

NATO Integration

Optimizing the Marine Corps Role in the European Theater

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Extract

E Given the maritime geography, the Indo-Pacific is the primary focus of the Marine Corps. However, Marines must operate and integrate globally, including in the European Theater. In this region, the Marine Corps must move beyond Naval Integration and achieve NATO integration, applying similar concepts and tactics adapted to the operational environment. This can be implemented by: fostering a change in culture amongst Marine leadership and planners; prioritizing and adjusting NATO contributing billets; and exploring short-term and long-term adaptations to improve access to NATO command and control (C2). The result is demonstrated lethality and integration that contributes to deterrence and defense in the Euro-Atlantic Area.

Background

International relations expertise is not required to identify the trendlines leading toward a more unstable and unpredictable multi-axis world. As the Marine Corps has looked toward future capabilities and requirements, it has justifiably focused on the larger, more existential threats posed by the People's Republic of China. However, Russia's continued war of aggression in Ukraine and its reactionary worldview reinforce the requirement for a European aspect to the Marine Corps' senior leadership thinking. Appropriately, the skillset and capabilities necessary to deny freedom of action and freedom of maneuver to our adversary in the Indo-Pacific have equal utility to the geography of the European Theater.

In considering the future, the Marine Corps has embarked on a variety of means to achieve better naval integration. Tactics experimentation, emer-

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gent capability employment, and C2 integration is allowing the Navy and Marine Corps to quickly iterate to find the right balance of role, responsibility, and structure. Task Forces 51/5, 61/2, and 76/3 are each exploring this in ways unique to their operating environments.

The European Theater adds a distinct but critical nuance to this experimentation in the form of NATO. On 4 April 1949 in Washington, DC, twelve nations signed the North Atlantic Treaty "determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They seek to promote stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area."¹ Since its inception, NATO has been responsible for ensuring the security of its member states. Today, NATO consists of 32 members, with Sweden being the newest nation to join.

In 2020, the Brussels Summit launched the NATO 2030 Initiative and with it the Concept for the Deterrence and Defense of the Euro-Atlantic Area, or DDA for short.² This transformative concept has focused the Alliance's strategic approach into a common methodology that transcends the transitions between the peacetime, crisis, and conflict environments. Plans continue to be refined and tested to ensure that the NATO approach is fit for purpose, bounded in reality, and cohesive across the three geographic areas and all domains.

Relevance

As codified in the Washington Treaty, NATO is the political-military body constructed to defend the North Atlantic region in conflict. Simply put, the United States has committed to working through NATO C2 mechanisms should conflict arise. The U.S. demonstrates its commitment to NATO by providing and filling dual-role leadership positions within the alliance.³ Accordingly, in conflict, Alliance nations will likely first initiate unilateral and bilateral actions, then leverage an interim coalition of member states, and ultimately transition to a NATO C2-led campaign that is supported by nationally retained elements. This is a fact. This is what the United States has agreed to support. Should NATO call, we will answer.

So What?

What does this mean for the Marine Corps? It means that in Europe, the Marine Corps needs to go beyond naval integration and seize the opportunity to be at the forefront of NATO integration while still retaining a rightful focus on the Indo-Pacific. The Marine Corps can achieve this by: (1) fostering a change in perspective (culture) amongst our key leaders, (2) prioritizing and adjusting NATO contributing billets, and (3) exploring short- and long-term communications and information systems adaptations to improve access to C2 and ensure lethality. The following sections will explore these challenges and then present potential solutions required to



Marines with Hotel Battery, 2/10 Mar, under tactical control of Task Force 61/2, fire rockets from the M142 HIMARS during FORMIDABLE SHIELD in Andoya, Norway, on May 2023. (Photo by LCpl Eric Dmochowski.)

better posture the Marine Corps for sustained theater employment.

Culture: NATO Knowledge and Understanding

Marine leaders and planners have a general lack of familiarity with the NATO operating environment and C2 construct. This hinders the FMF from optimizing Marine employment in the region and demonstrating the Marine Corps' relevance. Without an understanding of NATO nuances, the Marine Corps misses out on available maneuver space to demonstrate its value proposition to the right target audiences—be it friend or foe.

