

By John T. Correll, Editor in Chief

## Joint Vision

THE Pentagon, eager to enhance the tradition of jointness, says that combined arms have been a regular thing for us since the American Revolution, when the Continental and French armies, supported by French seapower, defeated the British at Yorktown. The Army and Navy worked together in numerous instances during the Civil War. In the coordinated land, air, and sea campaigns of World War II, joint operations reached unprecedented levels.

Jointness in the modern sense of the term, however, dates from the Defense Reorganization Act of 1958. That was when the individual services lost operational control of their own forces. From that point on, the main charter for the service departments was to organize, train, and equip their units. The services retained their roles as established by law, but the missions were assigned to unified and specified commands on a geographic or functional basis. As they used to say at Air Command and Staff College, the warmaking powers of the United States are now vested in the national command authorities and nine warlords—meaning the commanders in chief of the nine unified commands. (No specified commands exist today.)

Jointness was tightened further by the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, which gave theater CINCs firm control over the deploying forces of all services. Even when one service is dominant in a given conflict, as USAF was in the Persian Gulf War, it still operates as an element of the joint command. Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman, USAF Chief of Staff, often refers to the Air Force as “a team within a team,” providing air and space capabilities as part of a joint team.

The Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces said last year that the “vision documents” of the services—USAF’s “Global Reach, Global Power,” the Army’s “Force XXI,” the Navy’s “Forward . . . From the Sea”—were “valuable” but that they left out the need for a “joint warfighting vision.”

Gen. John M. Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is

filling that gap with “Joint Vision 2010,” which has been through multiple drafts since the beginning of this year. It is presented as a “conceptual template,” concentrating on expectations about warfare of the future. It will no doubt have considerable influence on the quadrennial strategy review coming up in 1997.

It anticipates future operations based on *information superiority*: the collecting, processing, and disseminating of an uninterrupted flow of information while exploiting or denying an adversary’s ability to do the same. This sets up the employment

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of four operational concepts—dominant maneuver, precision engagement, full-dimensional protection, and focused logistics—leading to *full-spectrum dominance*.

“Dominant maneuver” means applying superior force throughout “the breadth, depth, and height of the battlespace” to compel an enemy to either react from a position of disadvantage or quit. “Full-spectrum dominance” refers to overpowering an opponent across the entire range of military operations.

“By 2010,” the document says, “we should be able to change how we conduct the most intense joint operations. Instead of relying on massed forces and sequential operations, we will achieve massed effects in other ways.” If US forces have information superiority, precision targeting, greater range, effective self-protection, and increased results per weapon, they will be able to tailor combat power to specific objectives “with less need to mass forces physically than in the past.”

The objective of full-spectrum dominance is consistent with General Fogleman’s principle of “asymmetric power,” and the operational concepts point toward considerable reliance on airpower and space power. “Joint Vision 2010” puts primary attention on the capabilities that joint commanders will need to conduct joint operations. To its credit, the document is not preachy about the relationship of the services and the joint structure.

The current debate on military roles and missions began more than four years ago. We have been reminded repeatedly that the goal is what is best for the nation, not what is best for the individual services. We have been reminded also that the role of the services is to draw on their “core competencies” in order to provide combat capabilities to a joint force commander. Both of these propositions are sound.

Despite assurances to the contrary, however, the rise of jointness has been accompanied, inevitably, by some decline in the power of the services. In some instances, this is interpreted to mean that the services are of peripheral importance in the joint scheme of things, and that is not so.

As Maj. Gen. Charles D. Link, USAF assistant deputy chief of staff for Plans and Operations, said in a widely circulated memorandum, the services are the “keepers of operational art.” General Link, USAF’s point man on roles and missions for the past several years, expressed his concern about “the prevailing perception that the four services are somehow the complicating factors in an otherwise harmonious world.” He said that “there is no ‘joint’ competence which one acquires in place of ‘service’ competence” and that the services “are the fundamental sources of American military competence in the land, sea, air, and amphibious mediums.”

What jointness does—all jointness does—is integrate service capabilities. The combination yields a synergistic gain, but it adds no new working parts. That, too, is part of the joint vision. ■