Summer 5-18-2021

Integrated Planning and Campaigning for Complex Problems

Robert S. Ehlers Jr.

Patrick Blannin

Integrated Planning and Campaigning for Complex Problems

Robert S. Ehlers Jr. and Patrick Blannin
©2021 Robert S. Ehlers Jr. and Patrick Blannin

ABSTRACT: Shortfalls and inefficiencies in traditional planning and campaigning have become increasingly clear in the current hyperconnected security environment. US military planners can mitigate these deficiencies by embracing integrated planning and campaigning approaches including the development of new organizational structures and processes. These improvements will give senior leaders increased options as the US military and US Allies and partners address complex problems with better effect and to greater advantage.

Over the last two decades, rapid advances in information technologies, the hyperconnected world these technologies have created, and the reach and power of the narratives they convey have driven significant changes in the global security arena. Adversaries excel at leveraging these technologies and tools with few legal and ethical constraints and restraints. Further, these adversaries are willing to play the long game, betting they can outlast what they see as a tired and strategically impatient and incoherent America. Legacy planning and campaigning tools are largely ineffective in a competition space defined by hyperconnectedness, the ubiquity of information, narrative warfare including disinformation and misinformation, and the democratization of access to the means and ways of information power.[1] Moreover, the often uncoordinated efforts of different government departments and agencies—and among Allies and partners—only magnify the problem.

To begin addressing these challenges, the US Joint Staff in 2018 published the *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning.* This publication offers useful approaches and ideas for combating information-savvy opponents through the development of new planning and campaigning capabilities. It defines integrated campaigning as "Joint Force and interorganizational partner efforts to enable the achievement and maintenance of policy aims by integrating military activities and aligning non-military activities of sufficient scope, scale, simultaneity, and duration across multiple domains."[2]

1. Robert S. Ehlers Jr. and Patrick Blannin, "Making Sense of the Information Environment," Small Wars Journal, March 3, 2020, https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/making-sense-information-environment.

2. Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* (JCIC), (Washington, DC: JCS, March 16, 2018), v, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/concepts/joint_concept_integrated_campaign.pdf?ver=2018-03-28-102833-257.

Integrated campaigning is indispensable for dealing effectively with the new realities of conflict evident in the hyperconnected global security environment and for gaining the initiative in prolonged security problems.[3] This article addresses the basic elements of integrated campaigning and its utility for addressing long-duration security challenges and information-savvy opponents. The article then considers the value of integrated campaigning as a means for addressing complex problems within the hyperconnected hyperconnected global security environment and the utility of this type of campaigning to planners. The article concludes with recommendations for structural and organizational improvements to promote this more-effective approach to planning and campaigning.

Planning Evolution

The attributes currently associated with military planning matured in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Prussian Great General Staff was arguably the first highly sophisticated planning organization focused on mobilization timetables, logistics, replacements, and the most effective use of everything from the railroad and the telegraph to breech-loading artillery and the machine gun.[4] These new approaches to planning grew out of changes in the character of war driven by political, economic, and social realities.[5]

The Prussian planning model, adopted by other great powers including the United States, worked well so long as the military technological paradigm of the era—industrial warfare based on mass conscription—remained the norm.[6] The disasters of the world wars and the development of atomic and nuclear weapons produced a paradigm shift, but not a definitive one. NATO and the Warsaw Pact continued to plan for major conventional war in Europe using tried and tested planning processes, and their military forces appeared much like those produced by earlier manifestations of the industrial warfare paradigm.[7]

The end of the Cold War and the Coalition victory in Operation Desert Storm portended major changes in armed conflict. While some called Desert Storm the last industrial war, others called it the first information war. The war's new computing and communications technologies represented a clear evolution, altering the character of that conflict in every way from the speed and precision of Coalition

3.   Ehlers and Blannin, "Information Environment."

4.   Arden Bucholz, *Moltke, Schlieffen, and Prussian War Planning* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 1991), 1–17; and Gunther E. Rothenberg, "Moltke, Schlieffen, and the Doctrine of Strategic Envelopment," in *Makers of Modern Strategy: from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 299–302.

5.   Bucholz, *Moltke*, 1–17.

6.   Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 258–70.

