

Ethical Decision Problem #9

Possible Malingering

Situation

You are the officer-in-charge (OIC) of a small unit of Marines. Having worked with these Marines for quite a few months, you feel that you have a solid working knowledge of their individual strengths and weaknesses.

LCpl Church is a young, married Marine with less than a year in the Marine Corps. He has experienced some difficulty associating with the rest of the platoon. He is quiet and shy. His performance of duty is marginal, and you attribute this to his lack of interest in his work and a lack of enthusiasm for the Marine Corps in general.

During a normal weekend of liberty, LCpl Church had a “nervous breakdown” the evening prior to reporting back for duty. He was taken to the hospital where he is diagnosed as having a “mental condition,” but he soon returns to duty.

A few days later, LCpl Church’s truck has substantial damage to the right front fender. When he reported the accident to you, LCpl Church explained that the brakes on his truck failed, and he hit a wall. Soon after, you received a call from the psychiatrist who describes the accident in detail. According to the psychiatrist’s version LCpl Church saw “shadow people” in front of him and hit a wall as he swerved to avoid them.

On several other occasions, you have been provided with a perfectly plausible explanation for an event, only to find that the psychiatrist has been told the “shadow people” were involved. The pieces fall into place. You are becoming increasingly convinced that LCpl Church is plotting to escape the Marine Corps on a mental discharge.

What now, Captain?

EDPs involve real-world leadership challenges that usually have a significant ethical/values component. They are typical of challenges that have confronted Marines in the past and could easily be encountered in the future. Readers should analyze the problem carefully and decide what action they would take.

Turn to page 66 to see how others say they would have handled this problem.

While control certainly may "glue" the force together and ensure management of the battlefield seams problem, it also may degrade the combat power of the force by depriving it of surprise, flexibility, and the ability to conduct effective maneuver. It appears, as stated earlier, when operational maneuver is used, there is a great deal of friction that cannot be resolved by simply reorganizing the force or exercising stricter control.

What Is Maneuver?

Maneuver warfare is defined as operations that seek to shatter the enemy's cohesion through a series of rapid, violent, and unexpected actions that create a turbulent and rapidly deteriorating situation with which he cannot cope. Maneuver is achieved by the use of decentralized control, mission orders and directives, and a well-communicated commander's intent and end state.

Decentralized control, by definition, takes the control of forces on the battlefield and places it in the hands of the maneuver elements within an operational command. It does not mean, however, that the operational commander relinquishes all responsibility for his subordinate elements. While the object is to have subordinate commanders make decisions on their own initiative, they must also keep the operational commander aware of changes on the battlefield. The key is that the operational commander does not use his situational awareness of the battle to stifle the initiative of his subordinates.

The second method for achieving maneuver is to rely on mission orders. This is the art of assigning a subordinate a mission without specifying in excruciating detail how the mission must be accomplished. From the operational commander's perspective the operational concept must plan for movement of forces and attack of objectives by use of maneuver. Orders to subordinates to support this concept must be specific enough to accomplish the objective and ensure coordination between friendly forces but general enough to allow the subordinate to take advantage of the constantly changing situation on the battlefield.

The third way of enhancing maneuver is to articulate a clear statement of the commander's intent. The intent is a vision that conveys what the commander wants to do to the enemy. It is the desired end state on the battlefield—what the commander wants the enemy to look like when the mission is accomplished. It should not be confused with how the commander wants to accomplish his mission; that is contained in the concept of operations.

Capt Muise goes back to his music analogy for a description of how maneuver warfare

works:

A proper understanding of the military concept (of maneuver) has been compared to a jazz improvisation session: where the whole band works to one broad harmonic framework or direction, but each individual player improvises upon it harmonically, melodically and rhythmically, introducing new shades of colour and new tensions and resolution to intensify—or relax—the sense of pace over the underlying progression. It is the adaptability of the individual initiative to emergent opportunities.

It is easy to see that such an exercise of maneuver, while essential to combat success, will put pressure on the seams of a battlefield. Additionally, the more complex a command or the greater the disparity of military forces on the battlefield (typical of the operational level of war), the more likely we are to incur problems with the seams while executing maneuver. Consequently, with the requirement for maneuver established, and force reorganization and centralized control exposed as counterproductive to seams management, where does the commander turn for tools to ensure unity and focus on the battlefield? I believe we must examine the frequently overlooked concept of harmonious initiative and lateral communications.

