
Support to Military Operations

The Evolution and Relevance of Joint Intelligence Centers

[James D. Marchio](#)

The Armed Forces Staff College instruction manual—known to many as the “purple book”—reads:

One of the most common problems in joint operations is that of intelligence. The preferred solution lies in the establishment of a joint intelligence center. Information from all sources is fed into this central collecting point where it is collated, evaluated, and disseminated. Such an agency benefits not only the joint force commander, but all major commanders involved by currently posting them on the latest enemy information available. [\[1\]](#)

The purple book's publication date was not 1992, following the successful employment of joint intelligence centers (JICs) during the Gulf War. Its prescient prescription predated that war by over four decades. The pressing question is: Why did it take so long for JICs to become widely accepted and used in the US military? And what does the tale of the JICs tell us about how coordinated intelligence might look as the United States pursues the global war on terrorism?

“[Despite occasional trials,] the idea of JICs did not fully take root until the 1991 Gulf War.”

The US military used JICs in several theaters of operations during World War II and tried to resurrect them on the eve of the Korean War. But the idea did not fully take root until the Gulf War. The historical record demonstrates that the birth, death, and resurrection of the concept of joint intelligence centers were tied to the changing fortunes of the larger interservice and interagency community, the evolving nature of armed conflict during the last 60 years, and the cyclical political and budgetary environment in which post–World War II US military forces have developed and operated. These same factors augur well for the longevity of JICs as they enter their second decade of continuous service.

Despite their growth in size and importance, JICs have not been subjected to extensive scholarly study. Until the Gulf War began in 1991, they were mentioned only in passing even in official histories and post–World War II memoirs of intelligence professionals. And even then, *only one JIC—Joint Intelligence Center/Pacific Ocean*

Area—was ever discussed at length. [2] *Although scholarly interest has expanded in the wake of the Gulf War, the resulting literature has failed to fully acknowledge, much less examine, the antecedents of the nine Department of Defense (DoD) JICs that have arisen since 1991.* [3]

Origins

The idea for a joint intelligence center arose in March 1942. The commandant of the US Marine Corps proposed such an organization in a letter to the commander-in-chief of the United States Fleet, citing the probability of active operations in the Pacific area in the future. The commandant's proposal garnered support, but was not immediately implemented. Nonetheless, it did spur the creation four months later of an intelligence center at Pearl Harbor, which proved to be a stepping-stone to what would become the first true JIC—Joint Intelligence Center/Pacific Ocean Area (JICPOA)—the following year. [4]

The impetus to create a JIC came, in part, from real and perceived intelligence failures at Pearl Harbor. Prior to World War II, military intelligence had been the prerogative of the individual services, with the Office of Naval Intelligence and the War Department's Military Intelligence Division conducting collection and analytical operations. [5] However, Gen. George C. Marshall, the army chief of staff, and Adm. Ernest J. King, chief of naval operations, acknowledged that national intelligence was fragmented and that multiple agencies were producing intelligence without coordination. They became leading proponents of joint solutions.

Other factors played key roles as well. The conduct of the war in the Pacific and Europe during 1943 and 1944 drove the push for joint intelligence. As US forces transitioned from largely defensive to offensive operations, it became clear that extensive interservice cooperation was required. The island-hopping campaign in the Pacific and allied operations in the Mediterranean and Europe emphasized large-scale joint operations that, in turn, required joint intelligence. As one senior naval intelligence officer observed about the central Pacific: “As we move westward the Army part is becoming more and more important. We need Army men we can expose to Ultra [sensitive intercepted communications intelligence] and who [can provide] . . . assistance in Army Order of Battle, in Army Air Force Order of Battle, and if they have such a thing Army traffic analysis.” [6] Expanded land-based air operations and massive bombing in both theaters likewise generated requirements for target intelligence and post-strike analysis.

Moreover, the availability of new intelligence sources increased the need for joint intelligence exploitation. Little intelligence other than Ultra was available in 1942, but the volume of captured documents, prisoner interrogations, and aerial photographs increased greatly as operations began in the Solomon Islands and North Africa. This new intelligence brought its own problems: duplication of effort, competition over collection resources, delayed or unsuitable dissemination, and conflicting assessments over enemy losses. [7]

In the Pacific Theater

A joint intelligence center, according to the Joint Staff Glossary, is a combatant command's intelligence center, which is responsible for providing and producing the intelligence required to support that headquarters as well as the command's components, subordinate joint forces and elements, and the national Intelligence Community. Beyond this formal definition, JICs have historically been characterized as joint-service and often multi-agency in composition. Likewise they have been synonymous with all-source intelligence production and focal points for theater intelligence support that benefits national as well as tactical-level customers.

JICPOA's establishment on 7 September 1943 could not have been better timed. Charged to collect, collate, evaluate, and disseminate strategic and tactical intelligence for the commander-in-chief, Pacific ocean areas, JICPOA provided intelligence products—including area handbooks, maps, and intelligence summaries—that supported wide-ranging combat operations over the next two years. As one source noted: “JICPOA became a factory geared to the production of all types of intelligence material and staffed by 1,800 persons in Hawaii and hundreds of others on detached duty all over the Pacific.” In fact, JICPOA produced on average 2 million sheets of printed intelligence and more than 150,000 photographic prints each week.^[8]

The cooperation that JICPOA fostered among the services and the planners and operators it supported was as important as the intelligence it produced. Lessons learned from combat operations on Tarawa in 1943, for instance, were rapidly assimilated into plans for the battle for Kwajalein and Majuro in the Marshall Islands, in large part because of the close cooperation between JICPOA and the Pacific command's plans and operations division.^[9] Integration was enhanced by the production of a target graphic acceptable to ground, naval, and air forces. Contemporaries noted that this graphic was “one example which demonstrates that a theater joint intelligence center will pay dividends which are in excess of those received from unilateral theater intelligence divisions.”^[10]