For a myriad of reasons, NATO is complicated. American service members bring all sorts of implicit assumptions into *which* NATO organizations are responsible for *what* based on the United States' geographic combatant command construct.⁴ This is understandable, but ultimately unhelpful if the Marine Corps intends to assure NATO and nations of its relevance and adaptability to the European Theater. Conversely, when Marine Corps representatives confidently navigate the NATO C2 structure, they demonstrate fluency to NATO leadership and a corresponding readiness to meet strategic and operational objectives.

The NATO lexicon is not the same as the Marine Corps, and nowhere is the awareness of the adage *words mean things* more impactful than in a multilingual alliance like NATO. As an alliance that combines 32 nations with a wide span of cultures, a long history of conflict, and even some areas where there remain substantial disagreements in terms of territory and resources, words and meanings become even more critical. A phrase too often uttered by well-meaning U.S. personnel is *U.S. and NATO* goals or objectives. Recalling that the United States is a founding member of NATO, then this seemingly innocuous statement may be perceived as a lack of awareness and undermine speaker and national credibility and erode trust.⁵ Further, words familiar to the United States have different associated authorities. An *operation* is approved by the North Atlantic Council. An *exercise* has a specific approval process at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) that results in inclusion in the two-year Military Training and Education Program. An *activity* can be approved by SACEUR on a shorter timeline. Being purposeful with NATO language demonstrates competency and increases trust. The more the broader Marine Corps attains the requisite knowledge and understanding of the

NATO cultural landscape, the better that it can align current and emergent capabilities to contribute to solving NATO problem sets.

If You Are Not in the Room, You Are Not in the Plan

U.S. European Command (EUCOM), as geographic combatant command, is responsible for ensuring congruence between U.S. national and NATO planning efforts, with U.S. Marine Forces Europe/Africa (MFE/A) ensuring component representation.⁶ In an ideal world, the actions that nations take in the early stages of a conflict would be consistent with the required shaping efforts that have been outlined in North Atlantic Council-approved NATO plans. From a Marine Corps perspective, what has become apparent is that the Alliance has an antiquated view of amphibious force capabilities and employment, often using passé terms like “forcible entry” and “operational reserve.” The Marine Corps must advocate for the proper employment of *Force Design 2030 (FD 2030)* elements early in NATO plans development. Relationships developed through alliance planning facilitate familiarity and improve integration in conflict.

Each NATO Joint Force Command (JFC) develops its own regional response to hostilities as a part of the broader SHAPE synchronized approach. Responsible for the Baltic Sea Region, JFC Brunssum has traditionally had an Army heavy, land-focused command structure. It is also commanded full-time by a 4-star general officer from a European nation. JFC Naples is a U.S. dual-hatted command that focuses on the Mediterranean and Black Seas and has an established relationship with the traditional maritime nations of these regions. The High North and Atlantic Ocean are under the purview of JFC Norfolk. Although this is also a dual-hatted command, it is currently building personnel capacity to fully exercise the breadth of its roles and responsibilities.

Force Design 2030, Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment, and the Tentative Manual for Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations seek to pre-

pare the Marine Corps to operate successfully in highly contested environments while contributing to a maritime campaign.⁷ Marine Corps forces extend the sensor reach of friendly forces and integrate the employment of organic fires and external joint effects in the air, maritime, and land domains. The maritime geography of the High North, the Baltic, and portions of the Mediterranean lend themselves to this approach as well. The capabilities and concepts that the Marine Corps is evaluating and fielding offer unique solutions that meet NATO operational objectives in these spaces. Through tactical actions to contest key maritime terrain and limit or influence the freedom of movement and freedom of action of opposing forces, Marine units impose operational dilemmas upon adversaries. Marines operating in strategic locations through a deliberate employment plan will disrupt adversary plans over time. The demonstration of this lethality and sustainability in both NATO and European exercises with seamless integration into the variety of C2 structures contributes to deterrence: the ultimate goal of the alliance.

Unfortunately, Marine Corps capabilities will not be accurately represented as part of a European Theater plan—at least not yet. This is because a commonality among all JFCs is the lack of U.S. Marines as contributors to the J5 or J35 teams that advise, assist, and advocate the development of the art of the possible. To capitalize on the power of the FMF in crisis and conflict, the Marine Corps must invest in a sustained staff representation in peacetime. This is the buy-in to sit at the NATO table.

Move, Shoot, and Sustain Requires Communicate

The ability to C2 is enhanced by the effective ability to coordinate and communicate. NATO's strategic and operational organizations are well connected through the NATO Secret Wide Area Network (NSWAN). The challenge is how to seamlessly link the operational level to the tactical executors, especially in times of rapidly escalating crisis.

