JOINT FORCE AIR COMPONENT COMMANDER--A COMMON SENSE APPROACH

Marc E. Freitas and Thomas A. Parker

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Published 1994 by RAND
1700 Main Street, P.O. Box 2138, Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138

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August 1994

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank Myron Hura, Daniel Gonzales, Laura Zakaras, and Marine Corps Colonel Robert Zimmerman, without whose thoughtful critique, thorough review, and considerable guidance this paper would not have been completed. However, any errors of facts or interpretation of events are, of course, the authors'.

Scope

- To review current thinking on JFACC doctrine.
- To examine joint air operations and JFACC concepts for a range of scenarios and military operations.

INTRODUCTION

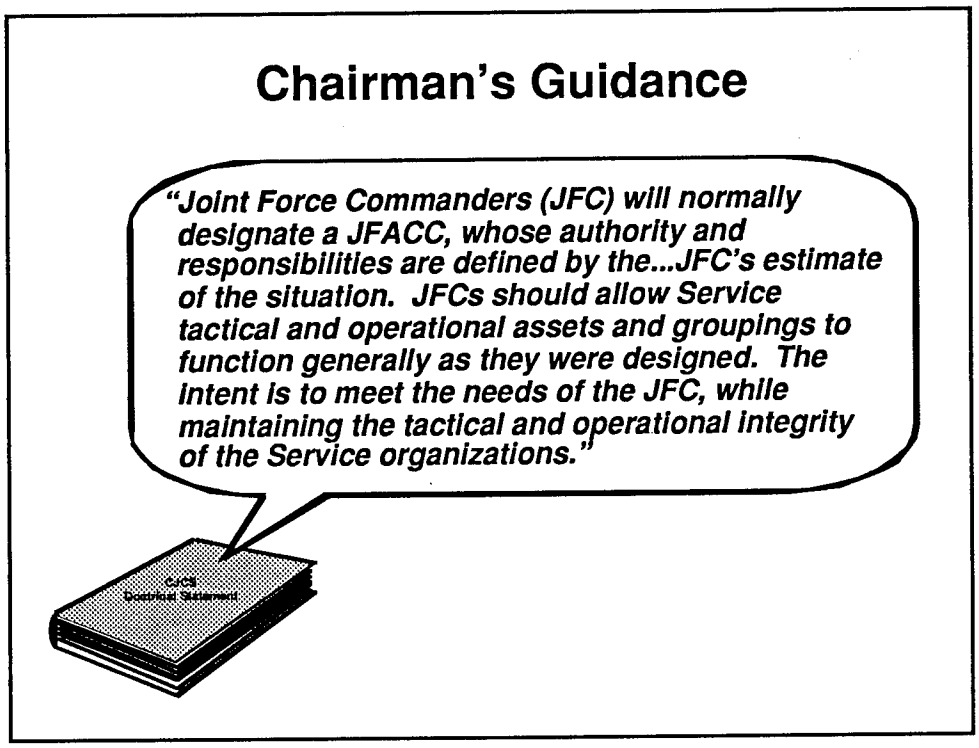
This paper examines issues of joint air operations and in particular those associated or related to the role and functions of the Joint Force Air Component Commander (JFACC).[1] It provides insights on the development and implementation of JFACC concepts from a naval perspective (both Navy and Marine Corps) consistent with the authors' experiences and operational backgrounds. Those experiences include command of operational units, involvement in the planning and/or execution phases of Operations Desert Storm, Restore Hope and Provide Promise and numerous JFACC related exercises in both LANTCOM and PACOM. In addition the authors bring joint operational insights gained from sister Service assignments as well as attendance in both joint and Service schools.

[1]The JFACC is defined in Joint Pub 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, of 23 March 1994 and outlines the duties and responsibilities of the JFACC regarding air operations, in keeping with the Joint Force Commander's guidance and authority.

The development and implementation of JFACC concepts are a source of disagreement among the Services, not so much as whether or not one should exist (we seem to have gotten beyond that), but rather the secondary questions of who should be a JFACC, and in what circumstances JFACC operations should be conducted. With the lack of specific guidance from the Joint Staff and its reluctance to prescribe doctrine without Service acquiescence, development of the JFACC concept (i.e. doctrine) continues to be contentious as the Services vie to ensure that each of their particular visions for conducting joint air operations are adequately represented.

What has resulted, unfortunately, is an overemphasis on the structural aspects of JFACC organization (for one particular type of air operation), without full consideration being given to the concept of JFACC or how it is to be used as a tool to support the Joint Force Commander (JFC) and his mission.

This paper examines how the JFACC concept evolved within modern American military history, what problems exist because of its current focus, and what alternatives may exist to address those issues.



As a starting point, discussions on the role of the JFACC in joint air operations can begin with the guidance provided by the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). In November 1992, the Chairman JCS, provided the Services with a doctrinal statement on certain aspects of joint operations. Although not a "cook book" for conducting joint operations, the Chairman outlined concepts that gave guidance on issues that have become contentious among the Services. One specific issue discussed in the paper is the role of the JFACC in joint operations. Of the points made on JFACC, it is interesting to note that throughout, no "hard and fast" rules were made, in fact quite the contrary. Wherever JFACC is discussed it is done in the context of how it would support the Joint Force Commander (JFC), based on the JFC's estimate of the situation and his concept of operations. Flexibility is the unwritten byword throughout the document, and there seems to be no intent to construct a rigid doctrine that must be followed. The intent as stated was to meet the needs of the JFC while maintaining the tactical and operational integrity of the Service organizations, thereby allowing components, either functional or Service, to operate as they were designed, organized, trained and equipped.[2]

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[2]Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, A Doctrinal Statement of Selected Joint Operational Concepts, 23 Nov 1992, p. 9.

On the other hand, the guidance does leave open the question as to how an overarching joint air structure should be developed without unnecessary infringement on the component commander's way of supporting JFC objectives. An historical analysis of the evolution of joint air operations reflects Service preferences (one way is better than another approach) rather than the Chairman's intent of flexible options.