7.   Jan Hoffenaar and Christopher Findlay, eds., *Military Planning for European Theatre Conflict during the Cold War: An Oral History Roundtable, Stockholm, 24–25 April 2006*, Zürcher Beiträge: Zur Sicherheitspolitik, NR. 79 (Zurich: Center for Security Studies, ETH), 46–56.

maneuver to the lethality of its actions.[8] But planning for Desert Storm still involved a traditional, industrial-war approach: AirLand Battle doctrine and planning processes, developed for war in Europe, drove operations.[9]

With the development of the World Wide Web and rapid increases in the speed of communications, events began outpacing the predominant planning model. Counterinsurgencies and wars of national liberation fought in the second half of the twentieth century had also exposed shortcomings inherent in the model. When opponents refused to play by prevailing rules and norms, the military advantages of the great powers shrank or disappeared. In French Indochina, Algeria, and elsewhere, David was often beating Goliath. These victories had more to do with will and strategic patience than with military strength.[10]

Similarly, as people gained access to the Internet and began publishing and disseminating narratives, hyperconnected, agile, message-savvy "Davids" began emerging, drawing crowds and amassing influence and power. The arrival of 3G and 4G transmission speeds and associated Web-publishing tools made the late 1990s and early 2000s a watershed period for this new kind of power. These trends are intensifying, giving nonstate actors and states willing to break with conventional norms major advantages in pursuing their strategic priorities. The dissemination of 5G further intensifies this process.[11]

Countering these new forms of conflict reveals insufficiencies in traditional planning processes. While constraints and restraints hamstring American and Allied responses to technologically savvy adversaries, the planning process itself is often the biggest culprit. Planning tends to be episodic rather than continuous. Planning teams are often ad hoc and temporary. Even when a good team comes together, the assignments process almost immediately begins disassembling it. Unfilled billets prevent formal changeover between outgoing and incoming personnel, and in the name of security and efficiency, communications specialists wipe the computer drives of departed staff. These actions and the resulting loss of knowledge continuity produce institutionalized inefficiency and ineffectiveness in planning and lessons-learned processes.[12]

8. Alan D. Campen, ed., *The First Information War: The Story of Communications, Computers, and Intelligence Systems in the Persian Gulf War* (Fairfax, VA: Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA) International Press, 1992), 1–22.

9. Rick Atkinson, *Crusade: The Untold Story of the Persian Gulf War* (Boston: Mariner Books, 1994).

10. Gérard Chaliand, ed., *Guerrilla Strategies: An Historical Anthology from the Long March to Afghanistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

11. David Patrikarakos, *War in 140 Characters: How Social Media Is Reshaping Conflict in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 3–13, 255–64.

12. Michael J. Mazaar et al., *The U.S. Department of Defense's Planning Process: Components and Challenges* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2019), xii–xiii, 2–3, 32–40; and T. C. Greenwood and T. X. Hammes, "War Planning for Wicked Problems," *Armed Forces Journal* (2009), http://armedforcesjournal.com/war-planning-for-wicked-problems/.

The Centrality of Information

Contemporary conflict is particularly information dense and transcends geographic boundaries in ways not previously possible. As a result, multifunctional, multidomain campaigns are increasingly complex. The central objective of what is now called information warfare or operations in the information environment is to achieve information advantage and decision superiority through nonlethal and lethal operations, leading to an end state that supports strategic priorities. But information advantage and decision superiority are temporary conditions within a limited space. This boundedness makes coordinated and synchronized actions, and the planning process required to develop them, central to successful operations.[13]

Gaining advantage—producing the full range of effects and objectives required to achieve end states—in today's security challenges requires a process integrated across all instruments of power, alliances, and other collectivities. Often these challenges are persistent, highly complex, and feature opponents well versed in the use of gray-zone tactics—"intense political, economic, informational, and military competition more fervent in nature than normal steady-state diplomacy, yet short of conventional war"—and other information-heavy approaches. Accordingly, only a highly adaptive, flexible, and iterative process of integrated campaigning offers any hope of long-term success.[14]

The linear, sequential, and highly centralized planning and campaign development processes of the previous century cannot deliver the level of agility and adaptability required to maintain an advantage in current operating environments. Applying instruments of power deftly and in coordination with whole-of-government and alliance actors requires a planning approach that identifies common characteristics of diverse and seemingly unrelated problem sets and aligns policy-driven end states with shorter-term objectives and activities. This is where integrated campaigning can be of the greatest value.

