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Building Allied Interoperability in the Indo-Pacific Region

DISCUSSION PAPER 2

**A Case Study in Joint Command
and Control for the Japanese
Self-Defense Forces**

AUTHORS

Trent Scott

Andrew Shearer

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INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

A Report of the
CSIS ALLIANCES AND AMERICAN
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Contents

IV	Foreword
VII	Executive Summary
1	Introduction
2	CHAPTER 1 The Challenge of Being Joint
5	CHAPTER 2 Australian Defense Force (ADF) Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC)
11	CHAPTER 3 UK Permanent Joint Headquarters
13	CHAPTER 4 U.S. Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands
15	CHAPTER 5 Conclusion
17	About the Authors

Foreword

History is replete with examples of military operations coming apart because peacetime command and control arrangements proved unequal to the task of complex operations in war. The political requirements of chiefs of defense to advise the head of state and legislature and to organize the flow of forces and resources rarely allow enough bandwidth to also command complex military operations against a determined adversary. Effective operational command and control arrangements are also essential to utilizing joint forces (military forces composed of more than one service), which can provide a greater range of operational and tactical options and therefore can potentially present multiple, complex problems for an enemy. As this paper notes, multiple complications can arise in contingencies when joint operational command is not in effect from the outset, including differences between the services in ways of warfare, decisionmaking, equipment, doctrine, and planning processes; parochialism favoring one service over another for capability development and command and leadership appointments; and divergent logistical support and sustainment procedures. Typically, planning, preparing, and executing joint operations is a more complex activity than for predominantly single-service operations, primarily because of the need to sequence and synchronize the actions and effects of disparate force elements.

That said, jointness in general—and the establishment of a joint operational command in particular—have been politically sensitive topics in postwar Japan. Pacifists in the Diet and within the Defense Agency worried that vesting discrete joint operational command in the uniformed military would lead to the potential for a return to prewar style militarization. For the first part of the Cold War the U.S. services were also quite satisfied to maintain stove-piped relationships with their Japanese counterparts, while some strategic planners in Washington saw Japan's service stovepiping as a way to prevent too much independent action at a time when Japan was primarily viewed by many U.S. planners as a base for operations elsewhere in the region.

More recently, however, there has been growing U.S. and Japanese interest in ensuring that the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) becomes what the latest Defense White Paper calls a "Dynamic Joint Defense Force" to be employed "with a high level of flexibility and readiness based on joint operations." There are several factors driving this imperative.

First, Japan had mixed results from its inaugural joint and combined operation with U.S. (and Australian) forces in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011. The JSDF deployed rapidly and efficiently for humanitarian and disaster relief operations under *Operation Tomodachi*. The chairman of the Joint Staff received kudos for his leadership, and his forces performed with great bravery in helping to prevent the meltdown of the Fukushima Daiichi reactor. However, the deficiencies in Japan's command and control arrangements were also apparent, including the lack of secure communications (a problem had there been an adversary) and the tensions faced by the chief of defense forces between managing policy/political matters on the one hand and operational matters on the other.

Second, Japan no longer has the luxury of planning primarily for rear area logistical support for U.S. operations in the Western Pacific. With the North Korean ballistic missile and nuclear threat and

China's increased pressure on the first island chain, Japan is now effectively in the front lines of any potential security crisis in the region. Adversaries will quickly exploit seams among the services or between the United States and Japan. The geographic proximity of these threats also complicates jointness between the JSDF and the Japan Coast Guard (JCG), since aggressive Chinese "gray zone" activities in the East China Sea could escalate from what Tokyo views as "law enforcement" to "defense operations" before Japan's relevant services are ready for the transition. As the paper highlights, a unified joint commander, with direct access for operational decisions to the chief of the JSDF, will have better prospects for providing holistic support (particularly air and maritime) to the JCG in response to gray zone activities.

Third, Japan is falling behind other peer militaries in moving toward joint operational commands. The U.S. Combatant Commands (COCOM), operating according to the Unified Command Plan; the UK Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), a three-star operational level headquarters subordinate to Joint Forces Command; and, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC) have all demonstrated the requirement for discrete joint commands to prepare for complex operations. The Combined Forces Command (CFC) has had this effect in the U.S.-Korea alliance for decades. And now China has also begun major reforms of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) with the aim of creating separate combatant commands capable of executing war plans against potential adversaries, including the United States and Japan, of course.

As this paper notes, Japan would benefit from establishing a joint operational level headquarters capable of:

- commanding and controlling JSDF elements in joint and combined operations to counter aggressive "gray zone" activities; to maintain freedom of the commons; and to defend the homeland;
- sharing information with other government agencies, including the JCG, in an integrated way, enhancing training to better cope with complex security situations, and ensuring a smooth transition if the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) is called in to assume control of a situation;
- enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces in joint operations including through contributions to joint capability requirements; and,
- promoting more effective interoperability with U.S. and other allied and coalition forces in the Asia Pacific.

Maintaining separation between the operational and strategic levels of command allows the strategic level to place JSDF action into the broadest possible context and align its actions with other elements of national power and its allies and partners. Importantly, it provides bandwidth for decisionmakers to anticipate and provide for the influential futures that might arise and it decides *whether* to act, rather than focusing on just *how* to act. In deciding whether to act, the strategic level can explore the risks of inaction and compare them with the strategic risks of acting. Conflating the strategic level of command with the operational tends to inhibit this strategic perspective.

However, one should not underestimate the bureaucratic, cultural, and technical challenges involved. The evolution to joint command and control has tended to take many years, even decades, of iterative development. Even when the political environment has provided the necessary impetus for the development of joint culture and competencies and the necessary institutional changes are in place to support such an evolution, achieving a truly joint culture that is enabled through joint command and control will require commitment over a potentially lengthy period.

