



**FINAL REPORT**



**noetic**

## **Strategic Command and Control Lessons – Scoping Study**

Noetic Solutions Pty Limited

ABN 87 098 132 024

July 2013

## Distribution

Copies	Recipient
1	Air Vice Marshal Hart

This document was prepared for the sole use by Head Joint Capability Coordination Division. Distribution of this report is at his discretion.

## Authors

Role	Name
Principal	Andrew Balmaks
Author	Justin Kelly
Author	J. P. Smith

## Revision Log

Revision date	Ver	Revision description
30 June 2013	1.0	Draft Interim
30 July 2013	2.0	Final

### Noetic Solutions Pty Limited

ABN: 87 098 132 027

Locked Bag 3001

Deakin West, ACT 2600

Phone +61 2 6232 6508

Fax +61 2 6232 6515

Web [www.noeticgroup.com](http://www.noeticgroup.com)

## Contents

Distribution.....	2
Authors .....	2
Revision Log.....	2
Introduction.....	4
Methodology.....	4
‘Strategic’ Command and Control .....	4
Command and Control .....	5
The Evolution of ADF Higher C2.....	6
‘We are not good at Strategy’ .....	8
Strategy and Policy .....	8
Flawed Understanding of Strategy .....	10
Misunderstanding Risk .....	11
Over-control .....	11
Other Observations.....	12
Bottom Driven Processes.....	13
Strategic-Operational Separation .....	13
Coalitions .....	14
JTF 633 .....	15
The Future Joint Force .....	16
Doctrine.....	16
Conclusion.....	17
<b>ANNEX A .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED.....</b>	<b>19</b>

## Introduction

The ADF is transitioning from over a decade of sustained and intensive operational activity. Before the impact of time and posting cycles dilutes the collective memory of the ADO there is both an opportunity and a need to identify the key issues, successes and questions that have arisen from the conduct of the strategic command of the ADF. Given the breadth of these operations, the large number of stakeholders and perceptions engaged, the continuous change that has occurred in C2 arrangements; and the sequence of reviews and studies of C2 that has accompanied those changes, it was determined by HJCC that it would be premature to embark on a comprehensive lessons learnt program. Instead, it was decided that a scoping study should be conducted to attempt to identify if there were any specific issues or themes that would benefit from more detailed examination.

## Methodology

The scope of the study was initially intended to extend across the last decade – since the beginning of combat operations in Iraq in 2003. However, on closer examination, the period up until the establishment of HQJOC was already comprehensively covered by a number of reviews including those by AVM Kerry Clarke (2003), MAJGEN Jim Molan (2003), Noetic Solutions (2005); and MAJGEN Richard Wilson (2005). The findings of those reviews had either been rejected, or accepted and embodied in the structures that emerged following the creation of HQJOC. As a result, the focus of this study is the period since the Wilson Review.

This scoping study makes no claim to being comprehensive. It rests on interviews conducted in Canberra or by email with 14 people who have been engaged either in direct command and control of operations or in supporting processes. Interviewees ranged from 3\*/ DEPSEC level down to 06/ EL2 and are listed at Annex A.

Border Protection Command and Op RESOLUTE are clearly part of the ADO's strategic command and control apparatus. However, they were excluded from the scope of this review because of the risk of unacceptably diluting the available effort. Despite this, the multi-agency character of BPC may be a harbinger of future needs and of the expected further expansion of 'jointery' and is probably worthy of a separate and focused study of its own.

The study does not attempt to identify lessons but, rather, to capture the observations of participants in the processes of strategic command and control, accompany them with some initial analysis based on the author's own knowledge and experience and arrange them into broad themes. It concludes by highlighting those areas that appear most in need of further detailed study.

## 'Strategic' Command and Control

The meaning of the term 'Strategic' Command and Control is diffuse. All the programs that comprise the ADO contribute to the processes described in *The Strategy Framework* (2010) and all have responsibilities towards the mounting and execution of joint operations either directly or indirectly. Command and Control necessarily includes the coordination of these functions. At the same time, strategy does not occur at any single hierarchical layer. National strategy pursues policy objectives provided by government. When that pursuit requires military actions, military strategy is executed through coordinated tactical action. Good

strategy incorporates, coordinates and reconciles perspectives held by political and tactical leaders and all those between.

In order to provide some focus to this study it was decided to limit it to examination of the workings of the ADO and, more specifically, to the interactions of those areas within the ADO that are directly concerned with the framing, planning, mounting and command of joint operations. This is wider than the 'ADF Higher Command Arrangements' that were the subject of the Wilson Review and incorporates:

- + those elements of the ADO with responsibilities for contributing to the production of the CDF Planning Directive Part A, namely: CDF, MSC Division, SP Division, IP Division, MSPA Division, DIO, HQJOC and Service Headquarters; and
- + those elements and individuals in the direct chain of command that connects CDF with tactical actions in the field. This includes CDF, CJOPS, JTF Commanders and local tactical commanders.