Integrated campaigning forgoes the "false dichotomy of peace and war" or the existence of "artificially static environments that can be broken into discrete *campaigns* with fixed end-states" by recognizing "the need for proactive, ongoing *campaigning* that adjusts to fluid policy environments and changing conditions to create favorable and sustainable outcomes."[15] This adaptability allows policymakers and commanders to understand, shape, and influence adversaries, partners, and neutrals throughout enduring or discrete operations.

---

13.   Ehlers and Blannin, "Information Environment"; and Eric X. Schaner, "What Are OIE?: Definition and Functions," *Marine Corps Gazette* 104, no. 4 (April 2020): 20–22, https://mca-marines .org/wp-content/uploads/MCG-April-2020.pdf.

14.   Joseph L. Votel et al., "Unconventional Warfare in the Gray Zone," *Joint Force Quarterly* 80, no. 1 (1st Quarter 2016): 102, https://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-80/jfq -80_101-109_Votel-et-al.pdf.

15.   JCS, JCIC, iii.

Crucially, integrated campaigning is ongoing. Supporting organizational structures and processes must be established, including cross-functional planning teams, formal and informal information-sharing networks, and information pass-along as members of planning teams move to other assignments. Integrated campaigning must not be episodic but instead constant and consistent in line with the evolving problems it addresses.

Viewed through the lens of current planning processes, however, campaign planning approaches across the competition continuum have inherent contradictions. Joint Doctrine Note 1-19, *Competition Continuum*, states, "campaigning through cooperation is usually an enduring activity with no discreet start or end point."[16] How does this direction align with traditional ends-, ways-, and means-based planning? The efficacy of cooperation-oriented activities can only be accurately assessed once they are tested in a competitive environment. Consequently, planning must remain proactive, not reactive. Also, while adaptability is key to success in competitive environments, achieving long-term strategic aims is the primary motivation and must inform planning, execution, and assessment.

Additionally, constraints and restraints emerge from the same precept upon which integrated campaigning is based. Domestic and international law apply the distinction between peace and war to legitimize, rationalize, and regulate the use of force. The transition to a state of war—declared or undeclared—also justifies the allocation of resources coinciding with an increase in acceptable risk. For an institution as large as the US Department of Defense, it is easier to treat these matters in distinct categories rather than on a complex sliding scale. Are the existing legal and institutional advantages of the artificial and simplistic peace/war binary compatible with the multidimensional complex sliding scale now characterizing competition and conflict?[17] Moreover, what is the role of the military in an environment characterized by multidimensional complexity?

Despite these potential limitations, integrated campaign planning and its ultimate result, integrated campaigning, enable commanders to excel in armed conflict, and ideally short of it, through the skillful application of whole-of-government cooperation and competition strategies. Commanders must be alert to the tension between military and other instruments of power and strive continuously for proper balance.

Perhaps most important, integrated campaigning reduces the difficulty of operating in the hyperconnected global security environment by enabling information maneuver in coordination with more traditional physical forms of maneuver. State and nonstate actors are becoming adept at articulating the concept of information maneuver. They

---

16.   JCS, *Competition Continuum*, Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1-19 (Washington, DC: JCS, June 3, 2019), vi, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/jdn_jg/jdn1_19.pdf; and JCS, JCIC, 7.

17.   JCS, JCIC, 31–32.

recognize how continuous, integrated, well-timed, and well-targeted shaping and influence actions enable combined effects at the whole-of-government and whole-of-nation levels and enable combined-arms effects at the military level. Employing properly targeted information in the right places and times, against the right audiences, either in conjunction with physical force or independent of it, is crucial in the hyperconnected hyperconnected global security environment. Our adversaries understand this concept.