Yet perhaps the greatest value added by JICPOA came from the multiple intelligence disciplines fused within the joint intelligence center. As the official history of the center observes:

The importance of this combination, in one room, and under a unified direction, of all the varied requisite source[s] of intelligence, backed by two world wide communications services, and able to draw on the multitudinous source[s] of JICPOA can hardly be overestimated . . . Moreover, it was found that Army and Navy information supplemented each other in many ways and that the result was frequently much greater than the sum of its parts. Experience so gained is the basis for the conviction that neither the Army nor the Navy can maintain independent intelligence necessary to produce intelligence to support planning for operations. Liaison and exchange of information is not enough and only when the intelligence organizations are fused together in one insoluble whole can higher echelon intelligence exert its best efforts.^[11]

Following JICPOA's Lead

Joint service and combined intelligence organizations emerged in other theaters as well. In Europe, a joint intelligence committee—comprising one representative each from allied forces headquarters and the navy and air staffs—was established in 1943. While possessing neither the resources nor the ability to fully integrate all-source information, it prepared assessments of possible enemy actions based on proposed operational plans and rendered decisions on joint intelligence questions. The demands and fruits of joint combat operations in North Africa and the Mediterranean as well as the approach of D-Day forced even greater integration of analytical and collection assets. The Combined Services Detailed Interrogation Center and the Mediterranean Photo Intelligence Center were created; so was a joint intelligence committee for the supreme commander, Allied Expeditionary Force, as well as a JIC for the Africa–Middle East theater.^[12] Elsewhere, the Joint Intelligence Center/Atlantic was established.^[13]

But JICs were neither embraced to the same extent nor used in the same manner in all theaters. Strong service

intelligence elements and opposition from key staff officers accounted for their absence in the South West Pacific and South East Asia theaters.[\[14\]](#)

During the war, the push for joint intelligence went beyond JICs to the national level. Joint US Army-Navy Intelligence Collection Agencies or JICAs were approved and operational in four different theaters by the war's end. Originally established by Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) directive in August 1943, JICAs were formed in the North African (later the Mediterranean), Middle East (later Africa–Middle East), India-Burma, and China theaters. These agencies were attached to the “respective theater headquarters as a separate staff section and charged with the coordination of nonoperational intelligence activities within the theater and the collecting and forwarding to Washington of intelligence desired by the War and Navy Departments.”[\[15\]](#) Like JICs, JICAs were praised for making the best use of limited resources, avoiding duplication, and reducing operational expenditures.[\[16\]](#) Other joint efforts at the national level included an attempt to establish a Joint Intelligence Agency as well as multiple joint intelligence boards and organizations.[\[17\]](#)

Postwar Downsizing

The end of World War II led to a rapid force demobilization that also affected intelligence organizations. JICPOA and the Africa–Middle East theater's JIC were among the first casualties. Most other joint intelligence organizations—even at the national level—met a similar fate.[\[18\]](#)

The future of JICs became intertwined with efforts to create a unified Department of Defense and a single national intelligence organization. The bureaucratic struggles that shaped the form and authority of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) profoundly influenced the environment in which joint intelligence operated for the next four decades.

As Amy Zegart argues in her study *Flawed by Design*, “the JCS that emerged in 1947 was weak by design. It had no primary budget authority, no chairman, and no action-forcing voting procedures, and it offered members no structural incentives to think in joint terms.”[\[19\]](#) Service differences over decisionmaking and control of resources lay at the heart of this design. While the War Department strongly supported expanding JCS jurisdiction and power and centralizing its decisionmaking under a single head, the navy opposed these efforts, preferring to retain the more limited and less structured wartime JCS organization. President Truman reportedly was forced to compromise on the design of the JCS or risk scuttling military unification entirely.[\[20\]](#) Bitter struggles over roles and missions exacerbated the interservice differences over command and control of resources.[\[21\]](#)

Attempt at Resurrecting JICs

Despite this internecine fighting, resurrecting JICs at each of the unified commands was discussed between 1949 and 1951. Studies done at the new Armed Forces Staff College and elsewhere cited the value of JICs, arguing that they should form the basis of theater intelligence support. Rear Adm. Thomas Inglis, deputy director of the Office of Naval Intelligence, told an armed forces staff audience that “these organizations proved themselves almost indispensable to the thorough planning and successful execution of our many successful operations during World War II.”[\[22\]](#) JICs offered numerous advantages, according to their supporters. They made the best use of limited, specialized, highly trained resources, like translators. Joint, integrated working relationships also led to fuller exchanges of information and intelligence—including sensitive communications intelligence—and

better analysis. Collection, targeting, and battle damage assessment, it was argued, were best performed in theater agencies like JICs because they facilitated coordination of resources and assessments so that the “strategic effect of an attack” could be determined. Intelligence production and dissemination benefited as well from economies of scale and less duplication.[\[23\]](#)

A proposal to create JICs at the unified and theater commands emerged from the JCS Joint Intelligence Group in 1949 as an annex to the Joint Mobilization Plan. Annex authors noted the desirability of establishing “Joint Intelligence Centers in Theaters of War and Unified Commands for collection, production, and dissemination of intelligence.” An ad hoc committee established in August 1950 at the behest of the director of naval intelligence to make recommendations on the establishment of JICs added support. A month later, the director of the joint staff sent out a message to the commands requesting their views on the JIC proposal.[\[24\]](#)

The unified commands overwhelmingly supported the effort to revive JICs. Commanders-in-chief for the Atlantic, Far East, and Pacific were all in favor, with the latter two citing the JICPOA experience during the Second World War as testament to the JIC concept. Only the commander-in-chief for the Caribbean objected, viewing JICs as wasteful and impractical in peacetime. Therefore it was no surprise that the director of the joint staff concurred with the recommendation that JICs be established. By April 1951, the proposal to create JICs at each of the unified and specified commands was forwarded to the Joint Chiefs for approval.[\[25\]](#)