## Command and Control

Like strategy, 'command and control' can also be a 'little slippery'. ADF doctrine<sup>1</sup>, for example, offers the following definitions:

- + **Command.** The authority that a commander in the military service lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment. Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources and for planning the employment of organising, directing, coordinating and controlling military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions. It also includes responsibility for health, welfare, morale and discipline of assigned personnel.
- + **Control.** The authority exercised by a commander over part of the activities of subordinate organisations, or other organisations not normally under his command, which encompasses the responsibility for implementing orders or directives. All or part of this authority may be transferred or delegated.

These definitions are muddled. The meaning of 'control' here is not its plain language meaning and that which is ascribed to it refers to a constrained command authority—specific cases being operational control, tactical control and the like. In fact, in Chapter 3 of the same publication, these levels of control are described as 'States of Command'. So the ADDP definitions of command and control are actually definitions of 'full command' and 'constrained command'.

In reality the 'control' in command and control refers to the system of measures put in place to aid supervision, synchronisation, de-confliction and the monitoring of progress. Control is about the support provided to enable a commander to exercise their command - that is, to ensure that the force remains 'under control'. Put simply, command is an individual cognitive function exercised vertically through a hierarchy and is primarily about formulating and communicating intent. Control is a function distributed across a large number of actors and agencies and supports the implementation of the commander's intent.

---

<sup>1</sup> ADDP 00.1 paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5

## The Evolution of ADF Higher C2

The higher command and control arrangements of the ADO have been evolving steadily since the creation of the Department of Defence in the early 1970s.<sup>2</sup> Central to this evolution has been the establishment of the means to command and control joint operations. The broad steps in this evolution have included:

- + Initially the COSC exercised strategic control of operations supported by a small staff led by a two-star Head of Joint Staff. Joint forces deployed on operations would report directly to COSC. The newly created Chief of Defence Force Staff exercised executive command of the three services, combined into a single ADF in 1976, through the Service Chiefs and was also empowered to appoint an officer to command a portion of the ADF consisting of elements of more than one service.
- + In 1984, the CDFS was re-titled CDF and a more expansive HQ ADF, including an Assistant Chief of Defence Force Operations (ACOPS), was formed.
- + In 1988 there was doctrinal recognition of three levels of command: strategic, operational and tactical. The HQs of Maritime, Land and Air Commands were designated as joint HQs which reported to HQADF for joint command matters and to their Service Chiefs for Raise-Train-Maintain matters. HQ NORCOM was raised as an operational level HQ and the position of Commander Joint Forces Australia (CJFA) was created but not filled. CJFA was an operational level commander, to be located away from Canberra and was directly responsible to CDF. These arrangements were tested in the 1991 Gulf War in which the Naval task group was commanded by CDF through the Maritime Commander as the lead operational commander. Similarly, deployments to Somalia and Cambodia shortly afterwards were commanded by CDF through the Land Commander.
- + In 1993 LTGEN John Sanderson was appointed as CJFA but had no command responsibilities.
- + In 1996, the service HQ were absorbed as components of HQADF and an operational level HQ—HQ Australian Theatre (HQAST) was created with a dedicated two-star commander. The environmental HQs, HQNORCOM and HQSF became components of HQAST. Importantly HQAST was expected to command operations on and around Australia - in the Australian theatre. Forces deployed outside Australia were expected to be commanded by CDF through a lead joint commander.
- + In 1997, HQADF was dissolved and its elements absorbed into ADHQ which comprised both the services and the other programmes. ADHQ mirrored the Defence organisation and was commanded by a diarchy comprising VCDF and DEPSEC S&I. Service logistics organisations were also brought under a single operational level joint logistics commander (Commander Support Command) and three years later absorbed into the merging DMO. Within ADHQ Strategic Command Division replaced the HQ ADF Operations Division.
- + During the deployment to East Timor in 1999, CDF was supported in his command by a Strategic Command Group roughly analogous to the augmented-COSC of earlier times. Initially, the chain of command for deployed forces was through COMAST but the realities of coalition management and the intense political interest in the detail of operations led to the establishment of a direct reporting

---

<sup>2</sup> Much of this section is drawn from David Horner <http://epress.anu.edu.au/sdsc/hap/pdf/ch10.pdf>

chain between CDF and the commander on the ground. During INTERFET, HQAST through its components, continued to manage operations in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville, various UN missions, the ongoing naval commitment to the Gulf and other named operations.