For perspective, all of the plans, operational designs, shared workspaces,

and commander's briefs that feed the NATO decision cycle reside on NSWAN. The planning, logistics, and targeting systems are built and managed on NSWAN. Air tasking order development is built through a NSWAN application: Integrated Command and Control (ICC). This entire body of knowledge, built through planning groups and refined through exercises, is generally inaccessible to the formations that will be responsible for closing with and destroying the enemy.

There are some workarounds to bridging this *air gap*. Some emails can pass from the Secret Internet Protocol Router (SIPR) to NATO Secret email accounts as long as they are formatted correctly. Some PDFs can even be distributed. However, the filter is notoriously fickle and finds "dirty words" in the most innocuous of paragraphs. The Battlefield Information Collection and Exploitation Systems (BICES) is another useful tool.⁸ This system, and the corresponding active accounts, allow for the easier transfer of files from SIPR to BICES to NSWAN and vice versa. The Project Neptune series of activities have reinforced the value of hosting chat programs on BICES servers, thereby allowing U.S. units to maintain awareness on both their SIPR chat rooms and connect simultaneously with a NATO higher headquarters.⁹ Unfortunately, BICES deployable kits are not readily present on every big deck amphibious ship or at all Marine Corps organizations on the East Coast. BICES kits also do not provide units access to the NSWAN applications, tools, or shared sites that underpin the operations planning and execution within NATO.

Transition

What is an opinion piece without some recommended solutions to the issues that are posed?

Culture Shifts through Education, Training, and Boots on the Ground

There are three ways to foster a change in culture and fluency. First, the Marine Corps needs to more fully introduce NATO structure and considerations into its professional educa-

tion. Second, NATO scenarios need to continue to be incorporated into FMF East pre-deployment training programs. Third, leadership and planners need to continue to ensure deployment for training and employment plans to Europe to reinforce both national and NATO relationships, including exploring methods to integrate into NATO Air C2.

Marine Corps University (MCU) manages the professional military education for both officers and enlisted personnel in compliance with the Outcomes-Based Military Education guidance promulgated in *CJCSM 180.01*.¹⁰ This centralization at MCU provides an opportunity to adjust future Program Learning Outcomes and Subordinate Learning Outcomes to tailor the introduction of NATO C2 relationships to staff non-commissioned officers, company-grade students, and field-grade officers.¹¹ In particular, the Command and Staff Course could serve as a good vehicle for exploring NATO structure in more detail with the intent of creating increasingly fluent MAGTF officers who are prepared to integrate their tactical units into NATO exercises and activities. Top-level school could be the ideal framework for students to review NATO C2 and then investigate NATO concepts for deterrence and defense with the intent to contribute through future joint and NATO assignments. Collaboration with NATO School Oberammergau provides an opportunity to integrate established and future courseware into the Marine Corps PME curriculum (e.g. ADL037, Introduction to NATO).¹² Ultimately, successful integration could lead to adjusted joint Outcomes-Based Military Education policy and corresponding initiatives across all Services, further enhancing strategic and operational interoperability in Europe.

Since Fall of 2021, the theater phase of the Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX) for both carrier strike groups and amphibious ready groups-MEUs have incorporated a NATO scenario. Commander Strike Group Four has worked hand in hand with Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (SFN) to ensure deploying forc-

es build an understanding of NATO C2 and the relationships that they will encounter, understand the specifics of NATO rules of engagement, and develop proficiency in cross-domain communications by operating for a NATO higher headquarters and connecting primarily through BICES. These efforts have paid dividends in preparing forces for subsequent deployments when they are assigned to NATO through a transfer of authority process to execute a bespoke period of vigilance activities. This NATO theater phase should continue to reside in pre-deployment programs. Pre-deployment command visits or “fire-side chats” combined with a validation of communications while conducting the trans-Atlantic crossing can help to focus deploying expeditionary units.