But what had been on a fast track now came to a screeching halt. It is unclear why, but the Joint Secretariat returned the JIC proposal, noting only that it had been “withdrawn from consideration by the JCS.” The following month, the army chief of staff called for the creation of joint intelligence divisions—vice joint intelligence centers—at the theater commands.[\[26\]](#) This proposal was referred to the Joint Staff Intelligence Group for comment and further development. The draft response provided two weeks later spurred only minor discussion of the vehicle by which the JCS should establish joint intelligence divisions, not the proposal itself. Consequently, the recommendation to establish joint intelligence divisions was forwarded to the Joint Chiefs for approval. During July and August 1951, the proposal's fortunes became integrally tied to the completion of the Joint Action Armed Forces manual. How joint intelligence would be organized was outlined in the third chapter of this doctrinal publication.[\[27\]](#)

In September 1951, JCS endorsed joint intelligence divisions, not JICs. The focus of the divisions was clearly to be on planning and policy. Guidance went only as far as positing that, “in large commands, it may be desirable to establish intelligence agencies responsible to the joint intelligence staff division. These agencies may render intelligence services which lend themselves to centralization at the joint command level.”[\[28\]](#)

In that spirit, the Joint Operational Intelligence Agency/Pacific Command was established in fiscal year 1953 with the goal of maximizing efficiency by integrating the Pacific Fleet's Intelligence Division (N-2) with the Commander-in-Chief/Pacific's Joint Intelligence Division (J-2). This joint organization lasted only three years, however, before it was dissolved and a separate J-2 and N-2 were reestablished.[\[29\]](#) It was nearly four decades before a JIC comparable in mission and structure to that proposed in 1949 was constituted.

Cold War Years

For the remainder of the 1950s, joint intelligence centers were discussed only occasionally and not at the high levels that characterized debate during 1950–51. Lack of service intelligence cooperation was evident during the

Korean War. From the Far East Command to America's signals intelligence community, service infighting was intense.[\[30\]](#) These problems ultimately led to the creation of the National Security Agency (NSA) in 1952, unifying signals intelligence efforts in one organization.[\[31\]](#)

The nature of conflict during the height of the Cold War played a critical role in reducing both the need for and support for JICs. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles's advocacy of the nuclear strategy of “massive retaliation” marked the heyday of the Strategic Air Command and service dominance by the US Air Force. Who required joint intelligence when nuclear war could be won by a single service with bombers and missiles? Or so it seemed. Thus, it was not by accident that the only joint intelligence center established during the 1950s was in support of the US Formosa Defense Command, created to deter and respond to Chinese communist ground, sea, and air attacks against the island of Formosa.[\[32\]](#)

In addition, while World War II combat operations had forced the pooling of all intelligence sources in organizations like JICPOA, Cold War worries over the potential for compromise and loss of scarce sensitive intelligence sources had the opposite effect. Even during the Korean War, army intelligence officers were barred by security regulations from merging sensitive communications intelligence with other forms of intelligence. Thus the role for joint intelligence, when advocated, was circumscribed, with its value seen primarily in technical areas.[\[33\]](#) Nonetheless, continuing problems with duplicative efforts and departmental bias did—despite strong service resistance—lead to the formation of the joint service Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in 1961.[\[34\]](#)

Budgetary and political factors further ensured that joint intelligence would remain undeveloped. The fight for scarce defense dollars during the post–Korean War drawdown intensified service parochialism. At the same time, growing army and navy budget shares from the mid-1950s through much of the 1960s—at the expense of the US Air Force—reduced the financial imperative to consolidate intelligence operations in joint activities.[\[35\]](#) Moreover, the fact that the services, not the joint commands, controlled the funding left the unified commands and their intelligence organs largely powerless. On the political front, the 1953 and 1958 Defense Reorganization Acts were a clear signal that the joint community needed to be strengthened. But these measures, much like 1947 National Security Act, did not go far enough in empowering the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the unified commanders and were undermined by loopholes that permitted extensive service influence.[\[36\]](#)

Thinking on joint intelligence matters stayed relatively stagnant—wording in the 1976 Armed Forces Staff College instruction manual, for example, was nearly the same as in the 1958 edition.[\[37\]](#) Joint intelligence divisions—not JICs—clearly won out as the primary joint intelligence organizational structure for the remainder of the Cold War.

Vietnam and After

Even the Vietnam War—a conflict involving air, ground, and maritime operations—did not revive JICs. Vietnam was seen and waged by the services largely as three separate wars. Flush with war dollars and ignored for the most part by Congress, the services continued to rely on their own, vice joint, intelligence. The

Defining Terms

Joint intelligence divisions focus on standardizing procedures and preventing duplication of effort by emphasizing cooperation and coordination among the services, but leave intelligence analysis and production to the service components.

intelligence chief for the Military Assistance Command/Vietnam (MACV) lamented that, “in this conflict, all US intelligence organizations were not centralized under the MACV commander.”[\[38\]](#) Only an under-resourced in-country Combined Intelligence Center served to provide limited intelligence outside service channels.[\[39\]](#)

The defense drawdown in the wake of the Vietnam War renewed interest in joint intelligence centers, but progress was limited and short lived. In 1973, the Pacific Command examined the concept for a Pacific theater joint intelligence center.[\[40\]](#) Monetary and personnel savings were the primary considerations cited in the subsequent creation of the Intelligence Center/Pacific (IPAC) in Honolulu. Advocates also touted the benefits offered by more centralized control at the joint staff level through the establishment of a joint subordinate operational command under the J-2 for the timely production of current, estimative, target, and other substantive intelligence reports.