Evolution of JFACC

- Long history of attempted joint air effort.
- Each Service developed its own air doctrine, based on unique Service missions.
- First efforts date to WWII
  - AAF in North African and Southwest Pacific Campaigns
- Korean joint efforts largely unsuccessful
  - no unified air campaign plan
  - centralized control vs dedicated air assets
  - Independent Naval operations
- Vietnam - another unsuccessful joint effort

JOINT AIR BEGINNINGS

Although the first proposal for joint air operations was probably made by Calvin Coolidge when he suggested buying one airplane and letting the Services take turns flying it, the beginnings of JFACC have been evolutionary rather than one based on a specific starting place and time. As air power developed into its current capabilities, the individual Services developed initiatives that would best take advantage of aviation capabilities with regard to supporting Service peculiar doctrine. During World War II, the Army Air Corps developed air power as an independent force (strategic bombing--Europe), the Navy used it in support of the fleet and maritime operations (Coral Sea, Midway) and the Marines began integrating it into a combined arms concept (Guadalcanal, Okinawa).

As WWII began to intensify, efforts to jointly integrate the Services' air arms were initiated. Perhaps some of the more successful efforts were found in the campaigns of the South Pacific and those in North Africa. In particular, the Battle for Guadalcanal was an early successful example of joint air operations. The Navy, Army Air Corps and Marine Corps aircraft that made up the "Cactus Air Force" proved to be a uniquely capable

fighting force that combined aviation assets from the three Services using them effectively and expediently (without regard to Service doctrine) in defense of forces ashore. However, this single action was limited to a single area of operation and did not come under the sort of joint command we have today with the implementation of the unified command structure.

Following WWII, the next opportunity for joint air operations came in September of 1950 with the start of the Korean war. There were several notable successes during this conflict for joint air operations, but the joint air effort on the whole was disappointing. Each of the Services essentially fought its own air war, largely uncoordinated with its sister Services. There was no joint planning effort. There existed major incompatibilities in training, doctrine and equipment, significant communications difficulties between the Services, and a general lack of a joint framework from which to wage the air war.

Most of the Korean war lessons learned regarding the necessity for some sort of joint air operations coordination center, the usefulness of joint training, planning and doctrine, built-in flexibility in hardware and training, and the general sense of cooperation among the air forces engendered by a crisis situation (most notably in the defense of the Pusan Perimeter in the early days of the war), were lost between the end of Korea and the beginning of the Vietnam war. Instead each Service returned to its own doctrinal concerns.[3] Service tactical doctrine had continued to evolve along separate lines. Moreover, the helicopter entered the battlefield in large numbers for the first time, further complicating the task of coordinating joint air operations. There were major Service doctrinal frictions over a wide variety of air power issues. A few of the most notable were the conduct of the bombing campaign of North Vietnam (USN and USAF),[4] the role and coordination of the helicopter on the battlefield (Army, USAF, and USMC), and the apportionment of tactical air power in support of ground forces (Army, USAF, USMC).[5]

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[3]Winnefeld and Johnson, Joint Air Operations, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis MD. 1993, p. 61

[4]This became an issue as to where and who should conduct air operations in theater (North or South). Although the Air Force still had strong opinions as to the need for unity of command under Air Force direction, there was little chance of a resolution to their liking given the control USCINCPAC retained over naval air assets. Eventually, the Navy expanded air operations in North Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos with direction coming from Honolulu and Washington, (Winnefeld and Johnson, pp. 76-78).

[5]Winnefeld and Johnson, p. 65

Eventually, work-arounds, ad hoc agreements, and informal Service understandings were reached which allowed the successful application of air power on the battlefield. General Westmoreland admits in his memoirs that it was this one issue--the coordination of joint air operations between the Air Force, Army and Marines--which led him to consider resigning.[6] Much like Korea and WWII, important questions concerning the harmonization of each Service's warfighting doctrines remained unresolved after Vietnam.

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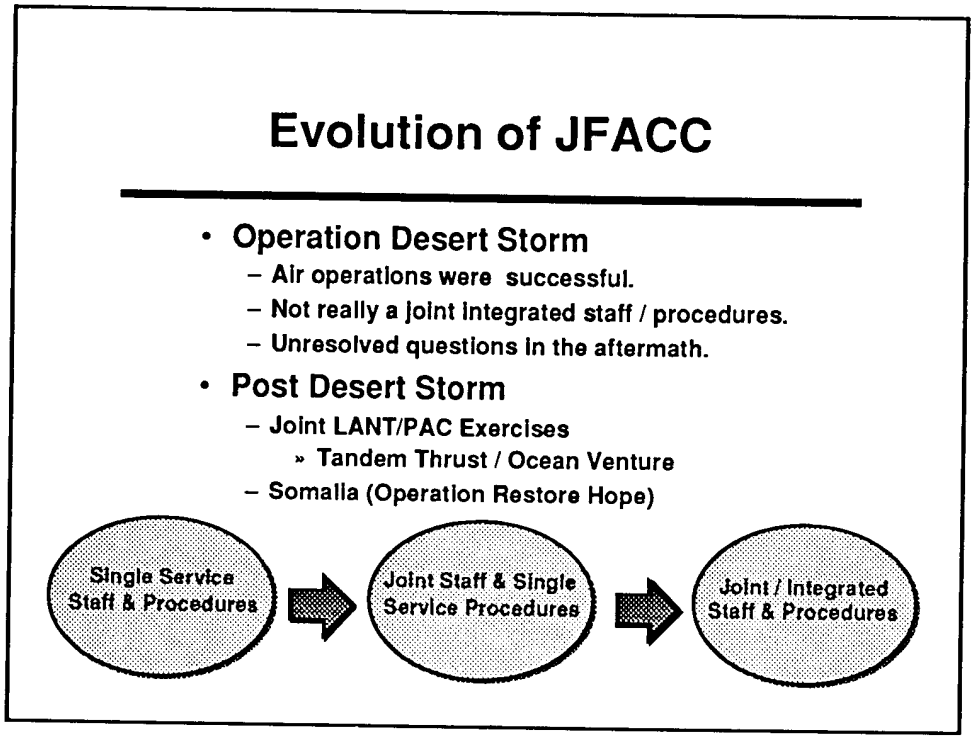
[6]William Westmoreland, A Soldier Reports, Doubleday, Garden City NY. 1976, p. 344-346.



OPERATION DESERT STORM

The evolution of JFACC has continued from its beginnings as a single-Service staff with single-Service procedures to that of a joint staff using single-Service procedures. Recent examples of this include Ocean Venture 92 as well as Operation Desert Storm (ODS), wherein the JFACC (in this instance Central Command Air Force --CENTAF) implemented unfamiliar single Service practice and procedures on a joint staff.[7] The evolutionary goal, of course, is to establish a truly joint and integrated staff using integrated procedures. That goal brings us to the current development phase of the JFACC concept, which began in Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Although there were other attempts at conducting joint air operations since Vietnam, notably in Grenada, Panama and Libya, it was during Desert Storm that the attempt was made to combine US air power (together with the coalition air forces) into a single unified effort.

