

■ EXCLUSIVE

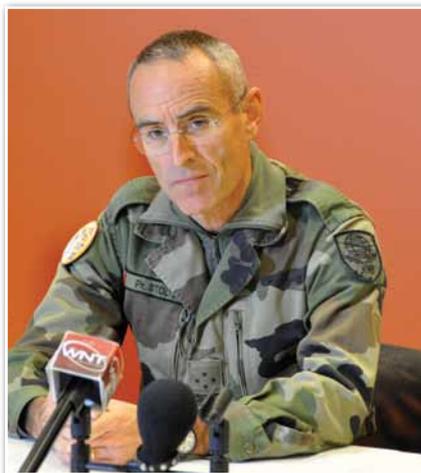
SFJT 12: Commander's Takeaways

By Lieutenant General Philippe Stoltz, FRA A
Commander of Joint Force Command Lisbon

IN STEPPING AWAY FROM THE NATO RESPONSE FORCE (NRF) certification process normally associated with the STEADFAST JOIST series, the Alliance has invested greatly in this particular exercise to test portions of the new Deployability Concept. The main premise of the new concept is that commanders have better flexibility in tailoring the structure of a Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTF HQ) deploying forward to meet a particular mission.

As both Allied Joint Force Command (JFC) Brunssum and JFC Naples agreed on employing a headquarters based on a two-pillared structure, JFC Lisbon re-organized to implement their proposal. This structure included an invisible pillar with the Strategic Communications (STRATCOM) Advisor coordinating the “influence tools” of the Headquarters. Given the importance of STRATCOM, I see two viable headquarters structure options available to the commanders. The two-pillared structure has the STRATCOM Advisor serving as a Deputy to the Deputy Chief of Staff Operations, synchronizing the Headquarters’ influence assets. The second option organizes the Headquarters into three pillars: Operations, Influence and Support.

The choice of one structure over another should be based on the nature of the operation, and its kinetic or non-kinetic dimension, the capabilities of personnel, as well as the Commander’s personal preference. From my perspective, the Forward Coordination Element (FCE) achieved great results



■ **BIOGRAPHY:** Lieutenant General Philippe Stoltz was born on 16 November 1955 in France. He is a graduate of the École Spéciale Militaire at Saint-Cyr (the French Military Academy) and the French War College. He graduated with distinction from the French War College, which he attended from 1989 to 1991. His former duties include Chief of Staff, Djibouti French Combined Headquarters (1998-2000); Chief of Operations and Chief of Staff, Special Operations Command (2000-2003); Commander Special Land Forces Brigade in Pau (2003-2005). Lieutenant General Stoltz also served as Deputy Commander Land Forces Command in Lille before being transferred to Marseille to take command of Land Force Headquarters N°3 from 2007 to 2009. In August 2008 he was assigned as deputy Commander KFOR, bringing him back for a tour of duty to Kosovo, where he had already had served as the Commander of Multinational Task Force North in 2005. In July 2009, Lieutenant General Stoltz was assigned Commander of Allied Joint Force Command Lisbon. General Stoltz has been awarded the Legion d’Honneur, the National Merit Order, the Military Valor Cross with five citations and the Overseas Medal.

with a highly trained small core of select individuals. During SFJT12 we were able to fully test the FCE’s ability to “connect” and “understand”. In the next exercise, the “prepare” task should receive more focus. For this purpose, the FCE needs Component Command Advanced Party counterparts to test its ability to prepare for the arrival of the main body and component forces.

Turning to the JTF HQ, my impression is that Concept’s modified decision cycle proved most promising. It was amended to implement a balanced approach to managing kinetic and non-kinetic operational effects and to provide more relevant and consistent recommendations to the Commander at the Joint Coordination Board.

Although we initially faced some difficulties caused by lack of understanding on the detailed inputs required to make the process work efficiently, the end products were sound. The initial uncertainty in implementing the decision cycle underlined the need to refine various supporting processes needed in order to implement it. The outputs of each step, especially the Joint Coordination Working Group Director’s Session and the Integrated Effects Board must be fully understood by the staff. Comprehensive training preparing the staff to execute the complete cycle is therefore of utmost importance. To this end, the importance of Academics cannot be stressed enough: it is critical. In the following weeks, JFC Lisbon will provide some proposals to pass on to JFCs Naples and Brunssum as they transition to the new Peacetime Estab-



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ishment structure. The two remaining JFCs must ensure each individual understands the Deployability Concept, understands how the decision cycle works, and his or her role in driving the cycle forward.

