

JOINT EFFECTS

Integration and Synchronisation of Lethal and Non-lethal Activities

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IN TODAY'S WORLD, NATO is confronted with threats in different ways and from different directions, which must be addressed in a firm and de-escalating way. In addressing these threats, a broad range of capabilities and functions is required, both lethal and non-lethal, to be used in a synchronised and integrated manner during the phases of strategic competition, crisis, and conflict.

Until recently, the main focus was on the preparation and conduct of crisis and conflict operations, but this focus has now been extended to a situation of strategic competition, which is also defined as "situations short of armed conflict". During this situation, only non-lethal activities — primarily information and influence activities — are used by the Alliance militaries. However, they should be used



ABOVE: ESPS Victoria and TCG Karadeniz Eregli, reflected in azimuth mirror, at the Black Sea during SEA SHIELD. Photo by MARCOM

in a way that when the situation of strategic competition shifts towards crisis and conflict, this balance between lethal and non-lethal activities in a supporting/supported role seamlessly adapts to the new situation without major organizational changes.

To materialise this process of a balanced use of lethal and non-lethal activities in a fully integrated and synchronised way during all phases of strategic competition, crisis, and conflict, NATO developed the joint function "Joint Effects". Joint Effects is the integration and synchronisation of resources and capabilities to create desired effects through lethal and non-lethal activities using the iterative targeting process as the driving factor on all three levels: strategic, operational, and tactical.

With this article, I would like to provide





ABOVE: (clockwise) Some of the non-lethal military enablers include information activities, lawfare, electronic warfare and cyber defence. Today, there are many valid reasons to consider non-lethal enablers as the primary option to achieve desired effects during crisis and conflict.

more insight into Joint Effects as a joint function and the way non-lethal activities are synchronised and integrated with lethal activities, with a focus on the communication capabilities and information staff function creating psychological effects under the overarching function of Strategic Communications (StratCom).¹

NATO DESCRIBES joint effects as the full spectrum approach to targeting as well as integrating and synchronising lethal and non-lethal activities to effectively and efficiently achieve desired effects in support of defined objectives. Although this official description is clear, Joint Effects actually covers a highly significant paradigm shift. The concept requires a much broader and multidimensional understanding of the terms used than ever before. I will, therefore, explain these terms, but in order to do so, I will first need to explain the paradigm shift, that is the shift from a full military focus on a lethal approach to a combined focus on a lethal and non-lethal approach. Indeed, the Joint Effects is a way to step away

from focusing solely on lethal actions during a crisis or conflict. Moreover, Joint Effects is an approach that aims at integrating and synchronising lethal and non-lethal activities, covering the entire range of strategic competition, crisis, and conflict.

In terms of achieving desired effects and objectives, military thinking is still dominated by lethal activities with minimum emphasis on

non-lethal activities. They are most of the time only a supporting capacity. There were several reasons behind this focus on lethal activities in the past. Firstly, it takes longer to prepare and assess non-lethal activities. Secondly, the planning frameworks for implementing non-lethal activities are limited. Joint Effects was therefore initiated to develop this planning framework to ease implementation of non-lethal activities, to provide the commander with more means and support.

Today, there are many valid reasons to consider non-lethal activities as the primary option to achieve desired effects. Non-lethal activities are normally less costly, have a lower logistic burden, provide more options to de-escalate than lethal activities, and result in lower reconstruction efforts post conflict. So, unless there is no other option but to use lethal activities, I believe that the use of non-lethal activities must be seriously considered as the first option. In this context one should always keep in mind that military activities are not an end in themselves, but rather supporting higher strategic, political objectives.

What NATO previously referred to as "Joint Targeting" is today incorporated into the term "Joint Effects". The new term better reflects the full spectrum approach to targeting. I see this as a necessary evolution and adaptation





integration and synchronisation of Fires, a warfighting function that primarily focuses on Fire Support Systems, but nowadays it also refers to non-lethal activities. Fires provide the commander the ability to affect the physical component of adversary fighting power, which ultimately impacts their understanding and moral component and consequently influencing their will to fight.²

Although Fires is defined as the use of a weapon system applied directly or indirectly to create a wide range of lethal and non-lethal physical and psychological effects, it is more than only the use of kinetic capabilities or means.³ Physical effects are mostly relatively easy to observe and measure. Most of the time, this is not the case with psychological effects. Although there is a lot to tell about the achievement of effects, in this article I have chosen to only focus on the psychological effects as a result of non-lethal activities.