Beset by numerous problems, however, IPAC never matured into what had been envisioned by its creators. The long period of incorporation of the new joint intelligence center allowed the individual services to subvert the growth process. Moreover, the massive budget increases in the early years of the Reagan administration removed a prime stimulant for IPAC and other JICs. IPAC was relegated to functioning primarily as the Pacific commander's intelligence staff. The reality was that the service component commander often had intelligence production capacity greater than the “capacity which exists at the higher joint force command level.”[\[41\]](#)

Changing Nature of Conflict

In the decade following Vietnam, the nature of conflict did little to foster joint operations. The US military was still focused on deterring and constraining the Soviet Union through nuclear parity and arms control. At the same time, while many of the significant US military engagements during this period—the Mayaguez incident off Cambodia (1975), Desert One in Iran (1980), and the invasions of Grenada (1983) and Panama (1989)—highlighted the broken nature of joint operations, their limited duration never generated the demand for daily, fused intelligence that only a JIC could provide.[\[42\]](#)

This situation began to change, however, as the United States became increasingly involved in supporting the Salvadoran government against insurgency and aiding the anticommunist Contras in Nicaragua. The Central America Joint Intelligence Team (CAJIT) was created in 1982 at DIA. Support came from the DIA director and the JCS chairman, who recognized the need for all-source, fused intelligence. This organization brought together close to 100 analysts from all of the services as well as CIA and NSA in the basement of the Pentagon. In part because of the lack of a theater-level JIC and problems spawned by compartmented programs and activities run at the national level, CAJIT provided tactical-level intelligence to Southern Command and US allies in Central America, particularly in El Salvador, from Washington.[\[43\]](#)

Rebirth

By the late 1980s, geopolitical, fiscal, and military factors began to coalesce in ways not seen since World War II to facilitate the reemergence of JICs. The collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War dramatically changed the political landscape and the military threats confronted by the United States. The dissolution of the Soviet bloc and improved superpower relations opened the way for regional conflicts without quick escalation to the brink of nuclear holocaust. At the same time, the decreased Soviet threat spurred an outcry for a peace dividend and a force drawdown. Despite new and more varied threats in the post– Cold War

world, intelligence resources diminished as part of the broader military force reduction.[\[44\]](#)

The passage of the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act was equally important for the resurrection of JICs. The act bolstered the power of the JCS chairman by making him the principal military adviser to the president. It also improved the composition and administration of the joint staff, instituted joint professional military education requirements, and mandated that joint officers be promoted at the same rate as their service contemporaries. Lastly, the Goldwater-Nichols Act granted the unified and specified combatant commanders more autonomy and authority.[\[45\]](#) A stronger JCS chairman and more powerful commanders in turn generated more robust intelligence requirements—requirements best met by a joint staff J-2 and a JIC. In fact, the JCS chairman, General Colin Powell, was instrumental in supporting efforts to create the J-2 position within DIA.[\[46\]](#)

In 1991, US operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, in response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, helped accelerate and institutionalize the emerging changes in joint operations and the intelligence organizations that supported them. The challenges confronted by the military intelligence community at the outset of the Gulf War were reminiscent of those that JICs were created to overcome during World War II. The scale and nature of combat operations requiring coordination of air, ground, and maritime assets went beyond anything encountered since the early 1940s. The Intelligence Community, according to a congressional after-action study, “initially was not prepared to cope with the volume of intelligence requirements to support the large scale of Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM.” This report noted that early on—much like the beginning of World War II—“various agencies and staffs produced a very high level of duplicative, even contradictory, intelligence to support deploying and deployed forces.” Thus, “both JCS and CENTCOM recognized a need for some order in the DoD intelligence community, consisting of more than 30 producers.”[\[47\]](#) Admiral Mike McConnell, who was the joint staff J-2 at the time, explained: “We set up [an] all-source fusion center in the Pentagon in support of the US Central Command. We had to do that because the CENTCOM [Central Command] didn't have one (a JIC) of its own that could support enough people.”[\[48\]](#)

JICs thus reappeared—first at the national level and shortly thereafter in theater. Led by Admiral McConnell, the National Military Joint Intelligence Center (initially called the DoD Joint Intelligence Center) was established in August 1990, two weeks after Iraqi tanks had rolled into Kuwait. Job number one was to provide a “single, integrated DoD intelligence position to national decisionmakers and the theater commander.”[\[49\]](#) The JIC set up at CENTCOM had a similar charter, albeit focused on integrating national and component intelligence to support subordinate commands. Postwar studies noted that the “JIC acted as the clearinghouse for intelligence requirements and as the collection manager for theater assets,” using “scarce theater assets effectively by eliminating duplicative efforts, and ensur[ing] component and subunified command intelligence requirements were addressed by national elements.”[\[50\]](#)

In the months following DESERT STORM, JICs were established at each of the unified commands. Joint Intelligence Center/Pacific Command was the first, in July 1991. Joint Intelligence Center/Transportation was the last, in December 1994.[\[51\]](#)

Breaking the Demobilization Pattern

Beyond the success that JICs enjoyed during the Gulf War, other factors ensured that they would not disappear as they had after World War II. One driver was the continuing downsizing of the American military, begun after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Concomitant DoD budget cuts forced the wise use of diminishing intelligence

resources. Partially in response, the assistant secretary of defense for command, control, communication, and intelligence (ASD/C3I) directed a move toward delegated intelligence production in March 1991. His restructuring plan took power and resources away from the service intelligence commands and funneled them into centralized and consolidated theater staffs—JICs.[\[52\]](#)

The nature of American military operations during the remainder of the 1990s demonstrated the need for joint intelligence. Command JICs were well postured to support planning and combat operations in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, as well as missions in the “no fly zone” over Iraq. Even non-combat-related programs, such as the Partnership for Peace initiative involving many former Soviet-bloc countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, benefited from theater JICs, which knew the targets of engagement intimately.