[7]Maureen A. Wigge, The Joint Force Air Component Commander: Theory and Practice, Center for Naval Analyses, Arlington, Va., 1993, p. 32.

However, for all the congratulatory words used to describe the joint U.S. air effort during ODS, it was only a first step in achieving the goal of joint air operations--through use of a joint and integrated staff and procedures--the JFACC concept implies.[8]

The Desert Storm campaign was successful, due in large part to the air effort and the adoption of USAF Service doctrine, procedures and communications systems by the coalition.

However, ODS was not a completely joint effort, emphasizing as it did single Service staffs, procedures, and doctrine. Joint coordination was achieved in certain areas and not in others. The deep strike and battlefield assistance portions of the air "campaign" were successful, and Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps units fully participated. Aerial Refueling and Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD) were additional mission areas which had a major joint flavor during the operation. And although preparation of the battlefield for subsequent ground operations had a joint emphasis, it was only after Army and Marine Corps concerns helped convince USCINCCENT to establish a Joint Targeting Board (JTB) under the direction of the Deputy CINC.[9] There were other areas, however, within the JFACC's purview, which lacked an appropriate joint emphasis. The preparation for the amphibious landing was a valid mission until the end of the hostilities, but both the JFC-assigned missions of interdiction against the Iraqi Navy and preparation for the amphibious landing in Kuwait went largely unplanned by the JFACC, and were conducted either outside the ATO or through creative use of the planning system (that is, designating important Navy targets along the coast as secondary targets, and flexing strike groups to them once airborne). The Air Force dominated planning process evidently did not appreciate the importance of these targets, and the small Navy JFACC liaison cell at the Air Operations Center (AOC) was unsuccessful in changing this mindset. "The JFACC did not consider these coastal targets significant."[10]

"The 'JFACC staff' was from top to bottom an Air Force Staff: organized on USAF lines, using USAF staffing practices, supported for the most part by single Service Air Force systems."[11] Since the JFACC (CENTAF) used

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[8]Ibid.

[9]Winnefeld and Johnson, pp. 111, 120, 125, 136, 192.

[10]Gregory M. Swider, The Navy's Experience With Joint Air Operations: Lessons learned From Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria Va., 1993, p. 27.

[11]James Winnefeld, Preston Niblack, and Dana Johnson, A League of Airmen, U.S. Airpower in the Gulf War, RAND, Santa Monica Ca, 1994, pp. 104-105.

what he knew best--9th Air Force procedures and systems for planning and controlling air operations--the JFACC's efforts seemed to minimize Navy and Marine Corps concerns and undervalue their capabilities.[12]

Additionally, much like Korea and Vietnam, the fundamental doctrinal issues over the employment of Marine air were never satisfied during Desert Storm. The Marines were influential in ensuring their Service concerns regarding use of Marine tactical air (TACAIR) as part of the MAGTF[13] concept were accommodated, but this too underlined differences in Service thought about control of the tactical air forces.[14] Instead of resolving doctrinal issues, ODS highlighted these doctrinal questions, all of which centered around the same question of how best to balance Service concerns with issues regarding unity of air effort.

RECENT EXPERIENCE

The Desert Storm experience has continued to shape the application of the JFACC concept in operations since. Proposals for an "at sea" floating JFACC under Navy control with all the organizational structure and manning of its land-based counterpart (even requiring a dedicated platform) will work little better in every situation. Both real world operations and training exercises continue to be conducted with Desert Storm in mind, thereby adding "credibility" to this particular way of doing business.

In November 1992, when planning was begun for operations in Somalia, the Desert Storm model was used as a starting point even though the likelihood of anything other than peaceful, humanitarian air operations was remote. To the credit of the Somalia planners, an attempt was made to tailor the size and objectives of the JFACC organization, (emphasizing along the way those functional areas within the JFACC that would be more important for the accomplishment of stated JTF objectives). But there was still a great deal of emphasis placed on an ODS style organization with functions, manning and procedures that replicated the system developed in that conflict. However, not every operation is Desert Storm, nor do procedures and staffing goals developed for one particular

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[12]Peter P. Perla, Barry P. Messina, John Parsons, Richard K. Phares, Gregory Swider, Maureen A. Wigge, The Navy and the JFACC: Making Them Work Together, Center for Naval Analyses, Alexandria, Va., September, 1993, p. 2.

[13]The MAGTF or Marine Air Ground Task Force is the principle warfighting organization for the Marine Corps and is organized, trained and equipped to fight as a completely integrated combined arms force.

[14]Winnefeld and Johnson, p. 120.

operation work for all operations. Somalia, for instance, was heavy on airlift and the re-establishment of air space with some emphasis placed on targeting in conjunction with airfield and port seizures. Eventually the JFACC organization in Somalia migrated into something more in line with the mission objectives until it finally went away altogether, but not until after considerable debate among the Services and CINC headquarters regarding the nature of JFACC and its role and function. There was concern from some that a JFACC should only conduct operations pursuant to objectives found in more "legitimate" combat efforts.

Doctrine & Myth

- Chairman's Statement provides guidance for implementation of JFACC concept.
  - Commander's intent allows for flexibility depending upon scenario and objectives.
- To date joint doctrine for JFACC operations still not approved.
- Service specific procedures / orientation.
  - Air Force vs. Naval perspectives.

LACK OF JOINT DOCTRINE

The myth about JFACC doctrine is that an approved JFACC doctrine exists. Although much has been accomplished recently in establishing a joint air operations doctrine that all of the Services can agree to, it has yet to be approved[15] Moreover, the final version may still leave many Service concerns unanswered and therefore subject to future debate. The difficulty in coordinating a JFACC doctrine that is agreeable to all four Services is in part due to: (1) the differences among the Services on how they believe air operations should be conducted (Service perspectives again), and (2) differences among the Unified Commanders on how they prefer to conduct joint air operations in their areas of responsibility. The result has been several less than successful attempts to write joint doctrine regarding JFACC operations.[16] These attempts have been colored with

[15]Joint Pub 3-56.1, which discusses joint air operations and the role of the JFACC, is currently in final coordination within the Joint Staff.