For me, this training necessity reinforces the importance of building a certified, agile and responsive team in each future JFC consisting of qualified and trained personnel. I assess that maintaining an appropriate level of skill and readiness for this selected group will be a challenge for NATO. Fortunately, in the run up and execution of the exercise, Lisbon was able to pull talent from across NATO to both fill the required billets and to make observations. This will ultimately benefit the contributing headquarters as the tremendous task of gathering observations and deriving lessons identified and lessons learned is just beginning. We have to scrupulously follow this process, which will feed the Deployability Concept's further refinement. Together with the Exercise participants, the A2R Community from the Operational Preparation Directorate (OPD), Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre (JALLC) and the Joint Warfare Centre (JWC) will play an instrumental role in this process. This is truly a NATO team effort!

Now, as JFC Lisbon is nearing the end of its operational life, the torch this Headquarters has helped carry in this Concept Development will be passed to the remaining JFCs and to pertinent headquarters in the NATO Command Structure. †

FURTHER READING

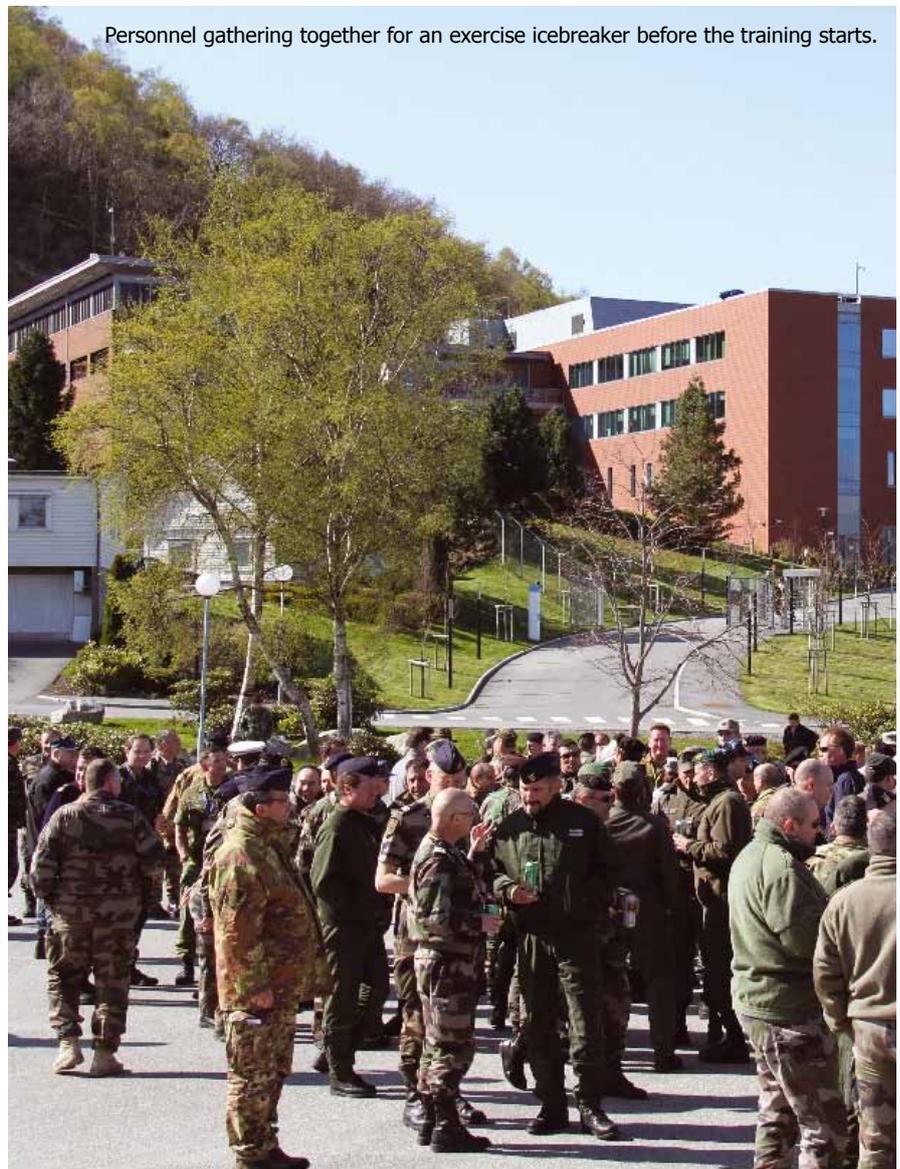
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* STEADFAST JOIST 2012



Lieutenant General Stoltz (left) and Major General Berger



Personnel gathering together for an exercise icebreaker before the training starts.