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Abstract

(b)(3), (b)(6) is a career naval aviator and FA-18E pilot. MNFI organization was complicated before I arrived, and re-organization was a recurring event. We went from functional to the J-Staff numbering. In SPA, Strategy faced a difficult year because the JCP had already set the strategy, the close fight had the most alligators, and Maj Gen Robeson directed all energies into immediate actions. The National ID card was symptomatic of initiatives that failed, but that we learned from and will have to pursue again in the future. Assessments faced the huge challenge of political sensitivities in everything they did. FSEC followed a Northern Ireland model of thinking (talk to people, regardless). ISF C2 architecture poses huge challenges. Huge future issues include drawdown, moving out of the palace, and innumerable unknowns surrounding a huge number of very difficult issues.

This was a very good and insightful interview. It would be well worthwhile listening to the recording, but I don't have time to right now. The two main contributions are its discussion of initiatives that did not work and the huge problem set facing CJ5 going forward.

Interview

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I had six deployments doing Operation Southern Watch before 2003. These were presence missions, conducting tit for tat strikes on Iraqi AAA pieces, using laser or GPS guidance.

In March 2003, I was in the Coalition Air Operations Center at PSAB doing 12-hour watches. Carriers and Air Wings, admin changes. We lost an FA 18 to a Patriot Strike. WE handled Deep Strike with GPS and Close Air Support, along with laser guided Maverick rocket propelled or laser-guided bombs. We did not use many JDAMs.

In March 2007, I was designated for a strategist billet. The JMD billet was in Strategic Effects. The first day, they moved me over here, to SPA.

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Can you explain the re-organization of MNFI from functional staff sections to the J-Staff?

When we briefed General Petraeus that we were going to J-Staff numbering, he was ecstatic. He said he never understood who did what under the functional system of STRATEFF, STRATOPS, SPA, etc. When we briefed it to LTG Loveless, ARCENT, down in Kuwait, he was surprised because they had thought MNFI had figured out a better way and they were moving to the functional organization. When the names changed, that clarified roles and functions.

In other places, the CJ9 staff is small; here it is huge.

What has worked in CJ5 (SPA) over the last year, or not worked, and why?

The previous J5 (Robeson) was trying to find relevancy in the current fight. Last summer, when Robeson and many of us arrived, the Joint Campaign Plan had already been designed, written, and approved, under (b)(3), (b)(6) It signed in late July. It had four Lines of Operation.

The strategy was set. The MNFI commander was directing the fight through the BUA and taking a tactical look. He has a dramatic focus on the four LOO. You see the method. He does not allow people to give up. He keeps trying. He knows how hard to push. Eventually, progress happens.

The problem for SPA was what does Strategy do when the strategy is already set? Strategy should look out two years. The Director (Robeson) did not have the stomach for looking that far out. All the alligators were close in. This created frustration in a BUA-controlled world where the CG wanted action today. This theater doesn't permit long-range thinking. Strategy thus had to take on the projects that were just laying around, such as weapons cards, the ID card system, that had relevance but no Daddy. More long-term stuff did not meet what the CG needed. Now, a year later, violence is down. There are fewer rain clouds, and there is more opportunity to do strategy. The niche didn't come about . .

(b)(3), (b)(6) was the chief of Plans, and he has now moved on to be AFRICOM's chief planner. Plans had three teams, each headed by a Marine O-5 on a six month tour. (b)(3), (b)(6) coordinated them. He had spent time with MEU's and understood it. (b)(3), (b)(6) just took over Plans, and he came from working on 1025.

Assessments

Due to the politicization of the war, Assessments was the most important element over SPA over the last year. We had benchmark reports to do and testimony and 9010s. They did a great job with three recurring assessments for three recurring documents. They answered the question of what is happening, or what has happened. From February through May of 2007, the BCTs were flowing and we were establishing Joint Security Stations and COPs. We waited for the hard kinetics. The troops moved out in June and July. Only three to four weeks prior to the testimony. If it looks fragile now, it was really fragile then. We faced constant and weekly updates. Assessments did very good work looking at CLCs and the Sol. They had the Campaign Assessment Synchronization Board. We did a nice prep for testimony. Also had a DoS counterpart for a 9010 report. We worked with OPA on PRTs on how to assess a post-PIC province. How do you assess success in a province after we leave? That is a real

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problem [like Basra after the UK pulled out of the city]. The main measure we can use is economic. TF BSO is here to train technocrats. A JFCOM IDA group did look back at how to map Iraq.