[16]One aspect of the problem is that definitions and even pronunciations of some of the specific JFACC related terms are not the same between service headquarters or even unified commands.

Service preferences that favor one Service's concept of operations and procedures over another.

In addition, the proposed doctrine has the tendency to subordinate the air assets of one Service to another, which in certain situations may be in conflict with Service specific doctrine (e.g., the use of other than excess USMC sorties to support JFC objectives through the JFACC, vice those same sorties being used for MAGTF direct tasking, which also support JFC objectives). Two perspectives that best exemplify the resulting differences can be described as from either a naval (i.e., both Navy and Marine Corps) point of view or from an Air Force point of view. It would be helpful to briefly discuss these two Service "visions" in order to better understand why the differences exist.

A principal difference is related to whether the JFACC is a "coordinator" or a "commander." The naval position considers the JFACC to be a coordinator of air operations. The Air Force views the JFACC as the functional component commander of all assigned air assets, "even when incorporated into a joint force controlled through Service components."[17] By definition, a coordinator only executes policy prescribed by a commander, while a commander initiates actions autonomously.[18] What follows is a major philosophical difference in interpretation. The Navy and Marine Corps hold that, according to the principal of "unity of command," only one path of operational control can exist between a senior commander and his subordinates. The Air Force view is that the JFACC is a functional component commander who is the senior commander of all air assets, (regardless of Service affiliation) based on the JFC's authority.[19] The differences go even further, and involve the interpretation of the term "functional." The Air Force sees a functional command as dealing with air power which serves as a primary force to influence the battle. Naval forces consider air power as one tool a Service component uses to accomplish JTF objectives. This can be further explained as the Air Force having a "horizontal" view of air power as a primary function, whereas the naval position takes a vertical view of air power as only one of several elements (i.e., naval gunfire, artillery, air, etc.) which require close integration of air and surface capabilities in order to achieve mission objectives.

These points of view led to development of procedures that reflect these different philosophies. For the Navy and Marine Corps this has led to

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[17]Wigge op. cit., p. 14.

[18]Swider op. cit., p. 6

[19]Ibid. p. 7.

procedures which emphasize decentralization and multi-Service input to coordinate air operations. By contrast, the Air Force have developed procedures that are more centralized.[20] One vision is not necessarily better than another, however they do go a long way to understanding the problems with regard to Service specific/non-standard joint procedures.

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[20]Perla, et al, p. 3.

Issues

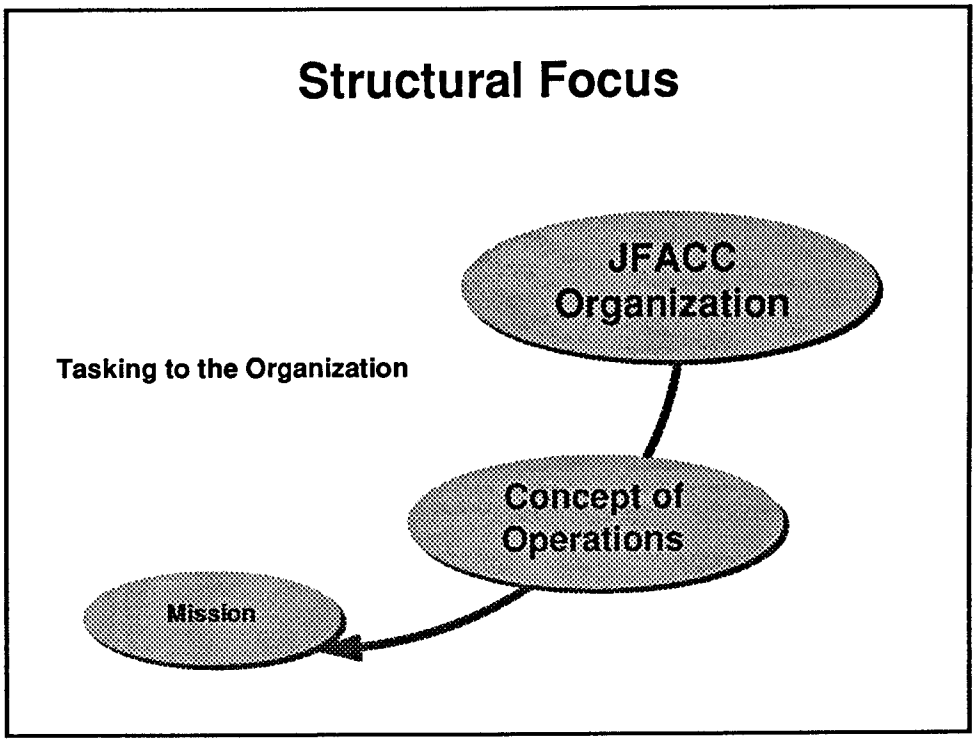
- **The absence of an unambiguous joint doctrine for JFACC operations hinders accomplishment of joint objectives.**
- **Single Service staff and procedures filling a joint doctrine vacuum, lead to a rigid "one way" mind set and reluctance to adjust to new and different operational situations.**
- **Emphasis on structural aspects of JFACC organization shifts the focus from flexible accomplishment of joint objectives.**

Lack of an agreed upon joint doctrine has caused confusion and friction in the execution of joint air operations. Innovations and introduction of Service specific doctrines have filled the void. Far from answering the valid concerns about harmonizing individual Service's warfighting doctrines, these factors have made differences even sharper and more profound.

The JFACC cannot exist in a single Service vacuum. No one Service's doctrine has priority over another Service's doctrine in a joint environment. Logically, joint operations should not impose a penalty upon the manner in which the Services train to fight. It is non-productive to expect a Service to train and equip itself to fight one way in a non-joint environment, and then expect that Service to change its doctrine, training, and equipment to satisfy another Service's requirements in a joint environment.

