Force elements, globally postured, combine quickly with each other and mission partners to integrate capabilities fluidly across domains, echelons, geographic boundaries, and organizational affiliations.”²⁹ In essence, for the joint force to be effective, General Dempsey argues that the DOD organizational construct must reflect environmental complexities. If the environment has a dozen ways to affect an organization’s performance, the organization needs a dozen ways to respond or counter. As stated in the CCJO, change will be constant and organizations must also be constantly and quickly changeable, leveraging structures and “processes that are easily reconfigured

and realigned with a constantly changing strategy.”³⁰ To fulfill the mission of defending the Nation and its allies and advancing a broader peace, security, and prosperity, fundamental changes to DOD’s organizational structure is an absolute necessity.

DOD Organizational Design Requirements

In the development of any DOD organizational design, strategic thinking must be the centerpiece to help identify, respond to, and shape changes in the global environment.³¹ Organizations in uncertain environments are managed and controlled differently than those in a certain environment regarding positions, departments, control processes, and planning and forecasting. Organizations in certain environments seek predictable transitions and integration, desire legacy systems to generate order, seek preventative cures that enhance efficiencies, emphasize deliberateness, and are willing to work through formally recognized institutions.³²

In uncertain environments, organizations become increasingly sensitive to the environment to recognize threats and opportunities, which enable swifter responses. Sacrificing organizational efficiencies for effectiveness, the organization becomes more complex to deal with the complexities of the operational environment. In addition, planning and forecasting become even more important as a way to position the organization for coordinated, speedy responses. As such, uncertain environments value the organizational attributes of speed, flexibility, integration, and innovation, which mean building on and around “people’s abilities rather than limiting them for the convenience of easily recognized roles.”³³

The current DOD construct has fostered the creation of well-structured, unbending organizational boundaries. Unfortunately, operating in an uncertain environment requires organizations to make their internal and external boundaries more permeable and flexible.³⁴ DOD must find the right fit between the external environment and the internal structure. The joint force requires an adaptable, responsive organizational structure that accounts for the 10 assigned primary missions and can respond to challenges that span the range from major combat operations; to limited contingency operations; to military engagement, security cooperation, and deterrence.

The combatant commands, Services, and Joint Staff all affect the organizational design of the U.S. military. Combatant commanders are the link between the national strategic level of decisionmaking and the forces that conduct operations. Combatant commanders have the responsibility for planning and executing strategies and plans for their areas of responsibility.³⁵ The design focus, however, must not be on the warfighting arm solely; it must also consider the roles and functions of the Services and Joint Staff as they relate to the assigned primary missions and the support they provide to the combatant commands. The Services have the responsibility for training, organizing, and equipping Servicemembers, thus providing ready forces to the combatant commanders for the execution of U.S. military strategy.³⁶ The Joint Staff supports the Chairman in his duty of providing military and strategic advice to the President and Secretary of Defense. Integrating annual assessments provided by the Services and combatant commands, the Chairman provides independent comprehensive assessments and advice “that cut across missions, domains, functions, and time” and “inform the development of national security and defense strategy, policy, doctrine, and guidance.”³⁷

Given the Chairman’s new operating concept of globally integrated operations, the military will transform from a conventionally focused and capital-intensive (for example, costly weapons systems such as the F-35) force to one oriented on small, adaptable, globally deployable units that require well-trained, experienced counterinsurgency forces and military police.³⁸ Mirroring the complexities found in the strategic operating environment requires additional specialized units to operate in the cyber and space domains as well as to prepare for and respond to weapons of mass destruction incidents.

Although maintaining a traditional conventional force capable of deterring and, failing that, defeating a near-peer competitor remains a vital necessity, the need for the entire joint force to possess that primary capability is no longer affordable. Instead, the unit of choice for the force will be the team. Teams of specialists within the force must understand and manage complex problems in a fast-changing and highly competitive environment. To leverage these smaller units, operational structures must be flatter and incorporate lateral processes to be more

U.S. Air Force (Timothy Chacon)



Joint team of Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen assigned to Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team undergo predeployment language and cultural instruction training

responsive to immediate tactical considerations. Lateral processes enable personnel “to make more decisions, different kinds of decisions, and better and faster decisions.”³⁹ Lateral processes will require the force to embrace decentralization, when appropriate, increasing the capacity for decisionmaking, freeing up senior leadership for other decisions, and making the organization more adaptable to change.

