

# **Insights and Best Practices Focus Paper**

## **The Joint Command Senior Enlisted Leader**

***Third Edition***

**Deployable Training Division  
Joint Staff J7**

**January 2020**

**Approved for public release**

This is the *Third Edition* of *The Joint Command Senior Enlisted Leader Insights and Best Practices Focus Paper*. It is written by the Deployable Training Division (DTD) of the Joint Staff J7 and released by the J7 Deputy Director for Joint Training.

Third Edition: January 2020  
Second Edition: July 2017  
First Edition: January 2016

**Scope:**

- Preparation of Service Senior Enlisted Leaders (SELs) to be Joint Command Senior Enlisted Leaders (CSELs).
- Oriented at Combatant Command (CCMD), Subordinate Unified Command, Joint Functional Component, Joint Task Force (JTF), and NATO headquarters (HQs).
- Addresses CSEL duties and responsibilities.
- Emphasizes CSEL role in mission command, building relationships, support to the commander's decision-making process, and JTF or multinational operations.

**Table of Contents:**

1.0 Executive Summary .....	1
2.0 Mission Command .....	3
3.0 Building Relationships .....	4
4.0 Key CSEL Tasks .....	7
5.0 Support to Commander's Decision Making .....	8
6.0 CSEL Support in JTF HQs .....	14
GLOSSARY: Abbreviations and Acronyms .....	GL

**Terminology and Acronyms:** Numerous military acronyms and organizational names are used in this paper. They are defined in the glossary to improve readability in the body of the paper for the intended readership.

**POC:** Mr. Mike Findlay, Email: [js.dsc.j7.mbx.joint-training@mail.mil](mailto:js.dsc.j7.mbx.joint-training@mail.mil)  
Deployable Training Division, Joint Staff J7, Joint Training  
116 Lake View Parkway, Suffolk, VA 23435-2697

**Accessibility:** Access this and other insight and best practice papers on the internet at the Joint Electronic Library site: [http://www.jcs.mil/Doctrine/focus\\_papers.aspx](http://www.jcs.mil/Doctrine/focus_papers.aspx).

**Disclaimer:** The views in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Joint Staff, the Department of Defense (DOD), or the United States Government (USG).

**Releasability:** Approved for public release.

## PREFACE

This *Third Edition of The Joint Command Senior Enlisted Leader Insights and Best Practices Focus Paper* continues to build on Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education (SEJPME) and focuses on Joint Command Senior Enlisted Leader (CSEL) roles, key tasks, and responsibilities as identified by flag officers, senior interagency professionals, and CCMD and JTF CSELs. This paper shares insights and enhances the capabilities of current and future joint CSELs. It also serves as a foundation for future Senior Enlisted Leaders to study as they move forward along the professional military education continuum. The paper captures insights and perspectives from the current Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (SEAC) as well as from current and former CSELs at both CCMD and JTF levels.

**This paper may be beneficial to four main audiences:**


- Command Senior Enlisted Leaders, as support their commanders and the joint force.
- Commanders, Chiefs of Staff, and Joint Directors, as they incorporate the skills and leadership of their CSELs and the other senior enlisted leaders within their HQs.
- Staffs, as they seek to benefit from the experience of senior enlisted leaders in the HQs.
- Senior enlisted leaders throughout the staff to enhance understanding of their role in developing, enhancing, and improving information flow and support to decision making.

**Four considerations:**

- Emphasize and reinforce the special bond between a joint force commander (JFC) and CSEL, as well as CSEL relationships with other key military and non-military leaders.
- Codify the CSEL's role in mission command, relationship building, support to the JFC's decision-making process, and JTF crisis response operations.
- Inform future JFCs as they consider how to employ and empower their CSELs.
- Understand the complexity associated with Joint CSEL assignments in CCMDs and JTFs.

This and other focus papers share observations and insights on joint force HQs identified by the Joint Staff J7 Deployable Training Division. The DTD gains insights on operational matters through regular contact and dialogue with CCMD- and operational-level commanders and staffs as they plan, prepare for, and conduct operations and exercises. The DTD incorporates these insights in functional focus papers, refines the papers through senior leader feedback, and shares them with the operational force, and joint lessons learned and joint doctrine communities. Related focus papers are *Chief of Staff Roles*, *HQ Terms of Reference*, and *Forming a JTF Headquarters*.

Please send your thoughts and best practices to DTD's POC, Mr. Mike Findlay. URL and email contact information is on the inside front cover.