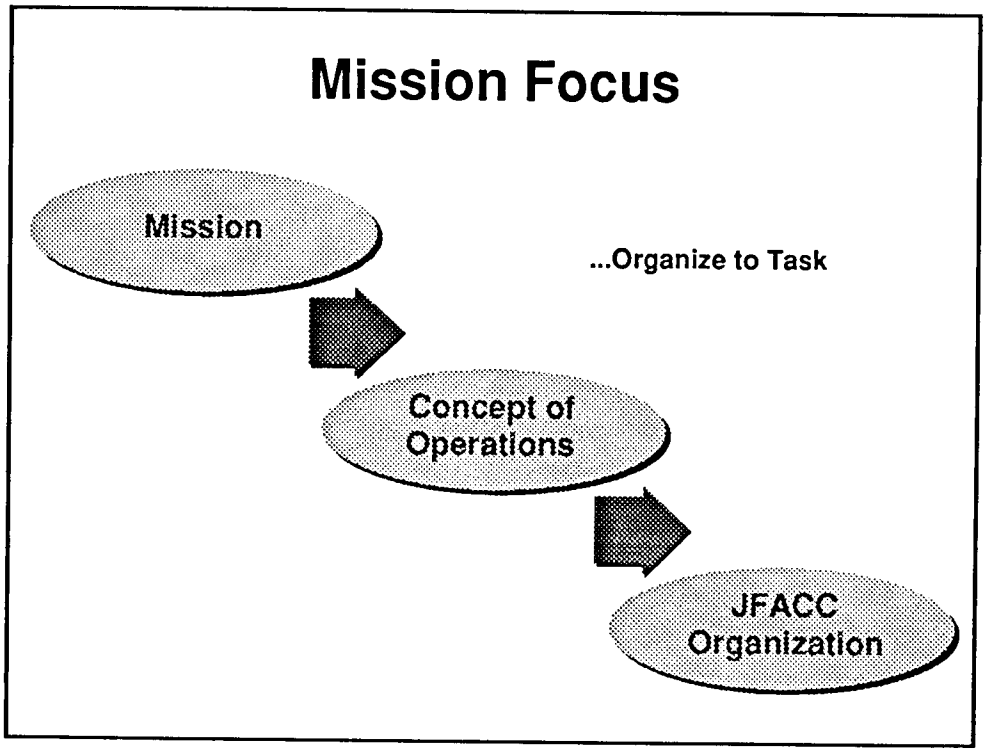
It may be impossible to reconcile each Service's warfighting doctrines to the satisfaction of the other Services. Each, for some reason, was developed independently of the other, and was designed to suit different goals and accomplish different missions. There should be little surprise

that Service doctrines appear so different. In spite of these varying views of Service mission, there is no reason that operational doctrine cannot be "harmonized"--utilizing the best portions of each Service's procedures--to achieve a unity of air effort. Joint doctrine should be multi-faceted so the JFACC concept can be tailored to a variety of missions, objectives and circumstances.



STRUCTURAL FOCUS

Current development of JFACC doctrine focuses on establishing a set organization that best accomplishes a limited set of operations. This standardized method is too rigid for development in new or different operational situations. A static JFACC concept may become a central theme as its organization grows larger and tries to address every situation through use of a set of procedures designed for one operation. JFACC becomes the goal rather than a means to attain the goal. This has led to the establishment of a structural focus, wherein the Service assigned the task of providing a JFACC places its emphasis on "going down the checklist" and ensuring the organization is just exactly so. This sort of approach, although good for establishing military traditions, is not the best way of doing business when dealing with fluid tactical situations.



ESTABLISH A MISSION FOCUS

By contrast, a mission focus (from the JFC's perspective) with regard to joint air operations would be tailored more to the JFC's desires for the assigned mission and allows the flexibility that the Chairman's statement implied.

The success of the mission is the real objective of the joint air effort. Each mission is different, with the resulting demands for force employment entirely dependent upon the assigned mission. Based on the operational situation and JFC desires, some may or may not require the designation of a JFACC. ODS, El Dorado Canyon, Bosnia, Somalia, and Rwanda-Burundi operations had very little in common except the requirement to coordinate the efforts of several Services to accomplish the assigned mission.

There are common threads among these and future operations. Each share the requirement for a knowledgeable joint staff operating with a joint perspective; a shared concept of operations; and unambiguous direction from the JFC.

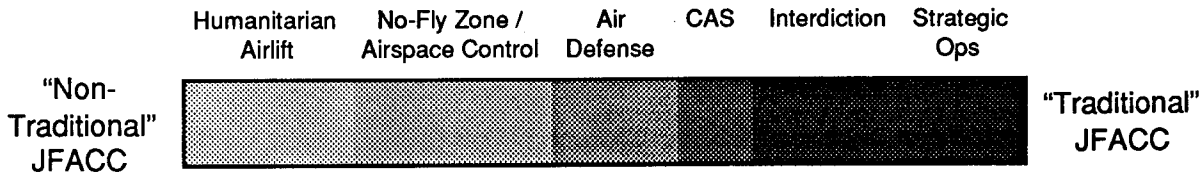


Figure 1--JFACC Spectrum

The harmonization of the air elements of all Services is required to successfully complete the assigned mission, each of which will probably differ markedly. The range of aviation options which may be used to support the JFC's concept of operations and meet the objectives vary from a more traditional strategic bombing "campaign" (early phases of ODS) to less traditional operations exemplified by the humanitarian relief operations and enforcement of no-fly zones (Somalia and Bosnia) with numerous aviation options between. If these aviation operations are viewed along a continuum (Figure 1), certain operations are more conducive to "traditional" JFACC organizations such as that used in ODS. The problem however, is that the organization that has been developed (and which works well) for a strategic bombing operation, may not necessarily provide the proper mix of staff and functions to ensure coordination of multi-national and civilian relief flights supporting a Somalia-like operation. An airlift operation, for instance, may have a decided logistic emphasis, even though other more "traditional" functions (intelligence, plans, air defense, etc.) may still be needed, whereas, enforcement of a no-fly zone may require a pronounced air defense and airspace control capabilities. To further complicate the issue, the JFC's concept of operations will likely be developed in phases so that even if strategic bombing is initially conducted, there is a likelihood that subsequent phases will result with other air operations becoming more important, emphasizing different organizational requirements to effectively coordinate them.

The concern for the phases of an operation and its subsequent structuring is doctrinal practice for amphibious operations, for instance. This approach is further addressed in a set of recent tactical memorandum that deal with procedures for conducting joint air operations (JFACC) both ashore and afloat.[21] Although the documents deal with the larger issues

[21]Commander Carrier Group One - Commanding General Third Marine Aircraft Wing, TACMEMO ZD001571-1-93, JFACC (AFLOAT) CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS, and

of passing JFACC functions from afloat to ashore and back again--in keeping with the operational phases--it does allude to the need for different organizational structures to meet the operational demands required of each mission.[22] The emphasis should be on mission success, not on JFACC. As such, the approach needs to be top down where the mission is clearly defined together with the means to accomplish the mission. A mission-oriented analysis should then be used to define appropriate JFACC organizations and responsibilities for the full spectrum of operations.