- + The Australian commitment to the Middle East immediately following the terrorist attacks in America in September 2001 was something of a hybrid. The Australian National Commander reported directly to COMAST but had little direct operational control over deployed forces which were generally under the operational control of coalition component commanders while reporting to their AST component commanders.
- + The invasion of Iraq in 2003 was planned by Strategic Operations Division (formerly Strategic Command Division) in a compartment that originally excluded HQAST and COMAST. Although the deployed forces were under the operational control of the coalition, they reported to the Australian National Commander for operational matters and to their AST component commanders for raise-train-maintain issues. The Australian National Commander however, reported directly to CDF. However, as the Australian commitment to the occupation of Iraq approached a steady state, the link between CDF and the Australian National Commander reduced in importance and the reporting chain was increasingly via COMAST but this was apparently a matter of convenience rather than a change in doctrine.
- + Following the Iraq War, in 2004, HQAST became HQJOC and was placed under command of VCDF whose duties were broadened to include those of CJOPS. The COMAST position was transformed into the Deputy Chief of Joint Operations while the Strategic Operations Division was abolished. In effect this transformed HQAST, which had been an operational level HQ principally concerned with operations in and around Australia to a strategic/ operational level HQ responsible for the command (on behalf of CDF) and control of all ADF operations. Within Russell Offices, a Director General Military Strategic Commitments was established to support CDF and VCDF in their operations roles. DGMSC was also responsible for interdepartmental liaison on operational matters including representation on standing committees and interagency planning and task forces. Additionally, as part of this transformation, in 2007, HQJOC absorbed the component HQs which ceased to exist as separate entities.
- + In October 2007, the roles of CJOPS and VCDF were separated to strengthen command and leadership of ADF operations. Henceforth the VCDF would focus on Defence business at the strategic level, specifically on supporting the Government and CDF, while CJOPS would command operations on behalf of CDF. His responsibilities include planning, mounting, monitoring and controlling campaigns, operations, joint exercises and other activities as directed by CDF. CJOPS was expected to liaise with VCDF Group to ensure military options and operational plans were developed and executed in accordance with strategic guidance. As part of this transition, MSC Branch was upgraded to a Division.

Since 2003, this evolution has been informed by a number of studies and reviews, these include:

- + AVM Kerry Clark (May 2003) Review of the ADF Strategic and Operational Level Command and Control Arrangements.
- + MAJGEN Jim Molan (October 2003) Evaluation of the Performance of the Strategic Level of Command of the ADF during Operations Bastille and Falconer.

- + MAJGEN Richard Wilson (November 2005) Review of the ADF Higher Command and Control Arrangements and its precursor the Noetic Solutions Review which informed it.

Overall, this evolution has been one of steady improvement in the ADO's ability to exercise command and control of joint operations and the basic architecture appears sound – but that does not mean it is perfect. The interviews conducted as part of this study suggest that there remains a degree of dissatisfaction with how the ADO actually uses this architecture and that there are arguably some missing pieces and residual issues that need to be resolved. The following section discusses the weaknesses that participants in strategic command and control have identified.

## **‘We are not good at Strategy’**

Before beginning, it is necessary to recognise the importance of the interplay of personalities. As noted above, command is an individual cognitive function and each commander in the chain acts in idiosyncratic ways that may or may not be optimal in different circumstances or viewed from different perspectives. This is inescapable. This factor does however make it even more important that the structures, doctrine and processes that support commanders are good enough to moderate the influence of personalities and normalise the behaviour of the system as a whole. No human system can work perfectly but that does not invalidate the need to design them to work as well as they can.

The proposition that ‘we are not good at strategy’ was put by a number of interviewees. The trigger for this observation, and how the weakness manifested, depended on where individuals sat in the organisation and on their roles in strategic C2. The following specific weaknesses with respect to strategy were articulated:

- + The policy formulated to guide the development of strategy was weak or missing.
- + The process to convert strategic propositions in military action are bottom-driven with senior leader involvement occurring too late. This means leaders are typically left to choose from a menu of options rather than guiding the development of options
- + There is a misunderstanding of risk and, as a result, risk is generally badly managed.

## **Strategy and Policy**

In late 2012, LTGEN (ret) Peter Leahy was asked by HJCC to examine the conduct of national command during recent operations and conducted a seminar to garner the perspectives of a number of stakeholders. Two of his observations about strategic decision making are important:

### ***Strategic Decision Making***

*There was considerable discussion around this issue. Some questioned the strategic nature of our deployments and expressed concern that there was a disconnect between tactical actions and strategic intent. .... Some participants questioned whether the SCG was the most appropriate forum to advise CDF on national command issues. Some also questioned the adhoc basis of the IDC process and the lack of feed-back through the Defence chain of command*



### **Whole of Government efforts**

*Participants were also concerned that politicians did not always act in a strategic manner and that there was not enough form and discipline around 'strategic decision making'. For a number the strategic end state was not clear and there was a requirement for improvements in the coordination between military, aid and diplomatic efforts. Participants noted the presence of POLADS from Defence but remarked on the considerable benefit to be obtained through the presence of DFAT LOs.*

The importance of these observations was reiterated by this study. Henry Mintzberg, the doyen of corporate strategic planning, once described strategy as 'a big idea and some strategic programming'<sup>3</sup>. Improvements in communications and the growth in the capacity of HQJOC mean that the ADO's ability to program is probably better now than it ever has been, however, this strength has not been matched by a corresponding improvement in the organisation's ability to identify 'the big idea'. In fact, it was suggested that the policy capacity of the ADO has declined over the last decade or so.