Integrating lethal and non-lethal activities through cross-functional approach

Non-lethal activities are not intended or are unlikely to result in the loss of lives or the destruction of a target. Indeed, the primary intention of non-lethal activities is to prevent loss of lives. Probably the best known and most used non-lethal military capabilities are Psychological Operations and Military Public Affairs, but in this context, we also need

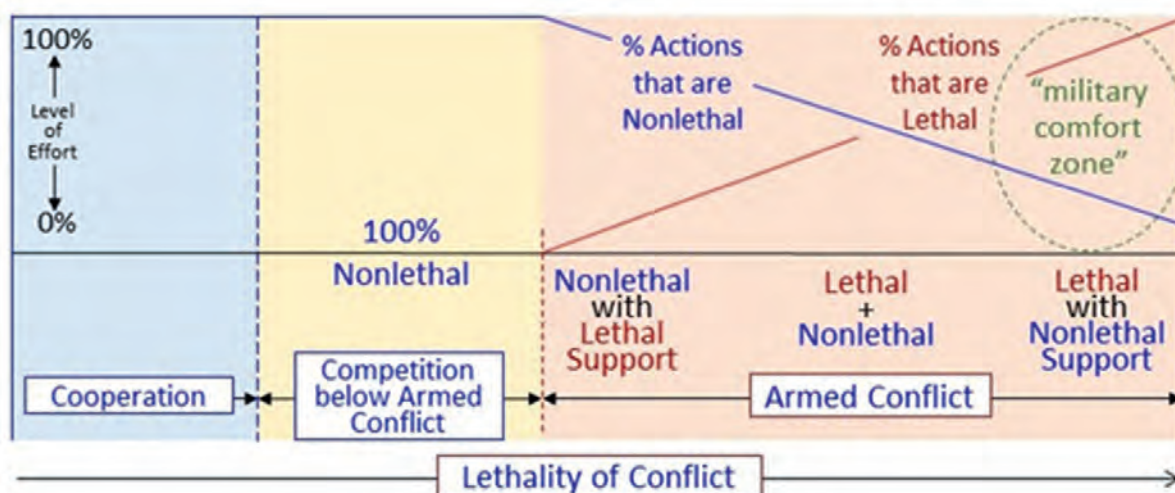
of the previous concept of Joint Targeting, to fit the challenging current and future security environment. The description makes it clear that Joint Effects is not replacing Joint Targeting, but rather that it is based on, and uses targeting, as a way to assure the integration and synchronisation of all available resources.

NATO's Joint Targeting process is the backbone of Joint Effects. Through the cyclic targeting process, based on the sequence of understanding, integration, synchronisation and execution, Joint Effects brings together lethal

and non-lethal activities to achieve desired effects. These capabilities are traditionally, Joint Targeting, Joint Fires, and Intelligence, but also, and not limited to, the non-lethal capabilities, Electronic Warfare, Cyber, Legal, and especially the communications capabilities, together with the information staff function, all under the overarching umbrella of StratCom.

The targeting process identifies the activities based on the available resources required to achieve desired effects and objectives. The targeting process includes the

BELOW: Integration of lethal and non-lethal actions, provided by the author (Source: Multinational Capability Development Campaign, 2017-18)



to include Electronic Warfare, Legal, Cyber and Space. The psychological effects of non-lethal activities are generally meant to change a certain undesired behaviour or influence the decision-making of the opponent; the first order effect is therefore a cognitive one. After the cognitive effect comes the change of intent, or how willing the opponent is to change their behavior, the second order effect. Finally, and if the latter is achieved, the third order effect is the observable and actual change of the opponent's behaviour. It is this cognitive aspect that makes it difficult and time consuming to effectively determine non-lethal effects.

The preparation is in itself already a complex process, and the assessment of effects is even more complex, time consuming and, in some cases, even impossible. This is why the integration and synchronisation of lethal and non-lethal activities needs to be identified as early as possible, preferably during the Operational Planning Process. The best way to integrate lethal and non-lethal activities is through a cross-functional approach, since desired effects are seldom fully achieved through one single capability, but through the use of multiple capabilities supporting each other. This requires the early involvement, participation, and coordination of adequate functional expertise during the design and planning process. During crisis and conflict, Joint Effects will be an integral aspect of the crisis management plan.

Starting with the design and planning, the integration and synchronisation of lethal and non-lethal activities continues during the phases of strategic competition, crisis or conflict. In this process, the Joint Targeting Cycle (JTC) plays a key role. The JTC is a cyclical process, starting with direction and guidance and followed by the development of targets. An analysis of the required and available means is then carried out, resulting in the planning and execution of lethal and non-lethal activities. Finally, the process concludes with an assessment.

The Joint Effects process of integrating and synchronising lethal and non-lethal activities starts with the authorisation of the North Atlantic Council (NAC). Through the Military Committee, SACEUR takes the overall responsibility for the NATO targeting activities during strategic competition, crisis or conflict. Within SHAPE, the Joint Effects Branch (JEB) is tasked to further operationalise this responsibility supported by, but not limited to,

the SHAPE Communications Division, NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre and the Centralised Targeting Capability.

The NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre, a NATO charter organization, is currently responsible for producing and sharing information on targets. This is done based on set indicators and warnings developed together with nations and partners. This so-called Federated Approach, which consists of sharing information with different entities based on set standards and processes, is soon to be the responsibility of the Centralised Targeting Capacity.