Consequently, in the face of a militarily superior United States, other players work to achieve strategic aims through gray-zone activities. Russia, for example, has developed a range of nonmilitary and quasi-military capabilities and tasks not normally assigned to Western militaries. The Russian Federation's use of reflexive control and its associated activities is a case in point.[18] Russian operations in Georgia, Crimea, and Ukraine have made full use of these capabilities to throw opponents off balance and keep them on the defensive in the battle for narrative and physical dominance.[19]

During a crisis, doing something is often seen as imperative. This bias for action frequently results in the military becoming the default responder.[20] If timely action is a priority, the military can effectively be brought to bear, as other instruments of power are rarely as responsive. But the nonintegrated deployment of military assets rarely delivers sound, long-term solutions to crises, making imperative a synchronized whole-of-government approach.[21] In this way, other instruments of power can set the conditions to make military efforts either unnecessary or more effective. Russia has moved in this direction, as has China with its "Informationized Warfare" and "Three Warfares" approaches.[22]

China continues to enhance its information warfare capabilities and build its information advantage, emphasizing operations designed to weaken an enemy force's command and control systems.[23] The People's Liberation Army has boosted its multi-domain, anti-access/area-denial

18.   Michael Holloway, "How Russia Weaponized Social Media in Crimea," Real Clear Defense, May 10, 2017, https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2017/05/10/how_russia _weaponized_social_media_in_crimea_111352.html; and Keir Giles, James Sherr, and Anthony Seaboyer, Russian Reflexive Control (Kingston, Ontario: Royal Military College of Canada, October 2018), 13–23, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328562833_Russian_Reflexive_Control.

19.   Valery Gerasimov, "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying Out Combat Operations," reprinted in *Military Review* (January–February 2016): 23–29, https://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/7/military -review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20160228_art008.pdf.

20.   Robert Gates, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense [DoD], February 6, 2006), 86, https://archive.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/QDR20060203.pdf.

21.   John J. Frewen, "A Bias for Action? The Military as an Element of National Power," in *New Directions in Strategic Thinking 2.0: ANU Strategic and Defence Studies Centre's Golden Anniversary Conference Proceedings*, ed. Russell W. Glenn (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2018), 44.

22.   Dean Cheng, *Cyber Dragon: Inside China's Information Warfare and Cyber Operations*, The Changing Face of War, edited by James Jay Carafano (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2017), 37–53.

23.   Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), *FY04 Report to Congress on PRC Military Power, Pursuant to the FY2000 National Defense Authorization Act: Annual Report on the Military Power of the People's Republic of China* (Washington, DC: OSD, 2004), https://www.globalsecurity.org/military /library/report/2004/d20040528prc.pdf.

capabilities.[24] China is also improving its cyber capabilities, including computer network attacks, electronic warfare, and information blockades of its computer networks. Chinese leaders realize how important emerging technologies are to national success. Artificial intelligence, for example, has assumed a major role in Beijing's ambitious *Made in China 2025* plan. This technology-based blueprint details a three-phase strategy to maintain market share in 2020, develop significant breakthroughs by 2025, and dominate the sector (along with nine other high-tech sectors) by 2030.[25]

Although their playbooks differ, Russian and Chinese means for obtaining and leveraging the initiative in conflict and gray-zone competition derive from their understanding that using and manipulating information more rapidly and effectively than their opponents offers major advantages. These approaches spring from a deep contextual understanding of the problem, its key players, and how changes in the speed and ubiquity of information flows have altered planning and operational requirements. Moreover, Russia and China can move unpredictably, execute operations rapidly, and fail fast without severe internal political ramifications, which makes them more risk tolerant.

Although Russian and Chinese activities have elicited a range of punitive responses, their governments arguably have mitigated the impacts by co-opting whole-of-nation capabilities as force multipliers in an enduring and scalable manner. Acknowledging this reality is important because the West has difficulty replicating such whole-of-nation capabilities for structural, legal, and moral reasons. Adopting an integrated campaigning mindset, however, may facilitate development of the whole-of-nation effects leveraged by Russia and China. Integrated campaigning will also facilitate more effective whole-of-alliance (or coalition) actions using all instruments of power in a coordinated, synchronized, and interactive manner.