Given these challenges, it is critical that Japan model its concept for a joint operational command on the best and most applicable practices currently being tested. The U.S. COCOM experience is relevant but too large scale and global. Korea's command structure is optimized against a single ground threat. The United Kingdom operates in a very different political and geographic context. In our view, the most relevant lessons for Japan can be drawn from the Australian Defense Forces HQJOC. Australia's experience is applicable in several key respects: it is the most recent effort; the goal was to increase operational effectiveness in the context of a strengthened alliance with the United States; the geography and mission set overlaps; and Japan itself seeks greater interoperability with Australian forces.

CSIS specifically recommended that Japan examine Australia's experience with the HQJOC in the January 2016 congressionally mandated study *Asia Pacific Rebalance 2025: Capabilities, Presence, and Partnership*.¹ Since then we have been fortunate enough to have on staff Colonel Trent Scott, who served in a central role in Australia's HQJOC. He has worked with Andrew Shearer under the CSIS Alliance Interoperability project to produce the following case study. We hope that it will be useful to Japanese experts in and out of government and also to U.S. and Australian policymakers keen to enhance their support for Japan's efforts.

Michael J. Green
Senior Vice President for Asia and Japan Chair
CSIS

¹ Michael Green, Kathleen Hicks, and Mark Cancian, *Asia-Pacific Rebalance 2025: Capabilities, Presence, and Partnerships* (Washington, DC: CSIS, January 2016), https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/160119_Green_AsiaPacificRebalance2025_Web_0.pdf.

Executive Summary

Joint forces—military forces comprised of more than one service—provide a greater range of operational and tactical options, and therefore can potentially present multiple, complex problems for an adversary, or provide more options for government in responding to crises. Japan has recognized the central requirement for “jointness” in its most recent Defense White Paper, declaring that the cornerstone of Japan’s peace and security is a “dynamic joint defense force” capable of being employed “with a high level of flexibility and readiness based on joint operations.” Moreover, the joint force is to be capable of managing the full spectrum of likely threats from humanitarian disaster response and “gray-zone” activities—remaining below the threshold of conventional military conflict—in the maritime domain through to achieving air supremacy and maritime control in defense of the homeland.

But achieving a high level of competency in joint operations across the spectrum of potential threats is no easy task. Challenges to effective joint action include differences between the services in ways of warfare, decisionmaking, equipment, doctrine, and planning processes; parochialism favoring one service over another for capability development and command and leadership appointments; and divergent logistical support and sustainment procedures. Typically, planning, preparing, and executing joint operations is a more complex activity than for predominantly single-service operations. These challenges are compounded when conducting *combined* or *coalition* joint operations where different languages, different operating systems and capabilities, and different political and strategic objectives need to be managed effectively to ensure success.

Many modern militaries, intent on enhancing their effectiveness in joint operations, have invested considerable effort in establishing structures and systems necessary to employ joint forces effectively. Typically, there has been a consistent move away from the traditional arrangement of vesting operational authority with the chiefs of each service (army, navy, or air force). Most modern militaries today have removed operational authority from service chiefs and placed this responsibility in the hands of some form of a unified commander, leaving the service chiefs responsible for raising, training, and sustaining their respective service. In most contemporary cases, the investment in a separate authority to command joint forces has occurred not just at the tactical level of command through the establishment of joint task forces, but has consistently occurred at the operational level as well. Most modern militaries have also commissioned a discrete operational-level headquarters to enable the designated operational authority to control assigned joint forces for operations, and to act as the interface between the military strategic-political level of national command and tactical joint task force commanders.

The U.S. Combatant Commands (COCOM), operating according to the Unified Command Plan; the UK Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), a three-star operational-level headquarters subordinate to Joint Forces Command; and the Australian Defense Force (ADF) Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC) are three models Japan may wish to consider in determining how best to develop its own operational-level joint headquarters. We consider the ADF HQJOC model as best suited to Japan’s circumstances in respect to the form and function of the operational-level

headquarters; however, valuable lessons may also be learned from an analysis of the UK and U.S. models of joint command.

The Japanese Self-Defense Forces would benefit from taking advantage of lessons already learned by its allies in development of their respective joint operational-level command and control mechanisms and inculcation of a joint culture. Separating the command and control of operations functions from the chief of defense (and service chiefs) functions has proven beneficial to the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and other modern militaries. Maintaining separation between the operational and strategic levels of command allows the strategic level in Japan to place Japanese Self-Defense Force action into the broadest possible context and align its actions with other elements of national power and its allies and partners. Importantly, it provides bandwidth for decisionmakers to anticipate and provide for the influential futures that might arise and it decides *whether* to act, rather than focusing on just *how* to act. In deciding whether to act, the strategic level can explore the risks of inaction and compare them with the strategic risks of acting.

Developing a truly joint operating culture, including joint command and control at the operational level, will better align the Japanese Self-Defense Forces with its principal ally—the United States—and enable holistic integration of joint and combined effects in the defense of Japan. A single unified joint commander, distinct from the chief of defense, will enable the United States and Japan to streamline connective personal relationships between senior military leaders and respective staff necessary for effective combined operations. Adopting an operational-level joint headquarters will also align the Japanese Self-Defense Forces with other key allies in its region, in particular Australia. And finally, a unified joint commander, with direct access for operational decisions to the chief of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, will have better prospects for providing holistic support (particularly air and maritime) to the Japanese Coast Guard in response to gray zone activities. If the unified joint commander has direct information links to the Japanese Coast Guard, through embedded or liaison officers and compatible information systems, there will be better prospects for timely and more relevant holistic response options because of shared understanding of the situation, as well as improved prospects for transitioning responsibilities between the Coast Guard and the Self-Defense Forces.