Commanding General Third Marine Aircraft Wing - Commander Carrier Group One, TACMEMO ZD001571-2-93, JFACC (ASHORE) CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS.
[22]Ibid. p. 1-1.

Doctrine & Procedures

- **Doctrine should focus on accomplishment of JTF objectives.**
  - **No single Service doctrine is pre-eminent.**
  - **Service specific doctrine should be incorporated into joint procedures, allowing key Service specific CONOPS to be fully exploited.**
- **Service specific and Joint doctrine can be harmonized to achieve "Unity of Air Effort."**
- **A procedural framework is required to successfully operate.**

The issue of joint doctrine for air operations should not force individual Service doctrines into a joint "straight jacket" but rather expand the concept of joint doctrine, integrating and emphasizing each Service's strengths and capabilities. This reduces a single Service doctrine pre-eminence for an acknowledgment of equality of Service doctrine based on the operational situation. The result of this harmonization of doctrine is that the joint air effort is synergistically enhanced through use of the best attributes of each Service's warfighting capability.

A requirement for harmonizing Service doctrines is a mutually understood and agreed upon framework of terms, definitions, and procedures. These must be understandable to all participants and allow for the incorporation of differing Service perspectives into the joint effort.

Tool Box Approach

- **Organize to Task**
  - Determine mission objectives.
  - "Adaptive Force Packaging."
  - Right tool for the job.
- **Primary factors**
  - Size and scope of JTF mission/objectives determines JFACC organizational structure.
  - Staff functions (or structure) of JFACC organization.

A "TOOL BOX" APPROACH

A future designated JFACC will probably begin his planning based largely on personal experiences and historic memory. He will probably also be influenced by his Service-specific philosophy on the JFACC concept and joint air operations procedures.

The different starting points of any JFACC planning effort is one of the key problem areas in the JFACC implementation process. Trying to meet an organizational ideal has led to a fixation on the structure of the JFACC organization, which has taken precedence over the function that the JFACC performs for the JFC--the orchestration of the joint air effort. A common starting point for development of a JFACC concept then can be derived from a functional rather than a structural approach. To do this, each JFACC brings certain Service specific capabilities or "tools" necessary to conduct air operations. These capabilities can be assembled and overlaid with flexible joint procedures that allow for a mission-oriented organization.

The emphasis must be on the JFACC meeting the JFC's goals and in satisfying national objectives, and not in meeting a predetermined notion

of how the staff and JFACC must appear or be organized. We must develop the capability to "re-think" the JFACC from top to bottom, using those portions of the traditional JFACC structure that are useful and assist in mission execution, and rejecting those portions which hinder mission accomplishment.

We suggest a "tool box" approach, to JFACC employment. Much like the adaptive force concept in USACOM, the JFACC would be tailored to fit the situation at hand. For example, a theater war/Bosnian type of joint air operation would look very familiar to the ODS JFACC arrangement, while humanitarian/Somalia operations would look less traditional and address concerns more related to "Operations Other Than War" (OOTW). Indeed, based on JFC guidance and the tactical situation, there might be no formal JFACC at all.

The tool box approach consists of two parts; "sizing the box," where the size of the JFACC organization is important, and "filling the box," where the important aspect is which tools you intend to use to accomplish the mission.

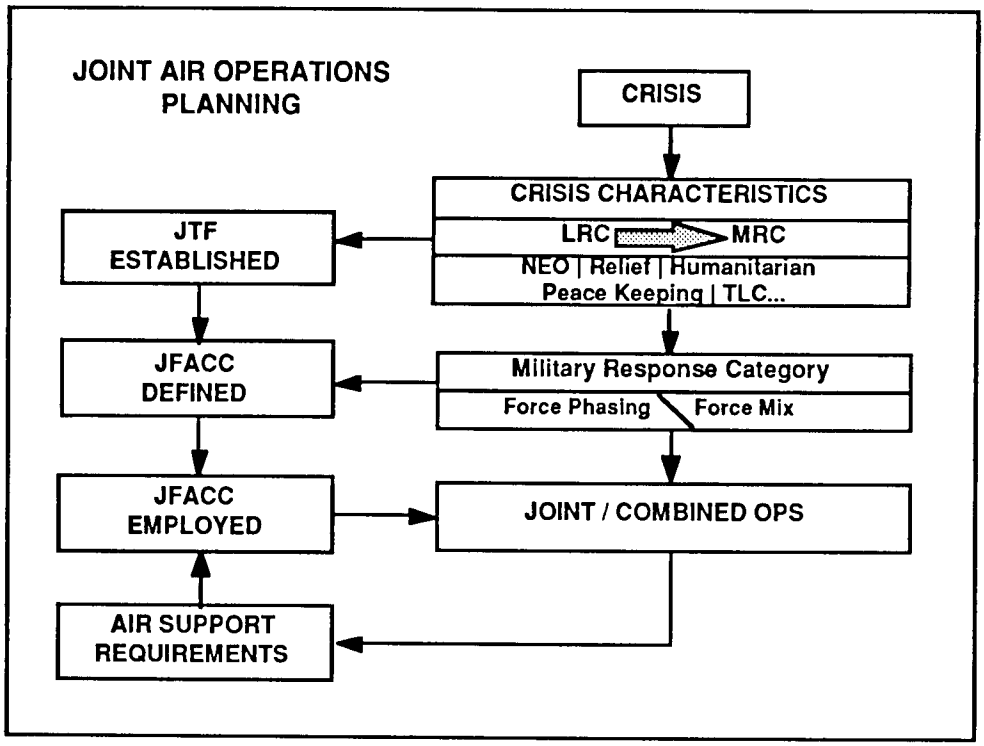
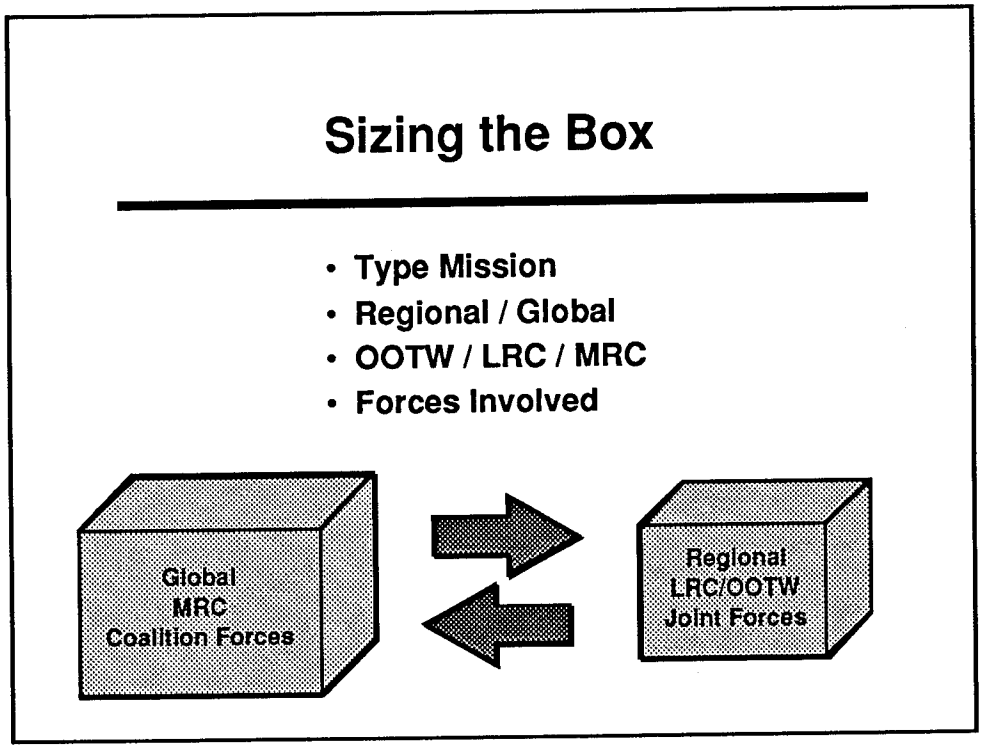