As MFE/A and II MEF look to the future, it would be beneficial to deliberately connect deployment and employment programs to anticipated tasks associated with NATO plans. The intent should be to increase familiarity with specific operating environments, consider the necessary logistics arrangements, and prepare a repository of best practices and locations to leverage Marine Corps capabilities in crisis and conflict. This feedback should then inform MFE/A, II MEF, and broader Marine Corps recommended refinements to joint and NATO thinking. Additionally, these employment decisions should explicitly focus on testing and refining cross-domain solutions that integrate into NATO C2 as well as partner national C2. Skillfully navigating the three tiers of U.S.-national, partner-national, and allied communications systems in peacetime, particularly in the targeting and fires environment, will pay dividends in crisis and conflict.

MFE/A and II MEF already support engagements in the European theater with a wide variety of force structures that range from brigade-sized C2 to platoon-sized HIMARS units. These units operate from the High North, through the Baltic, and across the entirety of the Mediterranean Sea. Notable exercises include: COLD RESPONSE in Norway; AURORA in Sweden; HEDGEHOG in

Estonia; BALTIC OPERATIONS with land operations in Sweden, Latvia, and Poland; MARE APERTO in Italy; EFES in Turkey; and ALEXANDER THE GREAT in Greece, to name a few. Other activities have crisscrossed the European Theater, supporting U.S. joint objectives. The next step is to cohere the purpose of these activities and align them to NATO deterrence objectives with linkages to informing and refining both NATO and U.S. plans.

The 2nd MAW and its tactical air command center (TACC) provide additive and resilient capabilities that perhaps are not fully accounted for in NATO planning. On the flip side, it is possible that the TACC has not fully explored how it engages with the NATO Command Structure Joint Force Air Component (NCSJFAC), particularly in light of the transformations to air C2 initiated by the Deterrence and Defense of the Euro-Atlantic Area concept. In particular, 2nd MAW should be completely prepared to provide seamless contributions to the NATO air tasking order development process. The United States does not use the same systems as AIRCOM (elaborated below); therefore, it would be worth collaborating with United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) and the U.S. 603d Air Operating Center to ensure that the TACC implements integration lessons learned since the start of the Ukraine Crisis and seeks opportunities to test and refine improved options.

Valuing the NATO Staff Officer and Senior Enlisted Leader

As the Marine Corps considers structure through the lens of *FD 2030* and *Talent Management 2030*, it should seek to capitalize on the value that MAGTF staff officers and senior enlisted leaders bring to embedded organizations and the subsequent return on investment for the Marine Corps itself. When present, Marines drive staffs. This is true in both the joint and international environments. Marines showcase the professionalism and expertise of the Corps in a way that transfers into confidence in the expected capabilities of the FMF itself.

Marine presence on staffs also translates to a resident beachhead and back

channel for coordination. This works in both directions. As the Marine Corps and II MEF plan peacetime activities, Marines on NATO staffs are a resource to facilitate a coherent understanding of the environment. They can also amplify Service-specific messaging objectives within NATO channels. NATO gains access to personnel with organic knowledge of Marine Corps trends and perspectives who can help sustain Service and national alignment with programs of work.

The Marine Corps has filled 44 of its 56 joint duty assignment list billets available within NATO. Eight of these are located at SFN. Notably, none of the billets at SHAPE or the Joint Force commands are aligned with the J5 or J35. As previously highlighted, this results in a lack of understanding by NATO planners on the art of the possible with the employment of future and emergent Marine Corps capabilities. It also stifles coordination and understanding of the NATO-defined operational objectives and desired operational effects.

There are two elements to effective staffing within NATO: quality and longevity. One challenge for the Manpower Management Division is to balance the right mix of personnel. The endstate should include both upwardly mobile MAGTF officers/staff non-commissioned officers and those who produce quality results but for whatever reason are not on a rising path. This stagnancy could be based on a number of reasons, like a desire for stability, limited command opportunities within their specialty, or a demonstrated interest and capacity to navigate international interactions. In any case, NATO fluency is hard-earned and needs to be capitalized through time in theater billets and through an oil drop approach throughout all levels of the Marine Corps. The more leaders we develop who understand how to navigate this structure, the more poised the FMF is to act as both a national and NATO force in readiness prepared when others are not.

Investigating Options in Communications and Information Systems

Right-fitting and investing in communications and information systems

solutions is complicated. Navigating the authorities to operate, the authorities to connect, and the financial support to establishing and sustaining services is an obstacle course when working within a single Service, single nation construct. It becomes a veritable minefield when looking to integrate national and alliance capabilities. Having said that, there are five ways to pursue longer-term solutions to this problem set with will, funding, and further technical and legal analysis.