In an article in JFQ<sup>4</sup> the US strategist Michele Flournoy, argued that good strategic planning needs to be:

- + **Deliberative** - seeking to explore the plausible futures that arise from the decisions being contemplated and unpacking, to the extent possible, their indirect consequences on other aspects of the nation's life as well as their direct consequences on the problem being addressed. In strategy, the context is often more important than the immediate problem;
- + **Integrative** - seeking to establish frameworks supporting the coordination of all of the elements of national power; and
- + **Inclusive** - in order to achieve the above seeking to engage with stakeholders from across government, with potential international partners and, in some situations, with individuals and organisations from the broader community.

For the deliberate development of policy advice on things like White Papers, ADO processes more or less comply with Flournoy's prescriptions. However, the production of strategies to address specific issues is not nearly as well done. There are a number of reasons for this.

- + There is no staff with the remit to conduct just-in-case strategic planning. In its stead HQJOC, which does have staff resources, often conducts this planning and, when events do arise, is able to present options to decision makers. In this case, decision makers can be left to choose from a menu of options arising from below and policy is reduced to de-risking them.

---

<sup>3</sup> <http://hbr.org/1994/01/the-fall-and-rise-of-strategic-planning/ar/1> accessed 26 Jun 13

<sup>4</sup> *Strategic planning for national security: A new project solarium* 2006; Michele Flournoy; Shawn W Brimley; Joint Force Quarterly; no 41; Apr 2006; p80-86

- + Within the ADO, there is no clear separation between the operational and strategic levels of command or functions. No-one is charged with providing advice on 'whether' we should act or on framing planning. The principal doctrinal trigger for operational planning - the CDF Planning Directive - does have a Part A that provides a strategic frame but there is no defined process for its production, HQJOC has a central role in its development and, to some extent, it focuses first on meeting the needs of HQJOC planning staff.
- + The Strategic Command Group is not set up for deliberation. It doesn't have a secretariat or staff that assembles policy options or agendum's and so its meetings tend to focus on loosely structured consideration of the matters presented to them. On occasion, this is unavoidable but there is a clear need for SCG to be supported through the consideration of the futures of the decisions being contemplated.
- + To be properly deliberative strategic planning needs to be done somewhere in advance of actual events - that is, it will tend to be 'just in case'. It may not be driven by clear intelligence indicators but in response to a more general unease. Within Government, not many agencies have cultures that support just-in-case planning - so the need for deliberation undermines the desire for inclusiveness. However, unless space is created for deliberation the ADO increases its prospects of being continuously materially surprised.

## Flawed Understanding of Strategy

The Strategy Framework (2010) describes strategy as 'the calculated relationship between ends, ways and means'. The problem with this 'ends-way-means' model is that it is true of all purposeful activity from 'consume cup of tea' to 'change the regime in Iraq'. This makes it familiar, accessible and easy to use. Unfortunately tactics is also the consideration of ends, ways and means and so are operational art, campaign planning, war planning, military strategy, national strategy, grand strategy and, mostly unconsciously, strategic culture. This universality undermines the utility of the ends-ways-means model.

In a 1989 article in the *Military Review*<sup>5</sup> Colonel Arthur Lykke introduced the idea that **military** strategy was the combination of **military objectives**, **military strategic concepts** and **military resources**. Importantly he used the metaphor of a three-legged stool to emphasise the importance of the relationships between these three elements arguing that if they were not balanced the stool of military strategy would be unbalanced and the national security that was perched on it would topple off. From this modest and simple explanation of military strategy emerged the idea that strategy is all about ends, ways and means. Unfortunately, ends-ways-means is often understood as a linear process and not the iterative balancing that Lykke described. It is not clear that the ADO has processes or structures for this iterative balancing of military strategic objectives, concepts and resources. As a result, some interviewees noted that consideration of how the 'means' will be employed, how the strategic propositions being pursued will play out through tactical action over months and years, was submerged in strategic planning. The interplay of objectives, concepts and resources also means that 'strategy' is not a skill that belongs in any single part of the ADO but is the result of the integration of work done in many areas. This requires both sound processes and an adequate coordinating staff.

---

<sup>5</sup> Lykke Arthur 'Defining Military Strategy' *Military Review* Volume LXIXO May 1989

A more expanded view of strategy is offered by General Sir David Fraser, as follows '*The art of strategy is to determine the aim, which is or should be inherently political; to derive from that aim a series of military objectives to be achieved; to assess these objectives as to the military requirements they create, and the preconditions the achievement of which is likely to necessitate; to measure available and potential resources against the requirements; and to chart from this process a coherent pattern of priorities and a rational course of action.*'<sup>6</sup> In this view, strategy involves the determination of ends - with the attendant acceptance of the role of politics - it then replicates Lykke's military objectives, concepts and resources before looping back to include the need for 'a pattern of priorities and a rational course of action' to be inherent in the military strategic concepts. This is a more complete explanation of strategy than that contained in the Strategy Framework. More importantly, however, it raises the question of how the 'policy' that should drive strategy actually arises.