Introduction

Joint military operations have existed in one form or another for much of recorded history.¹ Joint forces—military forces comprised of more than one service—provide a greater range of operational and tactical options, and therefore can potentially present multiple, complex problems for an enemy. Multiple service capabilities enable an operational (or tactical) joint commander to combine capabilities, tactics, techniques, and procedures in asymmetrical as well as symmetrical ways to present multidimensional threats to the enemy. And if the joint forces commander can synchronize actions between the multiple service capabilities sufficiently, the joint force can generate cumulative effects that are greater than the sum of its parts.²

Japan has recognized this central requirement for “jointness” in its most recent Defense White Paper, declaring that the cornerstone of Japan’s peace and security is a “dynamic joint defense force.” Recognizing the increasingly severe security environment in its immediate neighborhood, and acknowledging that the U.S.-Japan alliance is a centerpiece of its national security policy, Japan is intent on “developing a highly effective joint defense force” to be employed “with a high level of flexibility and readiness based on joint operations.” This joint force is to be capable of managing the full spectrum of likely threats from humanitarian disaster response and “gray-zone” activities in the maritime domain through to achieving air supremacy and maritime control in defense of the homeland.³ Like the United States, the United Kingdom, much of NATO, Australia, and South Korea, Japan has placed competency in joint operations front and center of its national military security strategy.

¹ See Noel Sproules and Alex Yates, *A Historical Study of Operational Command: A Resource for Researchers* (Edinburgh, SA: DSTO Information Sciences Laboratory, 2005) for a variety of examples reinforcing this point.

² Milan N. Vego, “Major Joint/Combined Operations,” *Joint Forces Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2008): 113.

³ Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan: 2016*, Annual White Paper, 172, http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/pdf/2016/DOJ2016_2-2-1_web.pdf.

1. The Challenge of Being Joint

Achieving a high level of competency in joint operations across the spectrum of potential threats is no easy task. Challenges to effective joint action include differences between the services in ways of warfare, decisionmaking, equipment, doctrine, and planning processes; parochialism favoring one service over another for capability development and command and leadership appointments; and divergent logistical support and sustainment procedures. Typically, planning, preparing, and executing joint operations is a more complex activity than for predominantly single-service operations, primarily because of the need to sequence and synchronize the actions and effects of disparate force elements.⁴ These challenges are compounded when conducting *combined* or *coalition* joint operations where different languages, different operating systems and capabilities, and different political and strategic objectives need to be managed effectively to ensure success.⁵ Sound command and control for both joint and multinational forces is especially challenging. Military history is replete with examples of costly failures of joint (and combined) command and control.

Many modern militaries, intent on enhancing their effectiveness in joint operations, have invested considerable effort in establishing structures and command, control, communications, computers, combat systems, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and electronic warfare (C5ISR/EW) capabilities necessary to employ joint forces effectively. Typically, there has been a consistent move away from the traditional arrangement of vesting operational authority with the chiefs of each service (army, navy or air force).⁶ Most modern militaries today have removed operational authority from service chiefs and placed this responsibility in the hands of some form of a unified commander, leaving the service chiefs responsible for raising, training and sustaining their respective service.

In most contemporary cases, the investment in a separate authority to command joint forces has occurred not just at the tactical level of command through the establishment of joint task forces, but has consistently occurred at the operational level as well. Most modern militaries have also commissioned a discrete operational-level headquarters to enable the designated operational authority to control assigned joint forces for operations, and to act as the interface between the military strategic-political level of national command and tactical joint task force commanders. Notably, however, the evolution to joint command and control has tended to take many years, even decades, of iterative development. Even when the political environment has provided the necessary impetus for the development of joint culture and competencies, and the necessary institutional changes are in place to support such an evolution, achieving a truly joint culture that is enabled through joint command and control will require commitment over a potentially lengthy period.

⁴ Vego, “Major Joint/Combined Operations,” 113.

⁵ “Combined operations” are military operations between two or more forces or agencies of two or more allies. “Coalition operations” are operations conducted by forces of two or more nations, which may not be allies, acting together to accomplish a single mission. By definition, a “coalition” is an ad hoc arrangement between two or more nations for common action. See Sprouls and Yates, *A Historical Study of Operational Command*, 7–9.

⁶ Sprouls and Yates, *A Historical Study of Operational Command*, 1.

In November 2015, the Japanese and U.S. governments established the Allied Coordination Mechanism (ACM) to provide a policy framework that better enables direct U.S. military support to the defense of Japan, including as a standing mechanism able to be used during peacetime security operations. The ACM aims to improve policy and operational coordination, including information and intelligence sharing, across government agencies, through coordinating mechanisms such as the Bilateral Operations Coordination Center and subordinate component coordination centers. It is underpinned by the Bilateral Planning Mechanism, a framework developed by the two countries to better synergize bilateral planning and responses to contingencies related to Japan's security.⁷ But the ACM and the Bilateral Planning Mechanism lack the command and control elements necessary for a rapid *combined* and *joint* response to potential crises or conflicts. Nor does the Japanese Self-Defense Force (JSDF) have a central command and control headquarters for independent joint operations, one that separates operational command and control from chief of defense functions, which is critical for effective operational responses.

A second important factor for Japan is a security posture that complicates coordination between civilian—the Japanese Coast Guard—and military—Japanese Maritime and Air Self-Defense Forces. Japan's unique national security legislation and architecture has so far prevented optimal cooperation between the civilian Japanese Coast Guard (JCG), which is primarily responsible for securing national waters, and the military JSDF, which is tasked with intervening if the situation escalates—a particular challenge because of China's increasing deployment of civil enforcement vessels that are larger and more capable than many naval vessels. Ensuring a well-integrated response to gray-zone situations will ideally require a more empowering legal framework that defines more precisely gray-zone situations and the respective roles of the JSDF and JCG. It will also demand expanding technical interoperability between the JSDF and JCG, as well as developing a common, integrated maritime domain awareness, supported by a more comprehensive and realistic combined and inter-agency training and exercise program.