Understanding both the major impacts of information on the contemporary global security environment and how our principal opponents use that information to gain advantage in specific situations makes it possible to understand not only why integrated campaign planning and integrated campaigning are vital, but also how these concepts might best be operationalized.

Operationalizing Integrated Planning and Campaigning

The *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* begins with a warning:

> The United States is in a worldwide competition with emerging and resurgent global powers, aspiring regional hegemons, and non-state actors

24. S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Nanyang Technological University, *Countering Anti-Access/Area Denial Challenges: Strategies and Capabilities*, Event Report (Singapore: RSIS, December 1, 2017), https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ER180424 _Countering-Anti-Access.pdf.

25. People's Republic of China (PRC) State Council, *Made in China 2025* (Beijing: PRC State Council, July 7, 2015), http://www.cittadellascienza.it/cina/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/IoT -ONE-Made-in-China-2025.pdf.

> seeking to challenge aspects of the post-World War II international order. For the foreseeable future, adversaries will continue to creatively combine conventional and non-conventional methods to achieve their objectives. Many will operate below a threshold that invokes a direct military response from the United States while retaining the capability to escalate to more conventional armed conflict if desired.[26]

To meet these challenges, the United States and its Allies and partners must engage in Joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational integrated campaigning across all instruments of power. The *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* defines integrated campaigning as, "Joint Force and interorganizational partner efforts to enable the achievement and maintenance of policy aims by integrating military activities and aligning nonmilitary activities of sufficient scope, scale, simultaneity, and duration across multiple domains."[27] Its "foundational idea" is "to enable *an expanded view of the operational environment* by proposing the notion of a *competition continuum.* This competition continuum offers an alternative to the old peace/war binary with a new model of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict. These are not mutually exclusive but rather states of relationships with other actors that can exist concurrently."[28]

To develop and practice integrated planning and campaigning, four actions are required: understanding the problem and its associated operating environment through the lens of the competition continuum; constructing iterative campaigns using a design process that coordinates and deconflicts military and nonmilitary activities; employing force and securing gains in campaigns tailored to the operational environment; and assessing and adapting campaigns based on objectives aligned with strategic priorities.[29]

These approaches signal a fundamental shift in what planning entails. Specifically, planning must become an integrated, long-term, continuous process operating in parallel with the integrated campaigning it sets in motion. This effort requires planners to monitor continually the progress made in achieving objectives and end states.

Achieving this combination is challenging. The process revolves around the core of a clearly articulated mission and a well-defined (and achievable) end state. The Australian Defence Force's *Information War: ADF Manoeuvre in the Information Environment*, JDN 1-20 emphasizes, "defence against threats generated in the IE [information environment] requires a national strategic narrative."[30] Unlike the United States, however, the Australian government does not produce a national security strategy to articulate a national security-oriented strategic narrative nested within a grand strategy. There is no "over-arching

---

26.   JCS, JCIC, 5.
27.   JCS, JCIC, 5.
28.   JCS, JCIC, 6.
29.   JCS, JCIC, 5–6.
30.   Australian Department of Defence (ADoD), *Information War: ADF Manoeuvre in the Information Environment*, JDN 1-20 (Canberra: Joint Doctrine Directorate, 2020), 5.15.

controlling national policy or architecture . . . to [facilitate] contest in the IE."[31] Similarly problematic is the American tendency not to act in accordance with its national security strategy.

Viewed through the lens of the hyperconnected global security environment and its dynamics, the imperatives for effective and achievable strategic aims, coordinated policy formulation, effective policy execution, and strategic patience all drive requirements for major changes in planning and operations. This new mindset will support the rapid, effective, and persistent integration of operations across the cognitive, physical, and informational domains to achieve integrated campaigning objectives.

The combination of inertia brought on by decades of traditional planning processes, legal and ethical constraints, and the relative freedom of action of adversaries and competitors all present challenges. Together, they make translating planning and operational improvements into effective integrated campaigning difficult. In fact, developing mature and capable integrated campaign planning and campaigning processes requires a paradigm shift in the structures and processes of planning organizations themselves.[32]

From Concept to Practice

Campaign plans seek to shape the operational environment and achieve national objectives.[33] These plans establish operations, activities, and investments to achieve objectives in support of strategic priorities. Objectives must be continuously assessed. As they are achieved (or determined to be infeasible), decisionmakers update the plans with new objectives and assessment measures. Integrated campaigning includes operations across the spectrum of conflict, creating opportunities to affect the operational environment favorably.