There seems to be an assumption within Defence that 'policy' will be delivered fully formed from government and all the ADO needs to do is translate it into a set of military objectives and a plan for action. As one interviewee noted 'we take direction as tasking' and another that 'we don't offer genuine policy options just narrow advice around a single option'. A more realistic model is that government may well feel needs, but that departments of state have an important role in developing policies to meet those needs and, in fact, have some responsibility to shape the direction they receive. Defence needs to improve the quality of its policy advice to government and to do this it needs to seek ways to meet the deliberative – inclusive - integrative approach discussed above.

## **Misunderstanding Risk**

Because the strategic policy that sets the purpose of operations is not well examined or articulated the ADO has difficulty managing risk. Ultimately any strategy aims to frame courses of action that balance potential costs against potential benefits. Good strategy gains the most that can be gained at the least practicable cost. Unless the potential benefits and costs are examined and articulated clearly there is no logical measure of progress.

During recent operations the strategic objectives were apparently too weakly articulated to enable the costs of action to be properly evaluated. The result was that avoidance of costs overwhelmed achievement of benefits and the apparent strategic rationale for commitment to both Iraq and Afghanistan, bolstering the US Alliance, was undermined by tactical risk avoidance. In this context a number of participants argued that the tactical restrictions the ADF placed on its operations palpably changed the perspectives of their US peers and superiors and effectively moved Australia from being an intimate alliance partner to being 'one among many' in the outer circle of troop contributors.

## **Over-control**

This misunderstanding of risk also impacts in other ways. In combination with a greatly improved capacity for command and control it leads senior leaders in Canberra or the Gulf to exercise almost minute to minute control over the daily operations of tactical forces. This was a very widely held observation. Specific examples were cited in which JTF633 required that it approve each patrol or activity by the RTF in

---

<sup>6</sup> Royal College of Defence Studies Thinking Strategically October 2010 p.20  
[www.hdaau.com.au/includes/files/cms/file/rcdsstrategyhandbook.pdf](http://www.hdaau.com.au/includes/files/cms/file/rcdsstrategyhandbook.pdf) accessed 7 May 13

Oruzgan 'outside the wire'. Other examples were the requirement for embedded staff officers to seek approval from JTF 633 prior to work related travel away from their normal place of duty.

ADF doctrine subscribes to a manoeuvrist approach and acknowledges that Mission Command is central to that approach. It also recognises that achieving mission command relies on 'mutual trust and confidence between commanders at all levels'.<sup>7</sup> Further doctrine notes that;

*Modern communications and overlapping levels of command present commanders with a so-called 'command dilemma'. The challenge is to balance over-reliance on communications, which undermines the longer term ability of subordinates to take risks, with micro-management of operations at lower levels by higher command because those communications necessarily exist.*

That is, doctrine notes the pressures towards over-control but still comes down in favour of Mission Command. In this commitment to Mission Command, ADF doctrine mirrors that of our principal partners the US, UK and NZ. Despite this commitment it is clear that Mission Command is not being applied by the ADF. It could be that our principal partners are wrong and Mission Command is not appropriate to contemporary needs, that it needs to be reviewed and redefined to more closely accord with those needs or that the problem lies within the ADF in the selection and development of leaders. The ADF needs to decide what 'Mission Command' should mean today, whether it should remain in ADF doctrine and, if so, what needs to be done to make it work.

The failure to implement Mission Command also hints at other failures in the selection and development of ADF leaders. The US Army War College characterises the strategic environment as Volatile, Uncertain Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) and seeks to prepare leaders to operate in it. Some ADF leaders, faced with a VUCA environment, apparently demonstrate a tendency to over-control. This is in sharp contrast with the approach taken by at least some observed US leaders who, apparently, faced with the same environment seek to clarify intent and support the leader closer to the front rather than to reach down and assume the command responsibilities of their subordinates. This reinforces the need identified above to review the development provided to ADF leaders to confirm that it meets contemporary needs in this respect.<sup>8</sup>

## Other Observations

The difficulties the ADO has in strategically framing its actions and the consequences discussed above are the principal findings of this study. During the interviews conducted however, a number of other observations emerged that need to be recorded. Some of these overlap with the preceding discussion but seem worth specific examination while others are issues that were raised in passing.

<sup>7</sup> ADDP 3.0 Operations (2011) paragraph 3.17

<sup>8</sup> The US Capstone for Joint Operations recognises a similar need: '**Use joint professional military education to realize mission command in joint operations.** Each of the Services implement some version of mission command in the conduct of joint operations, but differences exist owing to characteristic missions and primary operating domains. Ensuring the principles of mission command in play at the Service level can function together in joint operations requires a common understanding of its varying manifestations and how they might be harmonized. A renewed focus on the command environment in Joint Professional Military Education is therefore critical. Mission command must be further understood in the context of the modern information environment, including advancements in command and control technologies and their vulnerabilities. Educating commanders and staffs to match command philosophy to the particular requirements of each mission is also important, as is imbuing commanders with restraint as communication technologies could increase the propensity for micromanagement.