Operationally, Japan needs to ensure optimal cooperation between the JCG and JSDF in terms of information sharing and surveillance and a mechanism for transitioning responsibility between the JCG and JSDF without inadvertently escalating the situation into a military conflict, while ensuring this overall security arrangement constitutes an effective deterrent across the spectrum from gray-zone coercion to high-intensity operations.⁸ A unified joint commander, with direct access for operational decisions to the chief of the JSDF, will have better prospects for providing holistic support (particularly air and maritime) to the JCG in response to gray-zone activities. If the unified joint commander has direct information links to the JCG, through embedded or liaison officers and compatible information systems, there will be better prospects for timely and more relevant holistic response options because of shared understanding of the situation, as well as improved prospects for transitioning responsibilities between the Coast Guard and the Self-Defense Forces.

Japan would benefit from establishing a joint operational level headquarters capable of

⁷ Japan Ministry of Defense, *Defense of Japan: 2016*, Annual White Paper, Part II, 238–52, http://www.mod.go.jp/e/publ/w_paper/2016.html.

⁸ Celine Pajon, "Japan's Coast Guard and Maritime Self-Defense Force in the East China Sea: Can a Black-and-White System Adapt to a Gray-Zone Reality?," *Asia Policy*, No. 23 (January 2017): 114.

- (a) commanding and controlling JSDF elements in joint and combined operations to counter aggressive gray-zone activities; maintain freedom of the commons; and defend the homeland;
- (b) sharing information with other government agencies, including the JCG, in an integrated way, enhancing training to better cope with complex security situations, and ensuring a smooth transition if the JMSDF is called in to assume control of a situation⁹;
- (c) enhancing the overall effectiveness of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces in joint operations including through contributions to joint capability requirements; and
- (d) promoting more effective interoperability with U.S. and other allied and coalition forces in the Asia Pacific.¹⁰

The U.S. Combatant Commands (COCOM), operating according to the Unified Command Plan; the UK Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), a three-star operational level headquarters subordinate to Joint Forces Command; and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC) are three models Japan may wish to consider in determining how best to develop its own operational-level joint headquarters. We consider the ADF HQJOC model as best suited to Japan's circumstances in respect to the form and function of the operational-level headquarters; however, valuable lessons may also be learned from an analysis of the UK and U.S. models of joint command as well.

⁹ Pajon, "Japan's Coast Guard and Maritime Self-Defense Force in the East China Sea," 121.

¹⁰ A Joint Operations Command for Japan was recommended by Michael Green, Kathleen Hicks, and Mark Cancian, *Asia-Pacific Rebalance 2025: Capabilities, Presence, and Partnerships* (Washington DC: CSIS, January 2016), 58, https://csis-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/legacy_files/files/publication/160119_Green_AsiaPacificRebalance2025_Web_0.pdf.

2. Australian Defence Force (ADF) Headquarters Joint Operations Command (HQJOC)

HQJOC is the ADF's fit-for-purpose operational-level headquarters. It commands and controls all ADF joint operations—including expeditionary operations such as contributions to U.S.-led operations to defeat the Islamic State and NATO-led operations in Afghanistan; defence assistance to the civil power such as disaster response and support to the Department of Immigration and Border Protection; and defence assistance to the civil authority such as support to law enforcement efforts to counter terrorism. It also conducts joint collective training. HQJOC is an integral component of the ADF's holistic approach to joint operations, which is best described as follows:

All operations are planned and conducted by the chief of defence force (CDF), chief of joint operations (CJOPS), and other joint commanders, supported by joint staff. Service combat capabilities are integrated as a joint force to provide the best-coordinated effects into the sea, land, and air environments. These combat elements are supported by enablers from all services and by joint enablers, both of which often include significant numbers of defence civilians. Current defence capability is managed by the services, with some enablers managed by joint or integrated civilian-military groups. The vice chief of defence force (VCDF), as joint capability authority, oversees these arrangements to ensure preparedness of the ADF as an integrated joint force. The VCDF also oversees the joint design and development of the future ADF, again with significant involvement of defence civilians. Australia's joint approach is linked to an integrated civilian-military defence organization.¹¹

Within the ADF, joint competency is underpinned by five key principles:¹²

- (a) **Operational requirement:** joint competencies are inherently linked to operations. The requirement to be competent in joint operations derives its legitimacy from the need to act jointly on current and potential operations. For Australia, the conduct of joint operations, rather than single-service operations, is a matter of practical necessity.¹³
- (b) **Transformation of service capabilities:** Achieving competency in joint operations is essentially a transformational process, necessitating coordination and / or integration of service capabilities to generate enhanced operational effects.

¹¹ Tim McKenna and Tim McKay, *Australia's Joint Approach* (Fishermans Bend, VIC: Defence Science and Technology Group, 2015), Executive Summary.

¹² These five principles are adapted from McKenna and McKay, *Australia's Joint Approach*, 65.

¹³ David Horner, "The Higher Command Structure for Joint ADF Operations," 144, <http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/p68061/pdf/ch1025.pdf>.