Campaign planning identifies means to achieve specific effects and objectives. By extension, integrated campaign plans seek to capitalize on the cumulative effect of multiple coordinated and synchronized operations, effects, activities, and investments that cannot be accomplished by a single operation. This approach facilitates integrated campaigning with a continuous, coordinated planning process executed in parallel with the operations it sets in motion.[34]

The implications of this approach, specifically for long-term problems, are important. Setting conditions is vital to campaign planning because it involves a range of whole-of-government and international factors shaping the problem. Shaping and influencing target audiences, steadily and well ahead of the problem becoming a crisis, is

31.   ADoD, JDN 1-20, 5–21.
32.   Marcus Thompson, "Information Warfare – A New Age?," (speech, iWar Five Eyes Principals' Forum, Australian Defence Force Headquarters, Canberra, October 31–November 1, 2018).
33.   DoD, *Joint Planning*, Joint Publication 5-0 (2017), I-1.
34.   DoD, JCIC, 1–8.

imperative. Accordingly, integrated campaign planning relies heavily on continuous war gaming, red teaming, and assessment, all of which help decisionmakers stay ahead of problems, anticipate major developments, and gain initiative over time as integrated campaigning continues. The line between planning and operations is increasingly blurry precisely because planning and operations occur simultaneously over long periods. Trying to gain the initiative and achieve continuing advantage involves parallel efforts along with careful phasing and sequencing.

Unlike deliberate planning, which produces operational plans that may or may not be executed in the future, integrated campaign planning addresses ongoing, complex problems that require constant engagement. A similar dynamic pertains when comparing integrated campaign planning with crisis action planning. While the latter addresses an immediate problem and will often be executed, such planning begins and ends at specific points in time, while integrated campaign planning and the integrated campaigning it supports continue for the duration of the problem.

Iterative planning and assessment, along with frequent and realistic war gaming and red teaming, facilitate plan development, operations, and the continuous updates required to stay ahead of opponents. The feedback loops and other observe-orient-decide-act aspects of this dynamic are often intensely negative for the party falling behind. Important changes in structures and processes associated with this aspect of integrated campaign planning include establishing standing and multidisciplinary planning groups with a long-term focus on security problems and high levels of understanding regarding those problems. These planning groups require human-machine interfaces that provide advanced data analytics to help planners understand how the problem is evolving, identify possible solutions, and select a viable course of action.

Condition setting, continuous assessment during parallel planning and execution, and updating campaign plans faster and more effectively than opponents all maximize the probability of addressing problems successfully and short of armed conflict. Long-term shaping and influencing to place an opponent in a position of relative disadvantage is vital, as is the battle for the loyalty of partners, neutrals, and others in the court of global public opinion. Alienating these groups with an approach too reliant on the threat of physical force and too light on information mass and maneuver will erode support and endanger relationships with potential partners. Nonlethal approaches and actions are well worth the effort, and continuously and methodically planning for them is at least as important as planning for lethal actions.

Key Aspects and Recommendations

The foregoing discussion of planning for long-term complex problems provided the general approaches, structures, and processes necessary for effective planning and operations in the hyperconnected

global security environment. The most important of these best practices can be summarized as follows.

Persistence. Integrated campaign planning must be continuous. Unlike conventional plans, integrated campaign planning changes constantly because it occurs in parallel with the integrated campaigning it supports. The requirements for persistence in information-centric planning parallel the rapid flow of information itself as well as the fast-paced shifts in behavior and initiative such information flow drives. Speed requires a speedy antidote, or at least a persistent and timely one, and this begins with the planning process.

Standing planning groups. Multidisciplinary standing planning groups, comprised of the best available people by skill set and experience, are indispensable for integrated campaign planning and integrated campaigning. The Israeli Defense Force Spokesperson's Unit and its real-time media center compose one case in point. While this organization is an operations center designed to counter and provide dueling narratives and messages, the deeper function that allows this activity is persistent and time-sensitive planning by the right groups of people.[35] The need for standing planning groups applies to problems as urgent as Israel's conflicts with Hamas and as long term and gradual as those involving China and Russia.