GARY F. BEEMSTER  
SGM, U.S. Army  
Senior Enlisted Advisor  
Joint Staff J7



ERIC E. AUSTIN  
Brigadier General, U.S. Marine Corps  
Deputy Director, Joint Training  
Joint Staff J7

**This page intentionally left blank**



**1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.** The role of a senior enlisted leader (senior noncommissioned officer – NCO) takes on increased complexity in Multi-service organizations, and even further in a multinational/coalition force. Senior enlisted leadership is an essential force multiplier to mission accomplishment, individual and unit training, quality of life, exercises and mission rehearsals, real-world joint operations, and sustains a warrior ethos across Service cultures. CSELs provide solution-centric leadership and acknowledge, understand, and accept their challenges and responsibilities. CSELs must remain strategically, operationally, and organizationally fluent from the combatant commander (CCDR) level down to the tactical level.

*“Empowering these NCOs is **crucial** to strengthening partner militaries, as enlisted force leaders are **closest** to the soldiers in the field and can **relate** to them in ways difficult for officers to match.”*

- Combatant Commander

Set against a backdrop of the exponentially increasing complexity of the operational environment and globally integrated operations, today’s Joint CSELs must grasp the transregional, all-domain, and multifunctional security challenges that their commanders face. Effective CSELs are joint and combined team builders who understand the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) environment and associated political, military, economic, social, information, and infrastructure (PMESII) aspects, and the benefit of unity of effort across the instruments of national power—diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME).

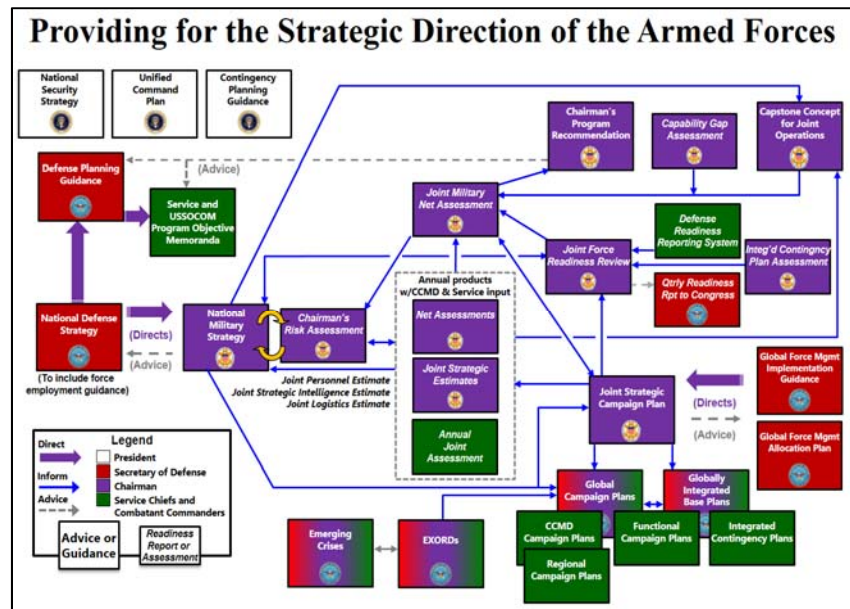
Joint CSELs look “up and out” while simultaneously remaining focused on the “down and in.” CSELs anticipate and adapt to surprise and uncertainty, recognize change and assist in transitions, and fully appreciate the core attributes of mission command - understanding, intent, and trust. CSELs make ethical decisions based on the shared values of the Profession of Arms. They think critically and strategically in applying joint warfighting principles and concepts to joint operations in support of their commanders and mission requirements.



### **Key Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:**

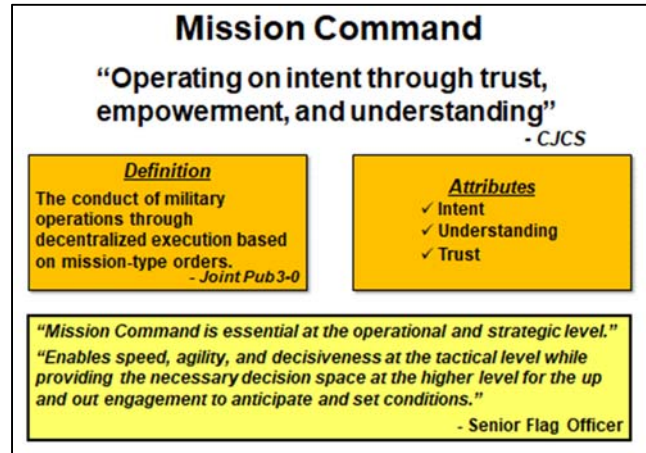
- Expand knowledge of the global security challenges, JIIM environment, and the DIME and PMESII analytical frameworks.
  - Develop a working knowledge of the security threat framework (i.e., Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, and violent extremist organizations [VEOs]). Increase understanding on how global integration affect future operations.
- Develop networks of willing and capable partners, including interagency, industry, and nongovernmental organizations.
- Expand understanding of combined and joint doctrine, command and control (C2) options, the value of building relationships, and combined and interagency capabilities and cultures.