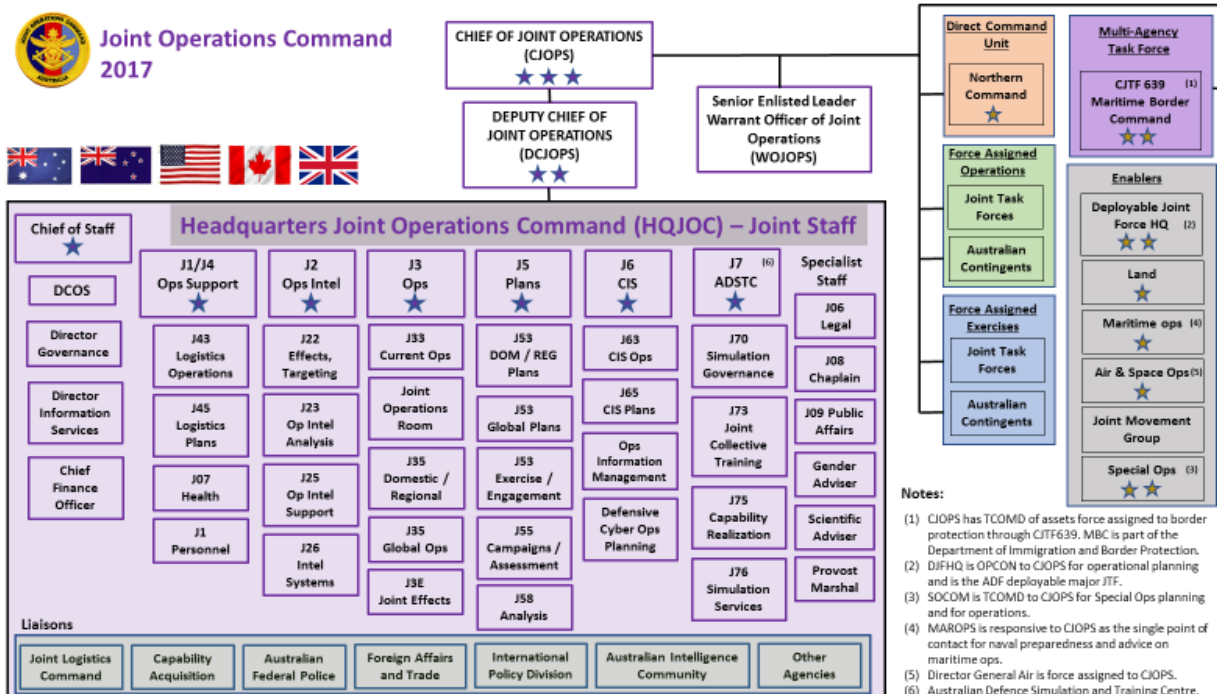
- (c) **Interaction of organizational entities:** Key to a joint approach is the interaction of organizational entities, demanding joint command and control structures and processes, and clear lines of authority, to be effective.
- (d) **Cultural alignment:** Being joint relies on aligning the whole-of-force (ADF) culture and more dominant service cultures. Cultural alignment is required to prevent cultural clashes that inhibit the transformation necessary to generate the right operational effects, particularly in the design of the future force.
- (e) **Enabling capabilities:** Being joint requires specific capabilities that enhance, enable, and/or connect other capabilities to create effective joint systems.

In accordance with directions from the government of Australia (principally the minister for defence), the CDF exercises full command of the ADF, and controls ADF operations through CJOPS. Chief of navy (CN), chief of army (CA), and chief of air force (CAF) command their respective service for all aspects except operations. Service chiefs are therefore responsible for all aspects of raising, training, and sustaining the force elements of their respective Service.¹⁴ Task-organized force elements from the services are “force assigned” to CJOPS via a CDF task order for specific operations, and CJOPS then exercises theater command on behalf of CDF. Service chiefs are responsible for preparing prospective force elements for operational deployment up to specified single-service competencies and CJOPS is responsible from an agreed point for achieving those joint collective competencies relevant to the specified operation. Essentially, CJOPS is the *supported* commander, while the service chiefs and other ADF capability managers are the *supporting* commanders.

CJOPS is a three-star officer—importantly, the same rank as the service chiefs—appointed by the minister for defence on recommendation from the CDF. CJOPS can be from any service, although the position is not strictly rotational by service. CJOPS exercises control of assigned forces and plans and conducts operations from a purpose-built headquarters, HQJOC. HQJOC was initially designed to be an integrated headquarters, rather than one based on components; however, the headquarters has evolved toward a hybrid, with some of the characteristics of both integrated and component structures.¹⁵ The internal structure of HQJOC is below.

¹⁴ Australian Defense Force, *Better Higher Command and Control Arrangements for the Australian Defence Force: Report on the Review of Australian Defence Force Higher Command and Control Arrangements* [the Wilson Review], November 30, 2005, 4, http://www.defence.gov.au/FOI/Docs/Disclosures/036_1415_Document1_Wilson.pdf.

¹⁵ Justin Kelly and J.P. Smith, *Strategic Command and Control Lessons—Scoping Study, Final Report* (Deakin ACT: Noetic Solutions, July 2013), 16.



The form and function of HQJOC are defined by the following characteristics:¹⁶

- All operations are planned from a joint and interagency perspective. Single-service technical expertise is inherent in the planning process, and interagency representatives from other government departments, such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Australian Federal Police, and liaison officers from across the Australian intelligence community are embedded in HQJOC, all of whom participate in deliberate, contingency, and crisis-response planning of operations.
- HQJOC is the single 24/7 hub for all-source situational awareness in the ADF to support the strategic- and operational-level command for operations and other designated activities. The 24/7 HQJOC Joint Operations Room controls notification of incidents as well as providing the means for proactive or responsive operational actions at the direction of CJOPS.
- The integrated staff, organized functionally in terms of plans, operations, and support with a flexible “teaming structure,” are able to expand and contract as circumstances dictate.
- A scalable, rapidly deployable joint theater C2 capability is inherent in the force structure.
- Comprehensive interoperability (in terms of both operating systems and processes) with the United States and other key nations is a key operating principle.
- Personnel manning, while a perennial challenge because of the inherent tension between service priorities and HQJOC priorities, is designed to minimise hollowness inside HQJOC and avoid “dual hatting” of personnel.

¹⁶ These characteristics are in part adapted from the Wilson Review, 15.

- (g) HQJOC is to be capable of controlling subordinate force elements via either a component structure, standing or ad hoc joint task forces, and national command elements.
- (h) There is an emphasis on leveraging technology, particularly information systems, to enhance situational awareness and collaborative planning, and improve effectiveness and efficiency.
- (i) Maintenance of single-service and specialist expertise in certain areas is necessary: maritime operations to reflect specific monitoring of raise, train, sustain activities that overlap with operations; submarine operations to reflect the strategic nature of these operations; special forces operations to reflect the strategic or high-profile nature of these operations; and air operations to reflect the specialized nature of the advice and planning, and control of air operations (particularly targeting), and specific raise, train, sustain activities that overlap with operations.
- (j) Above all, the position of CJOPS and the command architecture manifested in HQJOC represent clear and well-understood lines of authority and accountability.