Finally, the continued viability of the Goldwater-Nichols Act served to create an environment in which JICs survived, if not flourished. Unlike the aftermath of the 1947 National Security Act, Congress—led by Representative Ike Skelton—remained actively involved in advocating “jointness” and pushing for reform within the Intelligence Community. While little concrete action resulted from the intelligence reform movement of the mid-1990s, congressional interest and involvement helped prevent scarce intelligence resources from being diverted to individual service accounts.[\[53\]](#)

JICs in the Post-9/11 World

The threat from global terrorism since the attacks in New York and Washington in 2001 and the subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq make a retreat from joint ventures less likely than at any time in the past. The nature of conflict today suggests that JICs—with some modifications—are likely to be strengthened, not replaced. Counterterrorism operations require specific, tailored, near-real-time, integrated intelligence products. These products are built from all-source intelligence and, increasingly, law enforcement data and other forms of information not previously used within the Intelligence Community. Intelligence produced to support counterterrorism operations requires new expertise and actors as well. From the Department of Homeland Security to multiple foreign liaison services and “red teams,” these new players are critical to assessing terrorist threats, identifying vulnerabilities, and providing sound recommendations to drive risk mitigation measures and decisions. The good news is that JICs are “fusion centers” by design, charged with integrating multiple streams of information. They have performed this function historically and are well-structured to do so in the future, incorporating traditional and non-traditional intelligence sources and analytical expertise. In fact, JICPAC currently operates a fusion center that conducts current situation analysis, collection management, and long-range assessments and threat estimates.



President Bush receiving a briefing in the JIC at CENTCOM on 26 March 2003.

JIC-level analytical expertise is particularly critical for today's counterterrorism operations. While transnational organizations, such as al-Qa'ida, are best tracked and assessed at the national level, the increasing trend toward franchise terrorist operations and splinter groups has reinforced the need for counterterrorism expertise and databases at the theater level. This same requirement has driven the establishment of Joint Interagency Coordination Groups at the theater commands, bringing together multiple organizations besides the military to plan and execute counterterrorism operations.[\[54\]](#)

Beyond conflict, the emerging “Lily Pad” basing strategy being advocated by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld to support the war on terrorism and other modern military operations portends a significant role for theater JICs. The strategy envisions replacing large established installations in Western Europe and the Far East with small bases closer to potential crisis areas. While it may make sense to reduce the US footprint in areas like Germany, Japan, and Korea, downsizing or eliminating theater JICs does not. The regional expertise of JIC personnel and interaction with key liaison services will be integral to the support of forces deployed to the bare bones forward bases envisioned for Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and Africa.[\[55\]](#)

The overall fortunes of the joint community since Operation IRAQI FREEDOM began in 2003 also favor JIC longevity. The prominent and highly effective role played by Central Command's JIC in orchestrating national, service, and coalition intelligence support during IRAQI FREEDOM demonstrated once again the value of JICs. Just as in World War II and the Gulf War, JICs excelled at fusing intelligence and minimizing duplicative and conflicting products. Other JICs—especially at the Pacific Command—played a key role in backing up Central Command's targeting efforts and picking up areas and issues that the command could not cover because of workload and priorities. Much of this was done electronically, sparing CENTCOM's staff the logistical burden of personnel augmentation that occurred during the Gulf War.

The measures taken to consolidate authority and functions under the newly created Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence (USD/I) are another auspicious sign for JICs. As the overseer of all DoD intelligence resources,

the USD/I is in a position to ensure that history does not repeat itself by preventing service intelligence elements from potentially backing out of joint commitments or lessening their support to JICs. Indeed, the USD/I is responsible for “ensuring that intelligence activities of DoD are conducted jointly, as appropriate.”[\[56\]](#)

Finally, budgetary and political factors augur well for JICs. The growing US budget deficit—more than \$450 billion for FY-2003 alone—will force spending cutbacks that inevitably will affect the military and intelligence communities. Joint intelligence historically has been recognized as more efficient and cost effective than separate efforts. But unlike the past where shrinking dollars sometimes drove parochial service equities to take priority, today's political environment will not tolerate such actions. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and Congress are pushing to extend “jointness” beyond the battlefield to training and acquisition.[\[57\]](#) The passage of the 2004 National Security Intelligence Reform Act—which directs the Intelligence Community to better integrate its efforts and emulate the joint officer management policies established by the Goldwater-Nichols Act—should further strengthen the “joint” intelligence environment.

Potential Hurdles Ahead

Optimism over the future of JICs, however, must be tempered by the recognition that old as well as new challenges loom. With requirements to support long-term military and peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Balkans, operational tempo may drive the military services to reduce their support to joint intelligence organizations at the theater and national levels in favor of meeting their own unit needs. Records show that some services have already cut their fill rates for joint assignments because of the continuing need to fill operational deployments.

Ironically, an even more significant challenge emerges from the information revolution and intelligence reform efforts. Reform advocates note that the intelligence organizational structures established to support operations during the Cold War are antiquated and should be replaced. The information revolution, they argue, requires that commands and agencies flatten their structures and improve horizontal integration. Technology has helped lower and remove boundaries between organizations permitting task-oriented networking. In this light, JICs may be seen as an unnecessary intermediate level because information technology and increased communications bandwidth has made direct support from national-level intelligence agencies to deployed units and task forces more feasible.[\[58\]](#)

Theater-level JICs may also be portrayed as inadequate for the new transnational threats faced by the United States. In the 21st century, groups and actors are seldom confined to one theater or area of responsibility. The Terrorist Threat Integration Center (now the National Counterterrorist Center)—with representatives from multiple intelligence and law enforcement agencies—may be seen as the intelligence template of choice for the ongoing war against terrorism.[\[59\]](#)

Historical archives and operational records attest to the value and resiliency of JICs. Despite the passage of six decades and a revolution in military affairs, the basic structure and functions of JICs are sound and capable of folding in new sources and expertise to support the global war on terrorism or a future regional conflict. JICs, as observed about World War II, provide integrated theater-level production that “prevents incomplete coverage” and “needless duplication” while giving the theater commander “a single intelligence estimate, not ones from each service which may be divergent and require further study and coordination.”[\[60\]](#) This lesson was reinforced during the 1991 Gulf War. In Admiral McConnell's words: “What we learned in building our own

JIC in the basement of the Pentagon was the need for a robust JIC with Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, civilians, Imagery, SIGINT, NSA, CIA, and targeting. Put that all together doing all-source fusing.”^[61] Intelligence Community officials and others seeking transformation ought to consider the historical record closely before discarding JICs in favor of higher-level fusion centers or ad hoc task forces and working groups.