Figure 2--Joint Air Operations Planning

By looking at each operational picture separately, beginning with crisis development and ending with establishment of a JFACC organizational structure, an effective method for conducting integrated joint air operations using task organization principles can be constructed. By way of illustration, the model in Figure 2 allows planners to define JFACC and joint air operations from a "mission oriented" perspective. Beginning then with the emergence of a crisis situation, planners can identify characteristics and define operational concepts based on the crisis at hand.

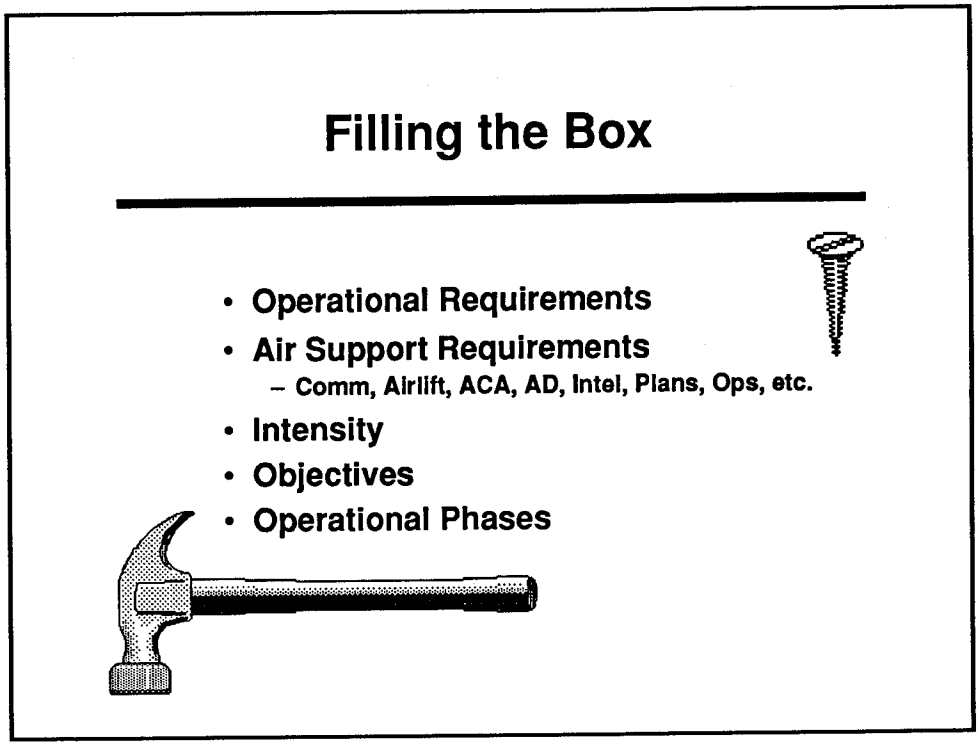


The right side of the model deals with sizing the box based on the present situation. Issues regarding what type of mission, whether or not it is regional or global in nature, if traditional operations or other than traditional are expected, and what forces are to be involved are discerned.

With development of a crisis, planners determine the characteristics of the crisis, deciding the objectives and developing guidance contingent on the scope of operations. A global conflict or major regional crisis would require far different forces than a regional crisis involving, for instance, operations other than war. Once the type of operation is determined, planners can decide what forces are needed to accomplish mission objectives. Not only are questions regarding the mix of forces addressed but also what the phasing of those forces into theater will look like. Force mix involves the functional aspects of forces (air/land/sea) together with the intrinsic nature of those forces (light/heavy assault forces, mechanized, surface/subsurface naval, fixed/rotary wing aviation, etc.). The phasing of forces into theater can also change the complexion of an operation from its initial inception to the final stages, making it desirable for planners to task organize the command structures accordingly. Likewise, joint or combined operations are determined by the mix of

forces and specific requirements for air support, and help to determine how and if a JFACC is employed and what the joint air concept of operations will be. Additionally, the types of coalition forces involved bring concerns as to forces compatibility. The differences (operating and material) between NATO forces for instance are apt to be less than one would expect of a United Nations sponsored force with a more abstract make-up.