Organizational structure and processes. An organization's structure and processes must facilitate persistent, well-informed, and well-staffed planning. While the Joint (J-code) structure accomplishes this integration in limited ways, it is far from ideal for addressing long-term, complex problems, especially those with high operational tempos. The key shortcoming within the J-code structure is not the number of J-code directorates but the paucity of truly integrated teams dedicated to working specific problems over long time periods. This close and persistent integration of personnel in permanent spaces—rather than coming together occasionally on neutral ground—is key to integrated campaigning.

Time and depth. Certain numbers of US military officers need to be generalists—as in "general officers." The rest of the officer corps needs greater time and depth in specific, long-term problem sets much like their enlisted and civilian counterparts who are generally hired to provide deep expertise and continuity. Practical solutions to this challenge of time and depth can be found by updating the military personnel assignments process. While less than 1 percent of officers will reach flag rank, the majority are developed professionally as though they might. While this professional development opens a wider window for the selection of flag officers, it drastically reduces the aggregate time and depth officers have in any given problem set or area of specialty. The "up or out" system is not very effective in the current security environment.

---

35. Neal Ungerleider, "Inside the Israeli Military's Social Media Squad," *Fast Company*, November 20, 2012, https://www.fastcompany.com/3003305/inside-israeli-militarys-social-media-squad; and Patrikarakos, *War in 140 Characters*, 63–90.

Whole-of-government approach. No aspect of integrated campaigning is less well developed. Because most problems in the global security arena are long term, highly complex, and reliant on an all-instruments-of-power approach, no single instrument of national power will suffice to deal with them. Unfortunately, whole-of-government approaches are limited in scope and are the exception rather than the norm. Cultural and contextual differences account for much of this nonintegration, and the current hyperpartisanship only exacerbates the problem. Standing, cross-functional planning teams must include long-term participants from all interested agencies and departments sitting in common spaces and working at an all-instruments-of-power level. This comprehensive approach is the basis of effective interagency coordination, civil-military cooperation, Joint and multinational operations, and the effective use of structures such as Joint interagency coordination groups and Joint interagency task forces.

Engagements with nongovernmental experts. Because limited numbers of real experts in a given problem set reside within the government, planners must seek insight from business, academic, professional, humanitarian, and other entities with relevant interests. These relationships must be cultivated over time and at the organizational level to build mutual understanding and cooperation.

Advanced and basic planning tools. The rapid development of advanced data analytics and artificial intelligence technologies is changing how humans understand and engage with complex problems. While technology is not a substitute for human interaction and interconnections, it is moving in that direction. Planning teams need a combination of the latest interactive technologies along with the venerable and still indispensable whiteboards and butcher-block paper. These legacy methods facilitate a more creative and interactive planning process even as cutting-edge tools enhance analytical insights.

Conclusion

Today the national interests, citizens, and territories of the United States and its Allies and partners are threatened in every operating domain by regional instability, failed states, increased weapons proliferation, global terrorism, unconventional threats, and challenges from adversaries. Working within this highly complex environment, planners must learn to engage in integrated campaign planning, and their operational counterparts in integrated campaigning. To succeed, planners and operators must embrace the realities of this security environment, including its complex informational aspects, and operate with clarity from within. The hyperconnected global security environment of today mandates a flexible, adaptive approach to military planning and ever-greater cooperation between all the elements of national power, coordinated with that of our Allies, partners, and various intergovernmental, nongovernmental, and regional security organizations.

Robert S. Ehlers Jr.

Dr. Robert Ehlers, the director of Advanced Learning Programs at JMark Services, Inc., is the author of *Targeting the Third Reich: Air Intelligence and the Allied Bombing Campaigns* (2009) and *The Mediterranean Air War: Airpower and Allied Victory in World War II* (2015).

Patrick Blannin

Dr. Patrick Blannin, operations analyst with the Australian Department of Defence, is the author of *Enduring Contest: Theories, Concepts, and Practice of Information Warfare* (forthcoming).