Australia's competency in joint operations and operational-level command and control did not simply materialize, but instead has been an evolutionary journey over the last 30 years or more. The first proposal for a change in ADF command and control away from the control of operations by a service component was in the late 1980s with the Baker Review. Then-Brigadier John Baker, at the direction of the CDF Gen. Peter Gration, reported in 1987 that the operational level of command was a necessity for Australia, and that a commander joint forces Australia (initially proposed as a three-star joint officer) be appointed to command the three service component commanders (Maritime Command, Land Command, and Air Command) in the defense of the continent. There was, evidently, considerable opposition to Baker's proposal for this new command structure. Retired and serving senior officers across all services feared the service chiefs would be eliminated from the chain of command and the CDF would be able to command operations through his joint commanders without reference to service priorities or concerns.¹⁷

It wasn't until 1996, however, that the same John Baker, by then a general and the CDF, established the ADF's first dedicated two-star operational-level joint commander—commander Australian Theatre (COMAST)—supported by a dedicated joint operational headquarters—HQUEST—incorporating the existing maritime, land, and air commands as components of the joint headquarters, as well as special forces. The HQUEST joint staff would be kept to a minimum level by drawing on the component command staffs, but it did include newly established joint logistics and joint movements staff, along with a common joint intelligence center.¹⁸ COMAST also had the option of commanding operations directly through standing joint task forces—the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters based on HQ 1st Division, Headquarters Commodore Flotillas, or Headquarters Northern Command (HQNORCOM)—as well as ad hoc, task-organized joint task force headquarters. General Baker also tasked COMAST with the responsibility for developing and testing joint concepts of operations, coordinating joint doctrine, and managing major joint exercises.¹⁹

¹⁷ Horner, "The Higher Command Structure for Joint ADF Operations," 152.

¹⁸ Ibid., 154.

¹⁹ McKenna and McKay, *Australia's Joint Approach*, 6.

The ADF next reviewed its command and control of operations in a series of iterative reviews after the 1999 intervention in East Timor. Based on lessons from Australia's leadership of the intervention force in East Timor, in 2003 VCDF was formally designated as the senior officer responsible for the operational level of command. In 2004 an initial Joint Operations Command (JOC) was established based on HQAST, with the VCDF designated as both a strategic chief of staff to CDF and the operational commander (VCDF was dual-hatted as VCDF/CJOPS).²⁰

The structure of the new HQJOC was not resolved until another command and control review, however, this one conducted by Maj. Gen. Richard Wilson in 2005. HQAST had been formed initially with the idea of creating a truly joint headquarters, although in practice COMAST relied heavily on the staffs of the component commanders to reduce personnel requirements on the joint headquarters. The Wilson Review recommended against a component structure, however, proposing instead an integrated model of command and control whereby the operational headquarters—HQJOC—would be truly joint, and CJOPS would command operations directly through joint task forces.²¹ Although there would be certain cells within the headquarters that would retain a discrete focus on specific air, submarine, maritime, and special forces operations, in the main CJOPS would control ADF operations through a joint operations staff. The previous component commanders would revert to their single-service roles of raise, train, and sustain.²²

The move away from a component-based headquarters structure to an integrated, joint model was key and was motivated by concern that retaining the component model would inhibit true “jointness.” That is, the Service components would inhibit the ability to think, plan and act in a truly joint manner, as distinct from simply a cooperative manner.²³ A further critique of the component model is that it introduces intermediate commanders into the chain of command that “act as a brake on the joint train.” Component commanders, particularly service component commanders, “do not foster trust. . . . Component command headquarters act like the tentacles of the services rather than the purple-minded staffs of joint warfighters working cooperatively under the joint commander.”²⁴ With this in mind, HQJOC was designed as a smaller, integrated headquarters without environmental components. It was to be truly joint and “fit for purpose,” only requiring augmentation when specific expertise is not available from HQJOC-assigned personnel, the deployable joint force headquarters element from HQJOC is activated for greater than 180 days, or large-scale or national mobilization is required. The purpose-built headquarters is equipped to accommodate up to 750 personnel, with just over 670 personnel (including 100-plus off-duty Joint Operations Room staff) as the initial manning figure.²⁵

In October 2007, the minister for defence finally formally created the three-star position of CJOPS, separating the roles of VCDF and CJOPS to strengthen command and leadership of ADF operations. This meant that VCDF would now focus on defence business at the strategic level, specifically supporting the government and CDF as well as becoming responsible for the ongoing transformation of the ADF into an integrated, joint force. CJOPS would assume responsibility for commanding operations on behalf of CDF, as well as planning, mounting, monitoring and

²⁰ Ibid., 7.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Horner, “The Higher Command Structure for Joint ADF Operations,” 159.

²³ The Wilson Review, 12.

²⁴ Sprouls and Yates, *A Historical Study of Operational Command*, 12.

²⁵ The Wilson Review, 23.

controlling campaigns, operations, joint exercises and other activities as directed by CDF. CJOPS was expected to liaise with the VCDF Group (Military Strategic Commitments) to ensure military options and operational plans were developed and executed according to strategic guidance.²⁶

Each of the reviews into ADF command and control highlighted above were conducted with full government oversight and commission; however, the identification of the requirement for each review came from within the military uniformed services. The journey toward competency in joint command and control for the ADF was mostly a “bottom-up” affair, with the military providing the logic behind the iterative structural changes and the political leadership of the day recognizing and supporting the proposed changes without significant objections at any stage of the process. Given that the United States had been leading the evolution toward joint command and control for many years prior to the ADF’s efforts, and that the United Kingdom and NATO had also commenced their own respective transformations to jointness, it was a logical step for Australia to make the necessary structural and philosophical changes to remain aligned with its principal military allies, particularly the United States.