^[1]Armed Forces Staff College, *Staff Officers' Manual for Joint Operations*, 1948–49, Record Group (RG) 218 (Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff), Central Decimal File (CDF) 1948–50, CCS 370.21 (3-16-44), B. P. Pt. 1 & 2: 26, National Archives, Washington, DC (hereafter abbreviated NAWDC).

^[2]W. J. Holmes, *Double-Edged Secrets: U.S. Naval Intelligence Operations in the Pacific during World War II* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1979); “Narrative, Combat Intelligence Center, Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area,” 8 November 1945, SRH-20, Entry 9002, RG 457 (National Security Agency), NAWDC; “Narrative, Combat Intelligence Center, Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area,” in Ronald H. Specter, ed., *Listening to the Enemy: Key Documents on the Role of Communications Intelligence in the War with Japan* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1988). For the most recent and in-depth study of JICPOA, see Jeffrey M. Moore, *Spies for Nimitz: Joint Intelligence in the Pacific War* (Washington, DC: Naval Institute Press, 2003).

^[3]William Walls and Lynwood Metts, “The Changing Role of Intelligence: Perspectives from the Pacific Theater,” *Defense Intelligence Journal* 1(1992): 61–74; Russell G. Swenson, “The Warning and Crisis Support Functions in Regional Joint Intelligence Centers,” *Defense Intelligence Journal* 1(1992): 81–93. Although seven theses have been written on JICs at the Joint Military Intelligence College (JMIC) since 1991, only one—Alfred M. Barros, “Joint Intelligence Center Pacific (JIC-PAC) Peacetime Intelligence Support to the Pacific Command: A Study of Intelligence Readiness,” 1995—explored the historical roots of JICs in any detail. The other works largely address the current operation and use of JICs. See Douglas R. Lucia, “Utilization of the Gulf War Joint Intelligence Center–Imagery Tasking Cell,” 1996; Che V. Russell, “Joint Intelligence Centers: Handling Transnational Issues,” 2001; Garry W. Dilday, “Joint Intelligence Centers: Improving Support to Warfighters Below the JTF Level,” 1996; James P. Cummings, “Strategic Joint Intelligence Center: Did Its Construction Meet Congressional Intent?” 1993; Christian P. Westermann, “Defense Reorganization: Evolution and Reformation of Defense Intelligence,” 1991; and Robert D. Folker Jr., “Intelligence Analysis in Theater, Joint Intelligence Centers: An Experiment in Applying Structured Methods,” Occasional Paper 7, (Washington, DC: JMIC, 2000).

^[4]US Pacific and Pacific Ocean Areas, “Re-port of Intelligence Activities in the Pacific Ocean Areas,” 15 October 1945, Joint Forces Staff College Archives, Norfolk, VA, (hereafter JFSCA), 3. Also, Holmes, 111.

^[5]Lt. Col. John C. Marchant, USAF, “The Case for the Establishment of a Theater Joint Intelligence Center,” (Thesis, Armed Forces Staff College, December 1948), 1–2, JFSCA.

^[6]Holmes to Capt. Smith-Hutton, 20 April 1944, “JICPOA/F-22 File of Administration, Letters, and Correspondence, January 1942–September 1945,” Entry 9024, SRMD-009, RG 457, NAWDC.

[7] Marchant, 17; Specter, 157, 161. Indeed, until the Battle of Midway, communications intercepts completely dominated combat intelligence; however, when action shifted to the Solomons, there was a need for additional and different types of intelligence. Holmes, 110–11, 130.

[8] Holmes, 215, and “Report of Intelligence Activities in the Pacific Ocean Areas,” 6.

[9] Holmes, 157–58.

[10] Marchant, 15. These successes led in part to the establishment of the Advanced Intelligence Center (AIC) on Guam on 1 March 1945.

[11] Specter, 166.

[12] Joint Intelligence Center/Africa-Middle East (JICAME). Marchant, 3, 6–7.

[13] *Ibid*, 17.

[14] *Ibid*, 9–11; “Duplication in Pacific Naval Intelligence Organization,” 27 Oct 1943, JICPOA/F-22 File of Administration, Let-ters/Correspondence, January 1942–September 1945, RG 457-Entry 9024, SRMD-009, 397–98, NAWDC. An excellent discussion of the successes as well as shortcomings of joint intelligence efforts during World War II is contained in Wyman H. Packard, *A Century of US Naval Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 1996), 225–40.

[15] JICAs were deactivated between August and December 1945. See JCS 441/4, “Liquidation of Joint US Army-Navy Intelligence Collection Agencies in Mediterranean, Africa-Middle East and India-Burma Theaters,” JCS CDF 1942–45, CCS 334 Joint Intelligence Collection Agency (2-17-43), and JCS 441/5, 31 Oct 1945, “Liquidation of Joint US Army-Navy Intelligence Collection Agency in the China Theater,” RG 218, NAWDC. JICAs were assisted by the Joint Intelligence Agency Reception Center (JIARC), which coordinated all administrative instructions and support; more importantly, it coordinated all requests for information to be collected by the JICAs. “Organization and Operations of JICA-JIARC,” 1 August 1945, RG 319 (Records of Office of Assistant Chief of Staff, G2, Intelligence), Historical Studies and Related Records of G-2 Components, Foreign Branch, MIS, Box 19, NAWDC. See also Packard, 227–29.