First, the Marine Corps needs to normalize proficiency with the systems that are available now. This means BICES.¹³ The Marine Corps and Navy need to identify the available systems and ensure that they are placed where they can have the most impact. This should align first with II MEF and the MEUs. It needs to become standing practice to maintain sufficient active BICES accounts amongst key planners and branch heads. These BICES accounts need to routinely be used to maintain communications with NATO contacts, both via email and via BICES-supported virtual teleconferences. These steps will increase familiarity with the available tools and reduce the learning curve when circumstances dictate that staffs must use them.

Second, deploying units need to continue to use BICES for tactical C2 during their pre-deployment training program. The NATO portion of the theater phase of COMPTUEX has served as an important forcing function in developing tactical unit comfort with operating on BICES servers. As noted, this arrangement allows for U.S. battle watch captains and watch officers to monitor both their standard SIPR chat rooms and their higher headquarters NATO command chat rooms. As a live exercise, COMPTUEX is excellent preparation for when these task groups arrive in theater and conduct a vigilance or interoperability activity under NATO control. SFN has seen increased confidence and fluency based on the efforts of Commander Strike Group Four and the individual deploying units through pre-deployment training.

Third, 2nd MAW and the TACC need to explore how Marine Air C2



A platoon commander with 2d Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion attached to Task Group 61/2.4, looks through a scout sniper observation telescope near Saaremaa, Estonia, May 2022. (Photo by Sgt Dylan Chagnon.)

systems integrate into NATO Air C2 systems. This is important from a planning perspective, in the case of air tasking order development. It is perhaps more important when it comes to current operations. Marine Corps forces have the ability to contribute to the recognized air picture/common operating picture and also contribute to air and missile defense within the area of responsibility. The *how* from a systems standpoint needs to become routine. For NATO, the programs Air C2 Information Services (AIRC2IS) and ICC are critical portals. What are the federated solutions for the TACC and Common Aviation Command and Control System (CAC2S) to ensure the Marine ACE is a gainful contributor to the NCS JFAC? Is the Marine Corps stuck relying on 603d Air Operating Center at USAFE to be the cross-domain node? Is there a better way to add value to overall continuity of operations planning?

Fourth, the Marine Corps should consider the cost/benefit of supporting SFN specifically, and NATO commands generally, with additional billets for Marine communicators. A NATO tour would foster intimate knowledge, understanding, and trouble-shooting acumen on NATO systems. As these Marines return to the fleet, they could

be prioritized to East Coast units, thereby increasing the resident organizational knowledge of NATO systems and connectivity methods. This results in a more prepared force.

Finally, in the longer term, the Marine Corps (and the U.S. Joint Force in general) needs to conduct three investigations. First, is NSWAN presence at U.S. commands an option and desired? Second, what is the time horizon for cross-domain or federated initiatives to ensure seamless communication with the strategic and operational levels of the NATO C2 structure? Third, what is required for our future Joint All Domain Command and Control system to be interoperable with NATO C2 and our NATO Allies? This is of particular importance in the air C2 environment and the joint targeting fires and effects realm. In both spheres, timely and accurate data is critical to success, especially in a contested environment with fleeting windows of opportunity. As the United States and NATO both look toward machine learning and AI support for these types of processes, it will become even more important that U.S. and NATO systems have clear linkages put in place from inception.

Conclusion

Why does this article matter? Simply

put, global strategic competition will define near-term planning and execution. The United States and the Marine Corps do not have the resources to meet all known global requirements, let alone the emergent issues that will quickly capture national attention. In Europe, Russia is an active and malign actor. The Marine Corps has to gain efficiencies in order to combine relevance in the European theater without detracting from a focus on the pacing threat in the Indo-Pacific.

Accordingly, the Marine Corps needs to go beyond naval integration and achieve “NATO integration” by leveraging the available stand-in capabilities. The case is clear that this can be achieved by: (1) fostering a change in perspective (culture) amongst our key leaders, planners, and tactical units, (2) prioritizing and adjusting NATO contributing billets, and (3) exploring exploring short- and long-term communications and information systems adaptations to improve access into NATO C2. Each of these elements is achievable and allows for a significant return with relatively minimal investment.