This 30-plus-year journey for the ADF now means that HQJOC is a truly joint operational-level headquarters, capable of controlling all ADF operations—domestic and expeditionary—across the spectrum of conflict and through all domains. HQJOC also controls all joint collective exercises, as well as other discrete activities directed by the CDF for government. CJOPS, as the three-star joint operational commander, commands these operations and activities on behalf of the CDF, while the service chiefs continue to provide technical advice and prepare force elements of their respective services for joint operations. And, as a direct result of this momentum toward achieving and maintaining the highest competencies in joint operations, Australia’s joint approach now extends well beyond operations.

In preparing the ADF for operations, in sustaining it on those operations, and in managing the force in peacetime, Australia has adopted an increasingly holistic approach to being “joint.”²⁷ The ADF has extended its joint approach to designing and building the future ADF such that the services are required to justify capability requirements not just from a service-needs perspective, but also from a joint-requirements perspective. Also, the ADF underwrites the current performance of the ADF by developing and inculcating relevant joint doctrine that is consistent with NATO and the United States’ joint doctrine, enabled by a comprehensive advanced joint professional military education foundation. Collectively, this holistic approach to joint excellence, including a centralized approach to preparedness management that demands the services adopt a joint-focused approach, is essential for inculcating a joint culture and bias for joint action throughout the ADF.

²⁶ Kelly and Smith, *Strategic Command and Control Lessons*, 7.

²⁷ McKenna and McKay, *Australia’s Joint Approach*, 1.

3. UK Permanent Joint Headquarters

Another model of joint command and control worthy of further detailed analysis is the UK model. The Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) emerged from an internal Ministry of Defence analysis of the geopolitical environment post-Gulf War I (1991) against a backdrop of a strong prospect for increasing deployments of British forces. Until this point, responsibility for planning and executing any UK-led or joint overseas operation had fallen on a designated single service. The Royal Navy had led the planning and execution of joint operations to retake the Falkland Islands (Operation CORPORATE, 1982), while the Royal Air Force led the planning for the United Kingdom's involvement in joint and coalition operations to liberate Kuwait and punish Saddam Hussein (Operation GRANBY, 1991).²⁸

A Defence Costs Study in 1994 identified a number of shortcomings within the Ministry of Defence (MOD), amongst which was concern regarding the apparently ad hoc and reactive way the single services were planning and conducting operations. The establishment of a joint headquarters was driven by the desire to enhance operational efficiency and effectiveness (and achieve financial savings). Based on operational lessons learned over the preceding decade, the MOD leadership recognized the need for a proactive, permanently manned operational-level joint headquarters that could ensure a smooth transition from the early planning stages of a potential deployment, through to the conduct of a joint operation, and subsequently the recovery of forces and adoption of lessons learned.²⁹

The initial PJHQ was established at Northwood, London, in 1996 and was scaled to handle the five concurrent operations then running in addition to other business such as the command of the UK Permanent Joint Operating Bases. Since then, PJHQ has grown as the number and tempo of operations has increased, and a purpose-built headquarters facility designed to accommodate up to 950 joint staff was opened at Northwood in 2010.

PJHQ is commanded by a three-star chief of joint operations (CJO), a rotational appointment between the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, and the Army. CJO is normally designated as the joint commander for specified operations and he is tasked with planning and executing UK-led joint and multinational operations; exercising operational command of UK forces assigned to multinational operations led by others; and providing politically aware military advice to the MOD.³⁰ Subordinate commands are typically discrete fit-for-purpose task groups or task forces that have been force assigned to PJHQ from the respective single services for the duration of the relevant mission. These may or may not be joint, depending on their respective missions. PJHQ is internally structured along the NATO staff system (J1 through J9) and comprises personnel from each of the services.

PJHQ is a subordinate unit of Joint Forces Command. Joint Forces Command is commanded by a four-star officer (the same rank level as the service chiefs) who is charged with a broader remit than

²⁸ The National Archives, "PJHQ—A History," <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121108235947/http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/AboutDefence/WhatWeDo/DoctrineOperationsandDiplomacy/PJHQ/PjHQHistory.htm>.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "The Permanent Joint Headquarters," <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/the-permanent-joint-headquarters>.

just preparing joint forces for operations and leading those operations. As well as planning and conducting specified operations through CJO and PJHQ, the joint forces commander leads joint force capability development and joint education and training. Subordinate commands of Joint Forces Command, other than PJHQ, include Directorate of Special Forces; Defence Intelligence; Defence Medical Services; the Permanent Joint Operating Bases (Gibraltar, Cyprus, British Indian Ocean Territory, and South Atlantic Islands); and Joint Force Development, which includes the Defence Academy.³¹ Notably, PJHQ is not responsible for defence of the UK home base or territorial waters and airspace, employing the strategic nuclear deterrent, Northern Island, counterterrorism in the United Kingdom, or NATO Article V (general war).³²

³¹ “Joint Forces Command,” <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/joint-forces-command/about>.

³² “The Permanent Joint Headquarters,” <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/the-permanent-joint-headquarters>.

4. The U.S. Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands

The United States recognized the value of joint operations being commanded by a single, unifying joint theater commander, and controlled via a single joint theater headquarters, during World War II. Notably, although the United States achieved a degree of unified command in the European theater under Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, attempts to establish unified command in the Pacific proved impossible.³³ As senior U.S. civilian and military leaders began looking toward the post-World War II environment, Army leaders argued that unity of command had worked well in the war zones when successfully implemented and the principle now had to be extended to Washington and down through the likely peacetime theaters of command. President Truman agreed, declaring, “We must never fight another war the way we fought the last two. I have the feeling that if the Army and the Navy had fought our enemies as hard as they fought each other, the war would have ended much earlier.”³⁴