## Bottom Driven Processes

Senior leaders in the ADO are busier than their subordinates. Their time is more utilised and they are required to attend many meetings. The result is that they have limited capacity for deliberation and, to some extent, find themselves responding to the briefs with which they are provided. This means that the ADO is driven from the bottom up.

An example of this is the recently endorsed Regional Campaign Plan.<sup>9</sup> This was prepared by HQJOC because successive CJOPS saw a need to coordinate the array of military engagement activities that were being undertaken. Because it was initiated from below, the campaign was provided with no strategic frame and was left to interpret strategic guidance to an extent its writers judged sufficient. By the time it was first considered by COSC the Campaign Plan was substantially complete.

The Campaign Plan describes how, *inter alia*, the ADF will engage with countries around the South China Sea and North East Asia. This is important and necessary. However, it is not clear that the potential strategic futures of these engagements have been fully explored. For example, what strategic planning was conducted to frame responses to situations that could arise if the tensions in these areas lead to localised or general violence?

Solutions to this challenge are apparent but probably not practicable. Without embarking on a major reengineering of ADO processes and structures possibly the best that can be done is to ensure that there is an awareness of the risks attendant on being driven from below and that leaders are supported by staffs that are charged with proffering a strategic perspective.

## Strategic-Operational Separation

The idea of an operational level of command is well developed in Australian and allied doctrine. There is a theoretical argument that the operational level is an artefact of industrial age warfare and that, as technology and warfare evolve, the operational level of command is being compressed into oblivion. To some extent Australian practice has supported this proposition. The CDF commands deployed elements of the ADF and most CDFs have, on occasion, exercised their command directly.<sup>10</sup> For command then, any notion of a strategic–operational separation is probably illusory. The chain of command during times of crisis will be as short and direct as it can be while during more steady-state operations supervision will be delegated to an appropriate level.

However, the apparent demise of a separation between strategic and operational level command should not obscure the need to sustain a separation between strategic and operational level planning. As described earlier, a strategic perspective puts ADF actions into the broadest possible context and aligns them with the other elements of national power of Australia and any partners. It anticipates and provides for the influential futures that might arise and it decides **whether** to act as a precursor of deciding **how** to act. In deciding whether to act it explores the risks of inaction and compares them with the strategic risks of acting.

---

<sup>9</sup> This plan has not been sighted by the author however a number of interviewees referred to it as an example of bottom-driven processes.

<sup>10</sup> Doctrine states that 'CDF may elect to command operations directly, but normally exercises command through the Chief of Joint Operations (CJOPS).'

This process is fundamental to any subsequent campaign planning. Ultimately, the campaign is a strategic artefact. It is framed, resourced, sequenced with other campaigns, and constrained and restrained by strategic planners. This is captured in the CDF Planning Directive Part A described in doctrine but has not been well demonstrated in ADO practice. Unless this strategic work is done, there can be no confidence that the planners at HQJOC can produce a campaign plan that pursues a strategy. This threatens to allow the grammar of war to overwhelm its logic.

The need for more inclusive, deliberative and integrative strategic planning will continue to increase as warfare continues to evolve. A larger and more authoritative strategy staff is required to accommodate some of the strategic pressure arising from the evolving character of warfare, specifically:

- + The increasing importance of coordinated action by a widening array of government agencies with a consequent need to drive interagency planning and responses through IDCs early in the development of an emerging problem.
- + The notion of geographically defined theatres is increasingly undermined by the increasing importance of space and cyberspace, the advent of long range weapons such as hyper-velocity cruise missiles and the continuing threat from terrorists. In the future most actions will be nested within a global battle space.
- + Warfighting capability is shifting from the ADF to the wider ADO and, to some extent, across government.
- + Coalitions, and the need for effective coalition governance, will continue to be critical and will likely increase in importance.
- + In an increasingly diverse community representing many perspectives on most issues and relying on globalised trade to maintain its living standards, the need to explore and articulate the indirect consequences of military actions will increase.

The conduct of this sort of planning is probably best led by a dedicated strategy staff that is discrete from the detailed planners at HQJOC. Importantly, the development of strategies is neither solely a military nor public service role. It requires the integration of both policy and tactical perspectives and should be undertaken by an integrated staff.

## Coalitions

A number of interviewees commented to the effect that 'we don't get coalitions'. The evidence given to support this proposition spanned several areas.