Given the complexities of the strategic environment and the assigned military missions, organizations structure themselves in four ways or combinations of ways: functionally, geographically, process, and product or plan. Organizing by function allows the joint force to present a consolidated focal point to allies, partners, and other regional actors and enables sharing of resources and expertise across geographic lines while promoting standardization. Organizations develop geographical structures as operations span regions of the world and there is a need to be close to allies and partners (and threats), and to minimize response times and to reduce cost of travel and transportation. A process structure centers on a complete flow of work ranging from plan initiation to development. Throughout the process, each functional or geographic stakeholder participates in the sequential flow. A product or plan structure focuses on the development of specific or multiple plans from end to end, which often encompasses multiple processes and functions.⁴⁰

Primarily operating in an uncertain global environment, combatant command-

ers fight wars and focus on the present or the near future. The Joint Staff and Services primarily operate in a more certain domestic environment, are future-focused, and are in the business of preparing for war, not fighting it. Thus, the organizational design structures for the Joint Staff, Services, and combatant commands must be reflective of their specific roles and missions as well as the specific environment within which they operate. Any DOD organizational design must account for the stability of certain components as well as the relative instability of dynamic or uncertain components. Each suborganization is designed and managed differently and yet must remain part of the whole.

The change that globally integrated operations represents is essentially a change in strategy—specifically, the ways and means. Changes in strategies have far-reaching implications for the entire enterprise, and any institutional changes must address the following components.

Doctrine. Doctrine is traditionally a compilation of “best practices” based on experiences and lessons learned. Adaptable and agile organizations operating in a dynamic environment will be less able to rely on previous organizational experiences; rather, through necessity, they will rely increasingly on personal innovation or creativity in response to unique situations. Doctrine must be transformed to emphasize a broader range of general operating concepts and be considered a type of intellectual “toolkit.”

Organization. The primary focus is traditionally on the combatant command

or the warfighting organization. The DOD enterprise, however, must be part of a holistic design that acknowledges and integrates the roles and functions of the Services and military departments, Chairman and Joint Staff, Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy, the formal and informal relationships with the Department of State’s Policy and Planning Staff, and the National Security Staff’s interagency policy committees. The design must also consider congressional committees with direct ties to the national security enterprise.

Training. Exercises and training programs must be “scripted” for globally integrated operations. Joint exercises and training cannot be one-dimensional and must mirror the complex, dynamic environment within which the joint force will operate. Joint forces must become accustomed to operating in degraded environments with minimal higher headquarters and senior leadership command and control injections and direction. Scenarios must present a hybrid of challenges that exercises the adaptability and agility of leaders and units as they reconcile environmental, mission, and capabilities mismatches. Training programs must encourage creativity and innovation and be accepting of, if not advocates of, failure.

Materiel. With major combat operations becoming less likely, future development and acquisition efforts must be special operations—and cyber-focused. DOD budgeting, acquisition, and procurement processes must facilitate rapid prototyping and

development. Small technological steps must be the norm instead of the traditional effort to hit the technological home run. Materiel must be readily available and easily adaptable to meet dynamic environmental conditions.

Leadership and Education. The Services and joint force must embrace the multicultural, multilingual, and multiperspective world that composes the strategic environment. Servicemembers must be recruited, trained, educated, and promoted based on their abilities to think beyond narrow ideologies and singular concepts. Leaders must not only possess technological and tactical skills but also demonstrate strengths in the traditional social sciences, the emerging norms of an information society, and strategic thinking. Educational institutions must emphasize critical, creative, conceptual, and contextual thinking competencies while developing leaders who display comfort with ambiguity and ill-defined objectives. Educational outcomes must stress understanding, intent, multiple contexts, and the idea that there are potentially multiple acceptable solutions to any problem. Institutions must deemphasize a product-focused, easily measured, checklist-oriented training mentality.

Personnel. Today's organizations need horizontal thinkers—personnel capable of thinking broadly across disparate subject matters as well as conceptually. The development of a permanent professional Joint Staff officer corps, as opposed to the current temporary or “borrowed” Service staff officer concept, is needed to competently and quickly aggregate, transition, and disaggregate ad hoc organizations in response to environmental demands. Training, education, promotion, and retention systems must be redesigned to facilitate member selection and development.

Facilities. A globally integrated operational concept requires facilities around the world to be capable of supporting and sustaining the joint force. They must leverage advanced technology but also be capable of performing degraded operations. Operational, training, and educational organizations must provide architecture, infrastructure, support, and cultural experiences that mirror the challenges of the operating environment. Facilities and supporting infrastructure must possess the flexibility to adapt rapidly to changing conditions, missions, and organizational demands. Some inefficiencies

resulting from redundant infrastructure and capabilities must be tolerated to enhance effectiveness and reduce risk.

Organizations are deliberately structured, goal-directed, social entities that reflect a deep understanding of the strategic environment. The concept of globally integrated operations represents the Chairman's profound grasp of the current and future environmental complexities and the role the joint force must play in attaining national security objectives. To operate effectively and successfully in this dynamic environment, DOD must redesign its entire enterprise to include not only its organizational structure but also the associated doctrine, training, materiel, leadership, education, personnel, and facilities needed to implement and support this concept.

The DOD organizational design of 25 years ago reflected the stability and certainty within the strategic environment then. Today and in the future, the speed of change in an age of technological innovation and globalization means there are no longer any certainties for the DOD enterprise. To provide effectively for the security of the United States, joint force senior leaders must capitalize on current opportunities to escape the traditional ways of operating and to develop agile organizational structures and processes that reflect the realities of the global environment. **JFQ**

NOTES

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