Truman’s concerns were addressed in the National Security Act of 1947, which, alongside creating the U.S. Air Force, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, also created the Unified Combatant Command system.³⁵ President Eisenhower further refined Truman’s direction through the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, demanding a complete unification of all military planning and combat forces and commands, effectively putting an end to separate land, sea, and air combat. Under this act, Eisenhower delegated full operational control over assigned forces to the combatant commanders, while the services retained responsibility for the administration of their respective service.³⁶ The United States refined the joint command and control of its armed forces a final time after the failed 1980 multi-service mission to rescue American hostages in Iran and the 1983 invasion of Grenada with the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986. Goldwater-Nichols reflected a culmination of iterative thinking about and practice in joint operations command and control. It expanded the powers of the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff (CJSC) and the combatant commanders by streamlining the operational chains of command, gave combatant commanders greater interaction with Congress and greater participation in the DoD budget process, and called upon the CJSC to review missions, responsibilities, force structures, and geographic boundaries for each combatant command every two years and report his findings to the president.³⁷ Goldwater-Nichols also provided legislative

³³ Gen. Douglas MacArthur commanded U.S. Army Forces, Pacific and his own theater of operations (South West Pacific Area); Adm. Chester Nimitz commanded the U.S. Pacific Fleet and the North and Central Pacific Areas. Andrew Feickert, *The Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands: Background and Issues for Congress* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, January 3, 2013), 3.

³⁴ Charles A. Stevenson, “Underlying Assumptions of the National Security Act of 1947,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 48 (January 2008): 130.

³⁵ Feickert, *The Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands*, 4.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

emphasis to service in joint billets for officers, as well as for joint professional military education (JPME).

The result of this iterative journey for the U.S. armed forces is that “the Unified Command Plan and associated COCOMs now provide operational instructions and command and control to the Armed Forces and have a significant impact on how the Armed Forces are organized, trained, and resourced—areas over which Congress has constitutional authority.”³⁸ Of the 10 COCOMs, each commanded by a four-star uniformed officer, 6 are geographic commands (Southern Command, Pacific Command, Northern Command, European Command, Central Command, and Africa Command), and 4 are global functional commands (Special Operations Command, Strategic Command, Transportation Command, and Cyber Command). The geographic commands in turn each comprise standing service component command headquarters (Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marines) and, where relevant, a special operations component headquarters. This means collectively there are thousands of uniformed and civilian personnel permanently assigned to a COCOM and its component headquarters at any one time as staff. Because of the sheer size of the COCOMs and the global nature of the Unified Command Plan, it is difficult for any other country to emulate the current U.S. joint command and control architecture.

³⁸ Ibid., i.

5. Conclusion

There has been a steadily increasing awareness over the past few decades of the value of joint operations in the effective employment of expensive and sophisticated military assets across the entire range of tasks governments expect their armed forces to undertake. This has been reflected in the establishment of joint warfare capabilities and operational-level joint command and control architecture in military forces around the world such as the U.S. system of Unified Combatant Commands, the UK PJHQ, and the ADF HQJOC.³⁹ The drivers for this consistent move toward enhanced jointness include the increasing need for greater efficiency; the demand for finer control over applying lethal force; and the requirement for the military to be employed in an ever-increasing range of missions. A joint approach, involving the generation of new capabilities through synergizing separate service capabilities, provides a government with increased flexibility and a more agile defense capability.⁴⁰

The Japanese Self-Defense Forces would benefit from taking advantage of lessons already learned by its allies in development of their respective joint operational-level command and control mechanisms and inculcation of a joint culture. Separating the command and control of operations functions from the chief of defense (and service chiefs) functions has proven beneficial to the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and other modern militaries. Certainly, during times of crisis the chain of command from the chief of defense down to subordinate task forces and groups may be as short and as direct as it can be, while during more steady-state operations command may be delegated to an appropriate level. This should not, however, obscure the need to sustain a separation between strategic- and operational-level planning and, in most cases, execution. Maintaining separation between the operational and strategic levels of command allows the strategic level to place Japanese Self-Defense Force action into the broadest possible context and align its actions with other elements of national power and its allies and partners. Importantly, it provides bandwidth for decisionmakers to anticipate and provide for the influential futures that might arise and it decides *whether* to act, rather than focusing on just *how* to act. In deciding whether to act, the strategic level can explore the risks of inaction and compare them with the strategic risks of acting.⁴¹ Conflating the strategic level of command with the operational tends to inhibit this strategic perspective.

Developing a truly joint operating culture, including joint command and control at the operational level, will also better align the Japanese Self-Defense Forces with its principal ally—the United States—and enable holistic integration of joint and combined effects in the defense of Japan. A single unified joint commander, distinct from the chief of defense, will enable the United States and Japan to streamline connective personal relationships between senior military leaders and respective staff necessary for effective combined operations. In the case of the ADF, for example, CJOPS as a three-star officer has a personal relationship with deputy commander PACOM (and with deputy commander CENTCOM), whereas the ADF Chief of Defence Force maintains a personal

³⁹ Sprouls and Yates, *A Historical Study of Operational Command*, 16.

⁴⁰ McKenna and McKay, *Australia's Joint Approach*, 65.

⁴¹ Kelly and Smith, *Strategic Command and Control Lessons*, 13.

relationship with the PACOM commander (and the CENTCOM commander, and the chairman of the joint chiefs). Deputy CJOPS speaks directly with the PACOM J3 (director operations) and J5 (director strategic planning and policy) and the staff cell leads speak directly with their counterparts as required. Depending on the circumstances, CJOPS may also find himself communicating directly with a three-star subordinate PACOM commander, such as commander U.S. 7th Fleet, because they are peers in rank. The ADF has found these peer-to-peer relationships at the most senior level of operational commanders to be extremely valuable for enhancing combined operational effectiveness. Concurrently, it has promoted flexibility for the chief of defence force, who is afforded greater opportunity to focus on combined political-military strategic issues on a peer-to-peer basis, instead of being continually drawn into operational matters. In Japan's circumstance, depending on the rank of the joint operational level commander, the personal relationship network of the commander will of course need to include commander U.S. forces Japan.

The ADF model of joint operational level command and control by a three-star CJOPS, via a purpose-built joint headquarters, HQJOC, provides the most useful case study for the Japanese Self-Defense Force as Japan continues to manage the increasingly complex challenges to its own and its region's security.

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