Harmonious Initiative

Harmonious initiative is a term that would not appear to have a place in military jargon or warfighting doctrine. Harmony, as defined in the dictionary, is a pleasing combination of the elements that form a whole. Initiative is defined as action without prompting or direction from others. It appears that the two terms contradict one another. However, if we harken back to the example of the jazz session, we can get a sense of how harmonious initiative works. It is initiative that seeks to complement the end state of the group. It is accomplished through training, intuition, and practice. But, most of all, it requires communications between the musicians. By their eyes, ears, and through the feel of the music, they communicate with one another and ensure a harmonious effort. Indirect and lateral communications/coordination between the musicians is the key to the success of the group as a whole. *MCDP 1, Warfighting*, the Marine Corps doctrine on warfighting, also recognizes this need for harmonious initiative and lateral coordination:

It is obvious that we cannot allow decentralized initiative without some means of providing unity, or focus, to the various efforts. To do so would be to dissipate our strength. We seek unity, not principally through imposed control, but through harmonious initiative and lateral coordination within the context provided by guidance from above.

The key, then, to achieving this harmonious initiative is to have effective lateral coordination (or in the case of the operational commander, communications and coordination) between his subordinate maneuver elements. This is the "new glue" that helps us achieve unity of effort on the complex and technical battlefield of the 21st century without falling back on the old and wornout methods of reorganizing the chain of command or centralizing control. But what constitutes lateral coordination and communications? Is it simply having electronic radio and telecommunications between adjacent commanders? Military history provides abundant examples, such as the Battle of Leyte Gulf, that illustrate the misunderstandings that can arise from overreliance on electronic communications. But there are other measures that help avoid this danger.

Liaison: A Concept

Liaison is a tool that has received little attention at either the tactical or operational level of war. The task of being a liaison officer for a command often falls to a less experienced or less competent officer who has failed in other assignments. On the other hand, a wise commander will recognize that a competent liaison officer greatly assists in seams management, builds harmony of effort with higher and adjacent commands, and enhances the command's ability to exercise the initiative necessary on the modern fluid battlefield. In addition to experienced and mature officers, liaison teams must include the best communications equipment and personnel available in order to ensure effective and continuous coordination across the seams of the battlefield. So critical is this type communication to the success of war at the operational level that it is essential that the "liaison channel" be dedicated and continuous. In other words, the communications officer must give as much priority to the liaison net as he does to the command net. *Joint Publication 1: Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States* reinforces the importance of this concept:

Experience shows liaison is a particularly important part of command, control, communications, and computers in a joint force. Recalling Clausewitz' analogy of a military force as an intricate machine, ample liaison parties, properly manned and equipped, may be viewed as a lubricant that helps keep that machine working smoothly.

It is certainly true that there are other methods that commanders may use to communicate with higher and adjacent commands. There is, of course, no substitute for face-to-face communication between commanders. Today that is available not only through

meetings, but also through video teleconferences. However, these methods do not replace nor negate the need for the competent liaison officers/liaison teams.

The cost in manpower and equipment for this concept is not cheap. To dedicate a handful of mature and competent field grade officers and communications specialists to liaison teams that are often not provided for in tables of organization is a hard decision for the commander to make. However, if the proper personnel are assigned, trained, and equipped for the job, the payoff to the commander can be the freedom to exercise harmonious initiative.