Afterword

The final draft of the body of this article was completed on 13 May 2023. Shortly thereafter, Robert Work wrote the comprehensive article “The Opponents of Marine Reform Have Lost, But Won’t Move On.”¹⁴ In his arguments, he states that “stand in forces are theater agnostic. They work as effectively in Europe’s confined waters as they do in the Western Pacific.”¹⁵ This is exactly the point. The 2022 *National Security Strategy* clearly notes, “Russia poses an immediate threat to the free and open international system.”¹⁶ And yet, because the People’s Republic of China has been correctly identified as the pacing threat, it is even more important that the U.S. efficiently yet effectively support the NATO Alliance to meet the security threats of the European Theater. The Marine Corps has a role. The initiatives noted here will ensure that role is more integrated, more substantive, and more lethal.

Notes

1. NATO, “The North Atlantic Treaty,” *NATO*, October 19, 2023, www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm.
2. NATO, “NATO Military Committee Discusses NATO’s Deterrence and Defence at SHAPE,” *NATO*, November 8, 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_188484.htm?selectedLocale=en.
3. Senior dual hatted positions are as follows: Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) as Commander U.S. European Command (EUCOM); Commander Joint Force Command Naples (JFC NP) as Commander U.S. Naval Forces Europe (NAVEUR); Commander Joint Force Command Norfolk (JFC NF) as Commander U.S. Second Fleet (C2F); Commander Allied Air Command (AIRCOM) as Commander U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE); Commander Allied Land Command (LANDCOM) as U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR); Command Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO (SFN) as Commander U.S. Sixth Fleet (C6F). Another essay can discuss whether these are the appropriate US positions in the current iteration of the NATO C2 structure; however, that is beyond the scope of this essay. A future classified essay can also explore the advantages and disadvantages of the domain specific C2 relationships, but again that is beyond the intent of this essay.
4. U.S. Department of Defense, “Combatant Commands,” *U.S. Department of Defense*, n.d., <https://www.defense.gov/About/Combatant-Commands>.
5. The author acknowledges that nations, to include the United States, may retain national forces and therefore work with NATO assigned forces in either associated support or some other form of coordination mechanism. This is not the context associated with the author’s observations.
6. U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Europe and Africa, “Mission,” *Marines.mil*, n.d., <https://www.marfor eur.marines.mil/About/Command-Information>.
7. Marines.mil, “Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment (LOCE),” *Marines.mil*, August 2, 2021, www.marines.mil/News/News-Display/Article/2708120/expeditionary-advanced-base-operations-eabo/www.marines.mil/News/News-Display/Article/2708135/littoral-operations-in-a-contested-environment-loce/; and *Marines.mil*, “Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO),” *Marines*.

mil, August 2, 2021, www.marines.mil/News/News-Display/Article/2708120/expeditionary-advanced-base-operations-eabo.

8. Department of Defense, *Mission Partner Environment LEXICON*, (Washington, DC: 2016).

9. Project Neptune is led by SFN and consists of a multi-phase approach to preparing U.S. high-end maritime units for operations with and in NATO. It combines briefs, participation in a pre-deployment training event, and the execution of support to deterrence objectives during a subsequent deployment into the European Theater.

10. A search of *CJCSM 180.01* reveals no reference to NATO. Current joint professional military education I and II categories may require adjustment to include NATO as a substantive topic. See Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Outcomes-Based Military Education Procedures for Officer Professional Military Education*, (Washington, DC: 2022).

11. Marine Corps University Command and Staff College academic year 2024 program learning outcomes include War and Conflict, Strategy and Policy, Doctrine and Capabilities, Thinking and Problem Solving, Leadership. Additional information at <https://www.usmcu.edu>.

12. NATO School Oberammergau, “Introduction to NATO (V8.3-2022),” *NATO School Oberammergau*, 2022, <https://www.natoschool.nato.int/Academics/Portfolio/Course-Catalogue/Course-Description?ID=185>.

13. Note: although Hampton Roads maintains two NSWAN to SIPR VTC bridges, there is discussion within the communications and information systems community that these may not be funded in the long term. Additionally, these two bridges are the only ones available to support cross domain connections into the entirety of the NSWAN community, limiting the agility to support short-fused scheduling.

14. Robert Work, “The Opponents of Marine Reform Have Lost, But Won’t Move On,” *War on the Rocks*, May 15, 2023, <https://warontherocks.com/2023/05/the-opponents-of-marine-reform-have-lost-but-wont-move-on-2>.

15. *Ibid.*

16. The White House, *National Security Strategy*, (Washington, DC: 2022).