- + The appointment of discrete national commanders rather than this role being assigned to a senior embed was thought by some to confuse senior coalition officers and other coalition members. It also meant that the Australian National Commander was simply another visitor to the coalition HQ who added to the HQ's workload and that any perception of influence or special access was probably largely illusory.
- + The production of an Australian campaign plan for Afghanistan received comment from a number of quarters. There is a question of doctrinal semantics about whether the plan was in fact a campaign plan but that is probably unimportant: Australia is free to define campaigns in any way it wishes as

long as the risk of confusing coalition partners is recognised and managed. More importantly, there was a perception that the objectives constraints and restraints of the Australian campaign were not fully aligned with those of the superior ISAF campaign and Australia therefore was a source of occasional friction and misunderstanding. Given the mechanisms for coalition governance that were established under the NATO umbrella, there may have been scope to gain better alignment between the ISAF campaign plan and Australia's.

- + The restrictions placed on Australian embeds movement away from their normal place of work meant that they were sometimes unable to fit in with the normal work patterns of their coalition colleagues. In some cases several days notice were required before movement could be approved and this meant that Australian embeds were sometimes unable to participate in short notice activities. Some felt that this reduced their utility to their superiors and pushed them towards the periphery of the groups of which they were a part.
- + Despite a sizeable contribution to Afghanistan, Australia declined responsibility for its own AOR operating firstly under Dutch and subsequently under US control. Similarly, in deploying a battle group to southern Iraq, it was committed to a British AOR and, from the coalition perspective, lacked profile. These two decisions not to have an Australian flag over an AOR were seen by some as undermining the authority of the Australian voice in the respective coalitions.

The ADF has only ever fought as part of a coalition; there is international unanimity that coalition warfare will become the norm everywhere; and this perspective is embedded in Australian doctrine. Despite this there is an argument that the structures and processes that underpin strategic command and control do not fully account for coalitions and, in particular, for the particular needs of an inveterate coalition junior partner. The well developed structures for command and control of joint operations need to be partnered with an effective and strong Australian voice in the processes for coalition governance and a well informed strategic perspective. The alternative is acceptance of the risks that Australia is repeatedly faced with the need to play its national red card and that operational preferences overwhelm strategic needs.

### **JTF 633**

Based on the small sample interviewed for this study there are very few JTF 633 'fans' in the ADF. There was near-uniform questioning of its role, size, location and function. It was generally perceived as being, at best, marginally contributory to the work people did and was described variously as 'a self-licking ice-cream', overly-controlling, risk averse, disruptive and interfering.

JTF 633 was established to command ADF activities in the Middle East. As well as its command and control function the JTF had important roles in the logistic support of deployed forces and in managing the details of force rotations. It is not clear however, that the JTF model chosen was the best fit to the actual need. In reality, the connection between the various activities being conducted did not support the need for a JTF - they were essentially discrete tasks that worked through different coalition chains of command and, in some cases, different coalitions. Arguably, the JTF construct was simply the only item in the ADO command and control repertoire and there was no perceived need to explore other options.

The ADO accepted the Wilson Review's recommendation that HQJOC should be an integrated HQ rather than component-based one. Since then however, its' evolution has seemingly been towards a hybrid with some of the characteristics of both integrated and component structures. With the presence of DGAir,

DGMAR and HQSOCOMD, HQJOC seems only one step – DGLand - away from being a component-based HQ. This presents some alternatives to the creation of future versions of JTF633.

Once a relatively steady state had been achieved, probably sometime in 2004, there may have been value in making the logistic and force support component a direct command unit of HQJOC and commanding the other 'pieces' of the various operations through HQJOC components. This may have reduced the redundancy between the two HQ, allowed the Middle East end to be smaller and improved the integration between Canberra and the Middle East. If alternative approaches to national command had been found, the result might have been shortened chains of command, reduced demand for deployed personnel and a more bespoke response to the unique local conditions faced by each individual operation.

## The Future Joint Force

The evolution of ADF C2 described at the beginning of this study has greatly increased the capacity of the ADO to mount and employ joint forces. However, the meaning of 'joint' is expanding. Warfighting capabilities now reside outside the ADF in both other areas of the ADO and other Departments. The existing processes for their coordination are not strong enough for them to be properly coordinated into a modern joint force.

Within the ADO, the coordination of joint capability generation has improved markedly in the last few years and steady progress continues to be made. The improved alignment of joint and single service future operating concepts with capability development processes being one example. The challenge will continue to be to combine the cultures and capabilities of the single services, other parts of the ADO and other government agencies into a properly integrated joint force without undermining the organisational cultures and subject matter expertise that is essential to eventual success.

## Doctrine

During this study the author has reviewed several joint doctrine publications. They are of uneven quality, in places the expression is clumsy and in others meanings are unclear. An example of the former was quoted in the discussion of Mission Command above:

*Modern communications and overlapping levels of command present commanders with a so-called 'command dilemma'. The challenge is to balance over-reliance on communications, which undermines the longer term ability of subordinates to take risks, with micro-management of operations at lower levels by higher command because those communications necessarily exist.*

The ideas contained in the excerpt are reasonable but the reader is left with a difficult task of grappling with the prose before the meaning can be discerned. Examples of a lack of clarity include the discussion of the definitions for command and control discussed at the beginning of this report; another is in ADDP-D:

*CJOPS is responsible to CDF for operational level planning and the conduct of ADF campaigns, operations and other activities. CDF requests the Service Chiefs to assign forces to CJOPS for operations.*



In this excerpt key concepts are clouded in uncertainty – what does ‘the conduct of’ mean when translated into command and control terminology and does CDF really request service chiefs to assign forces? What if they say no? There may be a need to conduct a review of joint doctrine to confirm its coverage, focus and quality.