[16] “Organization and Operations of JICA—JIARC,” 1 August 1945, 6–7.

[17] Examples of other joint efforts included the Joint Intelligence Study Publishing Board (JISPB), the Joint Army-Navy Assessment Committee (JANAC), and the Joint Electronics Information Agency (JEIA). The JISPB commissioned a series of Joint Army-Navy Intelligence Studies (JANIS) that provided basic topographical data on likely operational areas. The JANAC was convened in late 1942 and operated throughout the war to provide more accurate estimates of enemy naval strength and eliminate service disputes over enemy naval and merchant losses. JEIA was created in 1943 to speed the dissemination of time sensitive technical intelligence among and within the US Army, the Navy, and the Office of Scientific Research and Development. James D. Marchio, “Days of Future Past: Joint Intelligence Operations During the Second World War,” *Joint Force Quarterly* (Spring 1996): 117–19.

[18] JICPOA was disbanded in October 1945 while JANAC continued in operation until 1947. *Ibid.*, 122.

[19] In *Flawed by Design: The Evolution of the CIA, JCS, and NSC* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), Amy B. Zegart argues that the trajectory of a national security agency is a function of three related factors: 1) the structural choices made at an agency's birth; 2) the ongoing interests of bureaucrats, presidents, and, to a lesser degree, legislators; 3) exogenous events, which are rare." (7, 133). See also James R. Locher III, *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2002), 15–32, and Gordon Nathaniel Lederman, *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 1–31, for excellent treatments of the problems surrounding the establishment of the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

[20] Zegart, 110, 125, 138–39.

[21] Secretary of Defense James Forrestal tried unsuccessfully to reach a gentlemen's agreement between the service chiefs over roles and missions in 1948 at sessions held at Key West, Florida, and Newport, Rhode Island. What ensued over the next 24 months—usually referred to as the “Revolt of the Admirals”—only served to further poison interservice relations. See Allan R. Millett and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), 481–82.

[22] Marchant, 17.

[23] *Ibid.*, 19–21, 24–27; CINCFE, “Views on Joint Intelligence Center Policy,” 11 Dec 50, RG 218, CCS 322 Jt. Intelligence Ctrs. 8-29-50, NAWDC.

[24] *Ibid.* For a discussion of the proposal to consolidate service intelligence services, see “Minutes of the J. I. C. 197th Meeting,” 22 May 1950, CDF 1948–50, CCS 334 JIC (7-11-49), and J. I. C. 470/3, “Consolidation of Service Intelligence Activities,” 2 Oct 1950, CCS 334 JIB (6-1-49), Box 111, RG 218, NAWDC.

[25] Message from CINCPAC on JICs, 21 Dec 1950, RG 218, CCS 322 Jt. Intelligence Ctrs. 8-29-50, NAWDC.

[26] Note by the Secretaries to the Holders of JCS 2194, 24 Apr 1951; and Note by the Secretaries to the JCS on “Establishment of Joint Intelligence Divisions as part of the Joint Staff in Unified Commands under the JCS,” 21 May 1951, RG 218, NAWDC.

[27] “Joint Action Armed Forces” (JAAF) manual, CDF 1948–50, CCS 370.21 (3-16-44), B. P. Part 2, RG 218, NAWDC.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Packard, 403–4.

[30] *Ibid.*, 237–38. Although the outbreak of the Korean War spurred interest in joint intelligence, intelligence deficiencies pushed the services to seek their own solutions. Air Intelligence Services Organizations (AISO)

were an air force initiative to meet unsatisfied intelligence needs, many of which would have been met by a JIC. AISOs were created to “tie together organizationally certain field air intelligence functions in a theater of operations or com-mand; and, to increase the adaptability of theater air intelligence to collect, produce, and disseminate all types of air intelligence information.” See “Air Intelligence Services Organizations,” *Air Intelligence Digest*, June 1951, 15–18.

[31]Matthew M. Aid and Cees Wiebes, eds., *Secrets of Signals Intelligence during the Cold War and Beyond* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 12, 19, 32, 35–36, 78–79.

[32]A small joint intelligence center was cre-ated in 1956 on Taiwan. Herman S. Wolk, “The New Look,” *Air Force Magazine* (August 2003): 80–83; Robert W. Smith, “Analyst in a War Theater Role,” *Studies in Intelligence* (Winter 1964): 49–56.

[33]Aid and Wiebes, 12; Lt. Col. Maurice K. Schiffman, “Technical Intelligence in the Pacific in World War II,” *Military Review* (January 1952): 42–48.

[34]DIA's creation met strong resistance, ultimately limiting its responsibility and resources. See both the introduction and primary source documents contained in Deane J. Allen and Brian G. Shellum, eds., *At the Creation 1961–1965: Origination Documents of the Defense Intelligence Agency* (DIA History Office: Washington, DC, 2002).

[35]For Department of Defense budget data, see Center for Defense Information, *Military Almanac, 2001–2002*, online at: <<http://www.cdi.org/products/almanac0102.pdf>>, and Historical Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Department of Defense Key Officials, 1947–1992* (Washington, 1992), 79–81. Service in-fighting during the 1950s was frequently couched in attacks on the prevailing national security policy of massive retaliation and the need, as articulated by US Army leadership, for a “flexible response.” For an excellent summary of the US Army's battle for less reliance on nuclear weapons during this period, see A. J. Bacevich, “The Paradox of Professionalism: Eisenhower, Ridgway, and the Challenge to Civilian Control, 1953–1955,” *Journal of Military History* 61 (April 1997): 303–33. Also, see the discussion of flexible response in Richard Smoke, *National Security and the Nuclear Dilemma*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 1987), 90–94.

[36]Zegart, 133–38; Ledermann, 20–24.

[37]“Intelligence for Joint Forces,” AFSC (February 1958): 23, 31, JFSCA; and *Ibid.*, (2 January 1976): 37–38.