Liaison in UPHOLD DEMOCRACY

We now need to return to UPHOLD DEMOCRACY and complete the analysis of that operation. What was the "glue" that ensured the seams for the planned invasion of Haiti were managed and coordinated? The answer was an intricate and comprehensive network of highly skilled liaison teams provided by the JSOTF to the adjacent and higher headquarters. These teams were positioned at the CinC's headquarters, with the JTF commander, with adjacent commanders, at key shore installations, and in airborne C² platforms. They became a two-way street for the flow of information and intent that quite often gets lost in the communications channels and centers or inappropriately filtered by layers of command. Their value can be demonstrated by the absence of a liaison cell in one location. There was, for a number of reasons, no liaison team from the JSOTF with the U.S. Marines in Cap Haitian. They were the one element left out of this information grapevine. Consequently, the Marines had to rely on message traffic and radio communications via several layers of command. What resulted was friction when JSOTF elements planned to operate near or in the area of the Marine forces. Additionally, while other commanders in the organization enjoyed the benefit of receiving near realtime orders and commander's intent from the CJTF, the Marines relied (at least early in the planning cycle) on message traffic filtered through the naval component commander. If the plan had been executed as planned, this is the one seam that potentially could have provided problems due to a lack of liaison/coordination.

Information Superiority

Over the past 18 months, *Joint Vision 2010* and its key enabler, Information Superiority, have matured and taken on greater significance in the joint community. One of the concepts being pursued under Information Superiority is Network Centric Warfare. This

concept envisions fused information, sensor, and engagement grids. The information grid is designed to give the commander dominant battlespace awareness, which is defined as achieved when the level of information possessed by the joint force concerning friendly forces, enemy forces, neutral forces, and the environment in which they are deployed reaches a sufficient level. Clearly the technology exists to "network" the battlefield of the 21st century and to achieve the level of information awareness envisioned by Network Centric Warfare. Consequently, some argue that the JFC will no longer have problems with the seams of the battlefield and will not require extensive liaison capabilities. But this view is by no means unanimous throughout the joint community and the Services. While this level of information awareness may be achievable, without changes in how we push/pull and process data, the JFC may be totally overwhelmed by this new level of information. Additionally, there are also concerns about reliance on an information system, which without significant technological enhancements in protection, is subject to interdiction and damage.

As a supporter of *Joint Vision 2010*, I believe in the power of information as an enabler. However, I also share the concerns expressed above. Consequently, the ideas expressed in this paper, in my opinion, take on even greater relevance on the 2010 battlefield. Effective liaison will become a powerful way for the commander to deal with an explosion of information. Liaison teams will assist in information validation, information fusion, and in understanding the all important "intent" element of information management; ultimately turning information into knowledge. They will also assist in coordination and interface with multinational partners and Reserve components that may possess a lesser capability with their information systems (also to assist in sharing of classified information among allies). Finally, they will provide an all important redundant and

backup capability for retention of dominant battlefield awareness by the JFC in the event of loss of the "network" capability.

Conclusion

The implications for the Marine Corps in joint warfare are clear:

- First, forward deployed MAGTFs will nearly always function as part of a naval component in support of a JTF during contingency operations. If the MAGTF wants to have its capabilities properly understood and employed, wants to minimize friction along the battlefield seams with other land forces, and wants to respond quickly to changes in the JTF operational concept, it will need to provide field grade level liaison cells to adjacent and higher organizations.
- Second, with a standing JTF headquarters within II MEF, the Marine Corps will need to maintain a strong liaison capability in its force structure and an aggressive liaison role in its operational concept.
- Third, all Marine task forces, regardless of size, assigned to a JTF or as part of a naval component within a CinC's area of responsibility will need to plan for deployment of competent liaison cells early in the planning/deployment phase of operations.

Liaison is clearly the glue for management of the seams of the battlefield and effective coordination between higher and adjacent commands. It is the operational concept that harmonizes command, control, and maneuver. In the Chairman's *Joint Vision 2010*, the battlefield of the 21st century will become deeper, faster, and significantly influenced by new technology, and will require "new operational concepts—dominant maneuver, precision engagement, full dimensional protection, and focused logistics." In this type of dynamic joint environment, Marine combat organizations can ill afford to wait for dissemination of information/coordination across the seams of the battlefield. Liaison with higher and adjacent organizations will be critical to combat success.

USMC



>Marine Col Clauer is the division chief for Concepts Division at the Joint Warfighting Center, Ft. Monroe, VA. He is responsible for supporting the commander in JWFC's mission as day-to-day implementor of *Joint Vision 2010* and for development of the Joint Center for Lessons Learned. His division coordinated and produced the recently published *Concept for Future Joint Operations* and is currently working with the joint community to develop a common assessment methodology for experimentation and examination of the operational capabilities desired for 2010.