## Conclusion

This study was based on a limited number of interviews with people who were available in Canberra in June 2013 or who had the time to respond to email questionnaires. The sample is small and there has been no attempt to validate observations, instead, they have been gathered, arranged and surrounded by some contextual explanation and analysis. This study should be read with that in mind.

**Improving Situational Strategies.** Despite the methodological limitation of this study one over-riding and important theme did emerge: the ADO is not good at situational<sup>11</sup> strategic planning and this weakness has a number of important downstream impacts. Good situational strategies are deliberative, inclusive and integrative and this understanding raises a number of consequent questions that could be the subject of further study:

- + What needs to be done to reinvigorate crisis and immediate<sup>12</sup> strategic planning and improve the policy advice provided by the Department?
- + Is CDF adequately supported in the exercise of his operational command responsibilities?
- + How can strategic responses be driven from the top instead of from the bottom?
- + What measures could be taken to improve the functioning of the SCG?
- + How should the ADF manage the apparent need for a separation of strategic and operational planning with the realities of the compression of the operational level of command?
- + Does the education and development of ADO personnel adequately prepare them for roles in strategic planning?
- + Is there a need for better defined strategic level processes to drive participation in coalition governance?
- + Is the ADO adequately postured to influence other government agencies in order to prompt and shape desirable responses to emerging situations? This influence includes appropriate contributions to IDCs but extends to other less formal and more comprehensive forms of engagement.
- + Is the ADOO satisfied with the existing whole-of-government planning process and what can be done to improve it?

Beyond this important work there are a number of other areas in which further study could offer benefits:

---

<sup>11</sup> Situational planning address specific scenarios and is different from the deliberate processes that produce generic strategic products such as White Papers, Defence Planning Guidance, policy to guide the production of the DCP etc.

<sup>12</sup> Here ‘crisis’ refers to those events that arise with little or no warning and which demand an early and effective national response that may, or may not, eventually include an ADO contribution. ‘Immediate’ planning would cover all other situations, actual or anticipated, that may require an ADO response.

- + **Models of Command and Control.** The ADO seems to have a single model of command and control which establishes a hierarchy connecting CDF with a JTF commander. When Australia is a coalition junior partner, or in some other situations, this may not always be the best model. There may be value in exploring, and describing in doctrine, a broader array of approaches to the exercise of command. This could encompass both integrated and component command from HQJOC, different approaches to national command and direct command by CDF among others.
- + **Mission Command.** It may be timely to review the applicability of Mission Command in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and, potentially, refine its description and application to meet contemporary needs. If there is a decision to retain Mission Command in doctrine, measures might need to be taken that encourage its application because it is apparently not being used at present.
- + **Expanding Jointery.** The future joint force will probably extend beyond the ADF and ADO to encompass other government agencies and, potentially, agencies outside government. Processes and doctrine for establishing, commanding and controlling such diverse groupings at all levels of command will need to be developed and practised. A focused study on lessons learnt by BPC since its formation could form a useful first step down this path.
- + **Joint Doctrine.** The quality of joint doctrine is uneven. There may be a need for a review of joint doctrine to confirm that the hierarchy meets contemporary needs and that it is as clear and accurate as it needs to be.

*The greater the number and the higher the rank of the military officers who compose the council [of war] , the more difficult will it be to accomplish the triumph of truth and reason, however small be the amount of dissent.* <sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Jomini The Art of War 1838 article 14 p.58. [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13549/13549-h/13549-h.htm#ARTICLE\\_XIV](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/13549/13549-h/13549-h.htm#ARTICLE_XIV)

## ANNEX A

## LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Person	Positions
<b>LTGEN (ret) Peter Leahy</b>	Former CA
<b>LTGEN (ret) Mark Evans</b>	Former CJOPS, COMD JTF 633
<b>Mr Brendan Sergeant</b>	DEPSEC s
<b>MAJGEN Angus Campbell</b>	DCA, Former COMD JTF 633, former Deputy NSA
<b>MAJGEN Tim Mcowan</b>	Former SOCAUST
<b>MAJGEN Craig Orme</b>	HADC
<b>MAJGEN Michael Krause (ret)</b>	Former senior embed, former J5 HQJOC
<b>RADM Trevor Jones</b>	HMSC
<b>RADM Steve Gilmore</b>	DCJOPS
<b>Mr Chris Birrer</b>	A/HIP
<b>BRIG Roger Noble</b>	BG Comd in Iraq, senior embed
<b>BRIG Michael Mahy</b>	J5 HQJOC
<b>CDRE Aaron Ingram</b>	J3 HQJOC