[38]Maj. Gen. Joseph A. McChristian, *Vietnam Studies: The Role of Military Intelligence, 1965–1967* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1974), 157.

[39]Author's interview with Mr. Philip C. Wehle, 23 July 2003, at DIA, Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, DC.

[40]Alfred Barros, “Joint Intelligence Center Pacific Peacetime Intelligence Support to the Pacific Command: A Study of Intelligence Readiness.” Also see “Intelligence for Joint Forces,” AFSC 5, January 1976.

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] Attempts to constrain Soviet nuclear efforts and US defense spending through arms control and détente are discussed in Jeffrey Porro, ed., *The Nuclear Age Reader* (New York: Knopf, 1989), 215–62; and Millett and Maslowski, 578–83. The literature detailing the military failures and shortcomings evident during these conflicts is considerable. See Zegart, 144; John E. Valiere, “Disaster at Desert One: Catalyst for Change,” *Parameters* (Autumn 1992): 69–82; John F. Guilmartin Jr., *A Very Short War: The Mayaguez and the Battle of Koh Tang* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996); Richard A. Gabriel, *Military Incompetence: Why the American Military Doesn't Win* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1985); and Mark Adkin, *Urgent Fury: The Battle for Grenada* (Lexington, MA: Heath, 1989).

[43] Charles Francis Scanlon, *In Defense of the Nation: DIA at Forty Years* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), 141.

[44] DoD's budget went from \$409 billion in 1990 to \$296 billion in 1998. Similarly, the force structure declined by 33 percent, a cut exceeded by the 40-percent reduction in intelligence personnel. See CIA, *The 2001 Annual Report of the United States Intelligence Community*, February 2002, online at: <http://www.odci.gov/cia/reports/Ann_Rpt_2001/intro.html>; Center for Defense Information, *Military Almanac, 2001–2002* online at: <<http://www.cdi.org/products/almanac0102.pdf>>; and Lt. Gen. James Williams, USA (Ret.), “Intelligence for the Future,” *Defense Intelligence Journal* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 3–13.

[45] For a thorough and engaging discussion of how the Goldwater-Nichols Act emerged and the opposition it met, see Locher's *Victory on the Potomac*. Locher was a Senate staffer and played a key role drafting the legislation. See also Lederman, and Zegart, 141.

[46] See interview with Admiral J. M. McConnell,” by Brian G. Shellum, 26 September 1995, DIA Oral History Collection, for Admiral McConnell's description of how the J-2 position was resurrected at DIA.

[47] Department of Defense, *Final Report to Congress: Conduct of the Persian Gulf War* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 335.

[48] Shellum, Interview with Admiral J. M. McConnell.”

[49] *Final Report to Congress: Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, 336. See also James R. Clapper Jr., “Challenging Joint Military Intelligence,” *Joint Force Quarterly* (Spring 1994): 92–99.

[50] *Final Report to Congress: Conduct of the Persian Gulf War*, 337.

[51] Walls and Metts, 67; Barros, “Joint Intelligence Center Pacific (JICPAC) Peace-time Intelligence Support to the Pacific Command: A Study of Intelligence Readiness,” 1995; Garry W. Dilday, “Joint Intelligence Centers: Improving Support to Warfighters Below the JTF Level,” 1996; James P. Cummings, “Strategic Joint Intelligence Center: Did Its Construction Meet Congressional Intent?” 1993; Christian P. Westermann, “Defense Reorganization: Evolution and Reformation of Defense Intelligence,” 1991.

[52] Dilday, "Joint Intelligence Centers" and Westermann, "Defense Reorganization."

[53] See Commission on the Roles and Missions of the United States Intelligence Community [the Aspin-Brown commission], *Preparing for the 21st Century: An Appraisal of US Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996); House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, "IC21: Intelligence Community in the 21st Century," 104th Cong., 2d Sess., 1996; Richard N. Haass, Project Director for the Independent Task Force, *Making Intelligence Smarter: The Future of US Intelligence* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1996); Working Group on Intelligence Reform [Abram Shulsky and Gary Schmitt, authors], *The Future of US Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Consortium for the Study of Intelligence, 1996); Twentieth Century Fund Task Force [Stephen Bosworth, chairman], *In From the Cold* (New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1996); Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy [John Hollister Hedley, author], *Checklist for the Future of Intelligence* (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 1995).

[54] For a discussion of al-Qa'ida's franchise operations, see the 19 February 2002 DoD background briefing at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb2002/t02192002_t2_19alqa.html>. Also, Charles N. Cardinal, Timber P. Pangonias, and Edward Marks, "The Global War on Terrorism: A Regional Approach to Coordination," *Joint Force Quarterly*, no.32 (Autumn 2002): 49–53.

[55] Greg Jaffe, "Pentagon Prepares to Scatter Soldiers in Remote Corners," *Wall Street Journal*, 27 May 2003, 1; David Rennie, "America's Growing Network of Bases," *London Daily Telegraph*, 11 September 2003.

[56] "Implementation Guidance on Restructuring Defense Intelligence," 8 May 2003, and DoD News Briefing, 20 May 2003.

[57] Seth Stern, "Rumsfeld to Armed Services: Can't We Just All Get Along?" *Christian Science Monitor*, 15 July 2003.

[58] Andrew Rathmell, "Towards Postmodern Intelligence," *Intelligence and National Security* (Autumn 2002): 87–104.

[59] For information about the rationale for and establishment of the Terrorist Threat Integration Center, see <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/release/01/20030128-12.html>>. In "Transforming Homeland Security: Intelligence Indications and Warning," *Air & Space Power Journal*, vol. XVII, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 69–77, Kenneth A. Luikart proposes the establishment of a new intelligence Indications and Warning Cell at the national level to fuse the multiple intelligence and information streams.

[60] Marchant, 29–30.

[61] Shellum, interview with Admiral J. M. McConnell.

[James D. Marchio](#) serves in the Defense Intelligence Agency.

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