Organization

STRATEFF and FSEC followed a northern Ireland model, which meant you talk to a lot of people you'd rather not talk with. STRATCOM had heavy Navy augmentation with 1.4a AOs and IO support.

When I arrived, STRATEFF was the dysfunctional section of the MNFI staff. It had grown so big so fast that the staff did not yet know what they were doing or were supposed to be doing.

For awhile, the CG was pushing Fusion Cells, and it was STRATEFF centric. We lacked expertise. The non-DOD surge took nine months. Now they are making things happen. The Agricultural Fusion Cell handled Date Palm Spraying and spare parts. Water resources illustrate vast improvements. We went from not having enough water, to not having enough chlorine to make the water safe, to having enough chlorine to open the pools. Nonetheless, making progress is "scary hard." We now have good chlorine stocks.

Have there been things we've failed to do? Have there been things we could not accomplish?

Some things run into insurmountable obstacles for such reasons as Gol corruption or greed that makes it impossible to make progress. One example is the National ID card program. We sought every way we could think of to implement a national program. We looked at passports, at the personal distribution system (the ration card). We pushed and pushed. We looked at using license plates as a basis for a national identification system. What we found was that Iraqis kept multiple license plates in their homes for each vehicle and that corruption plagues the ration system. Whether it is weapons registration, a census, or any other population control measure, they all face endless barriers getting personal accountability.

With the Sol, we are trying to keep them employed.

ISF Command and Control Architecture.

A team was working on ISF C2 architecture in Marcy 2007. Now it is on the docket for the fourth time. Rubai is on schedule with it again. There are two different lines of communications with the IA and the IP. The MoI wants their piece of the C2 structure and the governors want their piece. All of this creates problems. The peshmerga evokes the problem of how do you implement crisis situation command and control. We're trying to use existing structures. We have parallel structures, through the operations centers. We need buy in from disparate organizations. They fear giving up held knowledge. We are focused on improving communications. We think we're close to the ISF architecture. We need a road map. We have in mind setting up corps headquarters in the regional operations centers as C2 nodes.

Some initiatives seem fruitless, but we seem to gain knowledge or new leads from the efforts.

We gain knowledge and visibility that offers other opportunities. They also are learning experiences. Maybe the weapons ID will offer a path forward on this.

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As you leave, what are the top issues your successor will have to deal with?

- 1) Drawdown. The JMD to fill billets is a huge problem because we're using a JMD to fight a war, but the focus and level of the war is constantly changing. The JMD is designed for a static, steady-state peacetime environment. We need to change billets every six months by specialty and pay grade as the conflict change. Changing the JMD is an 18-24 months process. By the time we've changed the JMD to reflect the required changes, the requirements themselves have changed and we're constantly behind the requirement.
- 2) Giving up the Palace without losing effectiveness. This will happen in three months, but where we are going to go is TBD.
- 3) We have a new, smart admiral in charge. We have to make sure the Joint Campaign Plan moves forward. What will happen on 1 January 2009 under the umbrella of a SOFA has never been attempted before. We will have 100k plus troops and as many contractors along with the Gulf Region Division, the PRTs, and the ePRTs. This is a less comfortable situation and challenge that what I faced over the last year. Now we're discussing a Memorandum of Understanding. Does that mean we won't leave chapter seven? There are a lot of unknown unknowns.
- 4) We thought we faced the perfect storm this summer, but there is a long list of unresolved issues. So many unknowns will be very, very difficult to deal with. Last year we knew many things: MRAPs, CERP. Now, we're entering a more constrained environment, needing the SF/SOFA, dealing with the security LOO, the unintended consequences, protecting contractors, new embassies and provincial elections. We're very good at the first elections, but how do we do second elections?

Has indirect fire impacted operations in the IZ?

No. I've had closer calls in an aircraft, dealing with surface to air fire. It did not degrade operations. IT caused some fatigue and induced stress. It was interesting to see mission reaction, but the reason to wear the uniform is the love of adventure and excitement. The non-military did not sign up for this, granted, but pilots learn to deal with people shooting at you, and we learned to use radars and physics to minimize the threat.

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