Operation Restore Hope in Somalia was developed along the preceding model. As the crisis emerged, planners determined; the scope and objectives of the operation (a humanitarian mission of limited duration), identified the force mix (forces were heavy on airlift and forcible entry capabilities), established the phasing of those forces (initial forces in theater were primarily naval--a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) and a Carrier Battlegroup (CVBG)), decided whether operations would be joint/combined (joint operations were conducted initially and subsequently became combined as other nations participated), and finally air support requirements were determined (based on the nature of humanitarian operations and a threat consisting of small arms, TACAIR played a smaller role compared to airlift which was used to deliver food to the Somalis). Other important aspects of air support included such issues as establishing air space control procedures in a country whose air space had long since become uncontrolled. Each of these factors helped to determine not only the size of the tool box needed, but also what tools would go in the box.



To fill the box with the proper tools the operational requirements (mission objectives, scope of operations) and air support required to accomplish those objectives must be defined. The intensity of the operation, specific and implied tasks[23] and the likely phases of the campaign all help the JFC determine what types of "Air Tools" he will need to effectively accomplish his objectives. This approach also allows the JFC to tailor (task organize) his staff/forces thereby streamlining his operations. Capabilities of communications, intelligence, targeting, air defense, airspace control, plans and air operations may not all be needed in equal amounts or perhaps greater emphasis may be placed on less "visible" staff aspects such as legal, medical or state department functions.

The left side of Figure 2 addresses JFC specific issues that begin with the establishment of the Joint Task Force (JTF). Once established the JFC, based on decisions about a military response, defines what his concept of JFACC will be. A specific JFACC concept of operations (how it will be

[23]Specific tasks are those which are specifically identified for accomplishment of mission objectives, whereas implied tasks are those that are discerned as necessary to ensure accomplishment of specific tasks.

employed) is then developed drawing in large part from the air support requirements that are necessary to effect mission accomplishment. Again using Operation Restore Hope for example, questions as to whether a JFACC should be employed not withstanding, structuring the JFACC organization should be based both on commanders guidance, operational objectives and air support requirements contingent to those objectives.

As a humanitarian operation with the objective of feeding a people in a country with a non-existent government and a concomitant lawlessness, Restore Hope required an ability to coordinate airlift assets both military and those of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and ensure that food supplies were distributed efficiently. Pursuant to that goal, military operations in direct support also required logistic air support (LOGAIR) and to a lesser extent assault support (rotary wing transport and gun ships) and close air support from fixed wing tactical aircraft. The mix of the resulting JFACC organization could then be structured around the functions pertaining to the dominate mission objectives.

"Traditional" JFACC's are frequently structured around the targeting cycle and development of an Air Tasking Order, however, a less than traditional JFACC, such as Restore Hope, had in this instance a focus on airlift, and the establishment of airspace control through use of an Airspace Control Authority (ACA).[24] To be sure, other sections or elements within the JFACC organization were also important depending on the phase of operations. In this sort of operation, a plans section together with a limited targeting and intelligence capability would be more important during the initial assault phases of the operation, while an airlift mobility element together with an ACA would have greater significance in later phases after airfields had been established.

For Somalia, as may be the case with other "non-traditional" JFACC's, more effort was required to coordinate the large amount of air traffic into a relatively small airspace with relatively few usable airfields, than to coordinate TACAIR sorties needed to support the initial seizures of airfield and port facilities. The unity of the air effort then comes not so much due to the establishment of a set organizational structure, but rather from the appropriate application of the "right tools" for the task at hand. In this way it matters less who is in charge, then what is accomplished. Therefore the components will view the JFACC more as an organizational tool that will evolve as the operation evolves to best support the JTF objectives.

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[24]An ACA is responsible for establishing airspace procedures and coordinating air traffic into and within the airspace.

On the other hand not every situation may require the creation of a JFACC organization. In fact establishment of a formal JFACC (although joint functions are still performed) may not even be appropriate under some circumstances. Unity of air effort--the purpose of JFACC--may be successfully achieved without the use of a single air commander, as was demonstrated in the El Dorado Canyon Operation against Libya in April 1986. This successful operation featured coordinated joint actions including naval aircraft (both Navy and Marine Corps) operating from aircraft carriers near the Libyan coast, and long range USAF bombers operating from their U.K. base. This single strike mission demonstrated simplicity, cooperation among the Services, flexibility, and a strong desire of all participants to succeed in the assigned mission,[25] contributory ingredients to combat success. "No single individual was appointed to be the tactical commander for the operation from planning through execution,"[26] yet the overall plan was well executed by all participants. Each Service planned its own strikes at geographically separated targets, that nevertheless requiredclose coordination between the different aircraft types. As a joint operation, the Air Force provided bombers and a command configured KC-10, while the naval forces provided SEAD, Airborne Early Warning (AEW), Combat Air Patrol (CAP) protection, Combat Search and Rescue (CSAR) and bombers.

This operation emphasizes that there may be situations in which the creation of a JFACC may not be necessary, or even appropriate, to achieve unity of air effort and mission success.

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[25]There is no unclassified summary of the El Dorado Canyon Operation. Most of the specifics of this paragraph are taken from Winnefeld and Johnson, pp. 83-96.

[26]Winnefeld and Johnson, p. 86.

Conclusions

- ***Establish an unambiguous joint doctrinal foundation.***
- ***Procedures should be broad and flexible.***
- ***JFACC should be task organized to the mission.***

CONCLUSIONS

From the foregoing, three conclusions emerge. First, doctrine should provide the foundation upon which integrated joint air operations can be conducted. Currently, there is little written that provides unambiguous doctrine regarding joint air operations. What is needed, however, is a solid doctrinal foundation upon which JFACC concepts can be built. The foundation should be sized for a large structure (as during ODS) but should also be able to accommodate a smaller structure (as in Restore Hope). In addition, the doctrinal foundation should be laid so as not to require that a JFACC structure be built at all, in keeping with the dictates of the operational situation and at the discretion of the joint force commander.

Second, the procedures to implement this doctrinal foundation for joint air operations should be broad enough to allow for flexibility to adjust to operational changes, as well as for Service procedural differences. This includes the ability to develop or modify a JFACC organization to meet the specific requirements of the various phases. Further, the procedures should also allow for the differences in approaches that each of the Service components bring to the force.

Finally, a JFACC organizational concept should reflect the type of operation for which it was established. Through a practice of task organizing to the mission, a JFACC should be tailored to provide the proper mix of staff and functions that allows it to best accomplish JTF objectives. Furthermore, the JFACC should be structured so as to allow it to evolve as the relative importance of the various joint air operations evolve, change or mature to meet the phases of the JTF mission.