Meanwhile, the SHAPE Communications Division contributes to Joint Effects, based on the overall StratCom framework. In doing so, it uses the JTC with a specific focus on the Information Environment to be able to generate desired effects through information and influence activities. These activities are conducted by the above-mentioned communications capabilities and information staff function and are aimed at informing audiences and influencing opponents' decision-making processes, information, and their information systems. The StratCom framework is not only important for the information activities, but also for the development of all activities as part of the integrated targeting plan.

Key StratCom principles identified for Joint Effects

In this context, it should be mentioned that the StratCom principles as defined in the NATO Military Policy on Strategic Communications (MC 0628) clearly states that these principles apply equally for activities and actions, both kinetic and non-kinetic, which have an effect within the information environment. From the eight principles identified, the following ones are especially important for StratCom's relationship with Joint Effects:

- Activities are driven by objectives derived from the narrative, policy, and the strategy issued within the framework of political/military direction. This principle assures that all activities are conducted based upon political and military authorisation within the set legal framework.
- Words and actions must be aligned: what we say and what we do need to be coherent.

- Communication is both a collective and integrated effort. Through this principle it is clear that communication is not something isolated from other military activities, but an integrated effort involving all military on all levels.

- Focus is on achieving the desired effects and outcomes. This is actually the basic principle for Joint Effects, as it focuses on achieving desired effects. The operational effects are developed by joint planners and approved by the Joint Force Commander in support of defined operational objectives.

BASED ON THE ABOVE, it is clear that StratCom and Joint Effects are mutually supportive. An important reason why StratCom is of importance to Joint Effects, apart from integration and synchronisation, is the utilisation of StratCom during all phases of strategic competition, crisis, or conflict, but especially during strategic completion, or what is now also understood as the "Baseline Enablers and Current Operations" (BACO). BACO defines the situation of strategic completion that stays below the threshold of armed conflict, but when not handled well, it could lead to a direct confrontation or even an armed conflict. For that reason, all non-lethal dimensions of power to influence and deter a potential opponent need to be considered, and all the available capabilities must be applied in an integrated and synchronised manner.

The integration of lethal and non-lethal activities is important, but has its limitations. It is impossible to integrate and synchronise all lethal and non-lethal activities. This would be extremely time consuming and slow down all activities because lethal and non-lethal activities have different timelines for planning, execution and assessment. Nevertheless, there is a clear need to find the maximum degree of integration and synchronisation possible to avoid disintegration of efforts and fragmentation of effects.

The focus on achieving desired effects through the integration and synchronisation of lethal and non-lethal activities may sound familiar to some of you and can easily be seen as a kind of rebranding, reinventing of Effects Based Approach to Operations (EBAO). However, this is not the case, because there are significant differences despite apparent similarities



“Non-lethal capabilities, when integrated and synchronised with lethal capabilities, provide a commander with a wide range of tools to achieve desired effects.”



ABOVE: Norwegian F-16 getting ready to take off from Bodø Air Station during Exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2018.
Photo by Hanne Hernes, Forsvaret

between EBAO and Joint Effects. Starting with the similarities, both EBAO and Joint Effects have a focus on achieving effects, and they share a broader view on the ways and means to achieve the desired effects. At the same time, the main difference between Joint Effects and EBAO is that EBAO is looking to all instruments of power of which the military are only one of the many, whereas Joint Effects is only looking to the military aspects.

WITHIN THE MILITARY context, Joint Effects is trying to achieve a better and more balanced, integrated and synchronised approach using both lethal and non-lethal resources. As already mentioned, non-lethal activities are not an add-on, but should be the preferred options for a commander to use, and at the same time providing a commander more options than initially foreseen. Joint Effects provides the commander with a tool to achieve effects

in situations that were not given much importance in the past. Joint Effects, simply put, is a process that can make it easier to transfer from a situation of strategic competition into a crisis or conflict situation and vice versa. This is something that was also not foreseen in EBAO.

IN CONCLUSION, non-lethal activities, when integrated and synchronised with lethal activities, provide a commander with a wide range of tools to achieve desired effects in support of the set objectives. This requires a clear and solid process together with a more efficient organizational structure. Joint Effects provides process and organizational structure. Furthermore, there are several reasons why the use of non-lethal activities is the best option for a commander. Finally, within this context, StratCom is the provider of the overarching structure for non-lethal activities through the communication capabilities and information staff function, and therefore, of key importance for Joint Effects. ✦

ENDNOTES

- 1 The integration of communications capabilities and information staff function with other activities, in order to understand and shape the information environment in support of NATO aims and objectives (MC 0628 NATO Military Policy on Strategic Communications).
- 2 AJP 3.0(c) para 1.44
- 3 Within NATO, there is an ongoing discussion about the definition of the terms "lethal/non-lethal" versus "kinetic/non-kinetic". So far, the term "lethal/non-lethal" is used to referring to NATO targeting capabilities. Based on the U.S. doctrine, an option could be to use the term "kinetic/non-kinetic" for capabilities and means, and the term "lethal/non-lethal" for effects. Another alternative could be to use the Canadian term "munition/non-munition" based for the capabilities and means.