- Be strategically, operationally, and organizationally fluent. Be familiar with foundational documents such as the Unified Command Plan, the current National Military Strategy (NMS), the Joint Strategic Campaign Plan (JSCP), Global Base Plans and Globally Integrated Base Plans and the Guidance for Employment of the Force (GEF).



- Understand C2 constructs for establishing JTFs (Service or functional components, Service unit HQs, or use of the Theater Special Operations Command).
- Expand capacity and joint competency by focusing on personal and professional growth, i.e., studying, listening, and learning, as well as team building in a dynamic JIIM environment.
  - A Joint Force composed of agile and adaptive leaders and organizations who can innovate and critically think through dynamic problems in an increasingly volatile and complex environment remains fundamental to the success of the Joint Force. The Joint Force's aim must be to develop, educate, and train leaders to fully understand the threat environment, anticipate and adapt to uncertainty, and operate with mutual trust in fellow leaders who are empowered through mission command. These strong joint leaders of character will need to think critically and strategically, and confidently address the toughest problems to assure future success.
- Assist the JFC as a “directed telescope” by providing a grounding in the “down and in” perspective of the command while remaining keenly aware of the “up and out” implications of the JFC’s decisions.
- Prepare to operate beyond your comfort zone—this is vital to joint CSEL success.
  - Place the highest value on developing leaders that prove adept at solving tough dynamic problems. Produce senior leaders who take the initiative, can operate globally, and can integrate joint and interagency capability across all domains—and do so in a state of dynamic complexity and great uncertainty.

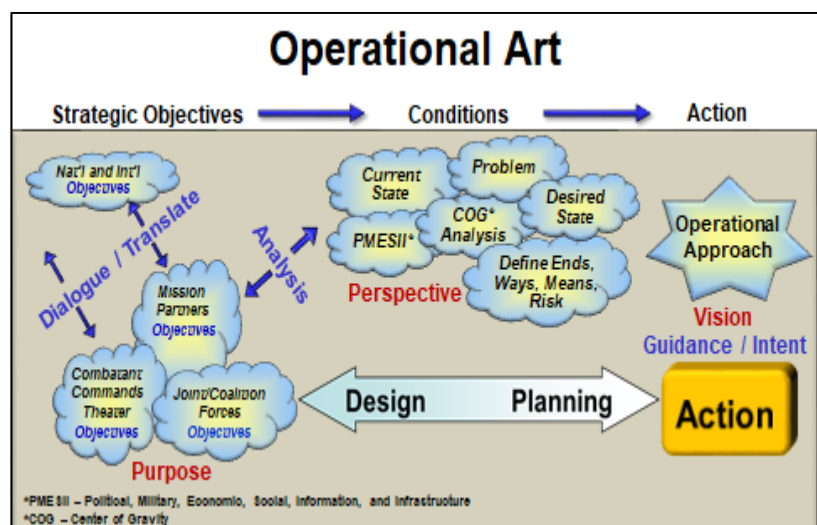
**2.0 MISSION COMMAND.** Joint Publication 3.0 (Joint Operations) defines mission command as “The conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based on mission-type orders.” Mission command depends on three critical attributes: *understanding*, *intent*, and *trust*. These core attributes influence how we view and react to a world that has become more globalized, networked, and interconnected. Understanding the problem, envisioning the end state, and visualizing the nature and design of the operation are critical. Today’s CSELs are products of the mission command philosophy; they intuitively understand mission command and rely on their instincts and experiences to implement mission command. The CSEL, as a valued member of the command team, has the ability to translate commander’s intent and guidance to subordinates and ensure the missions given to subordinates are within their capabilities. CSELs assist the JFC in setting conditions for subordinate success by sharing understanding, gaining/delegating authorities, empowering subordinates, prioritizing efforts, allocating resources, and planning for, and managing transitions.



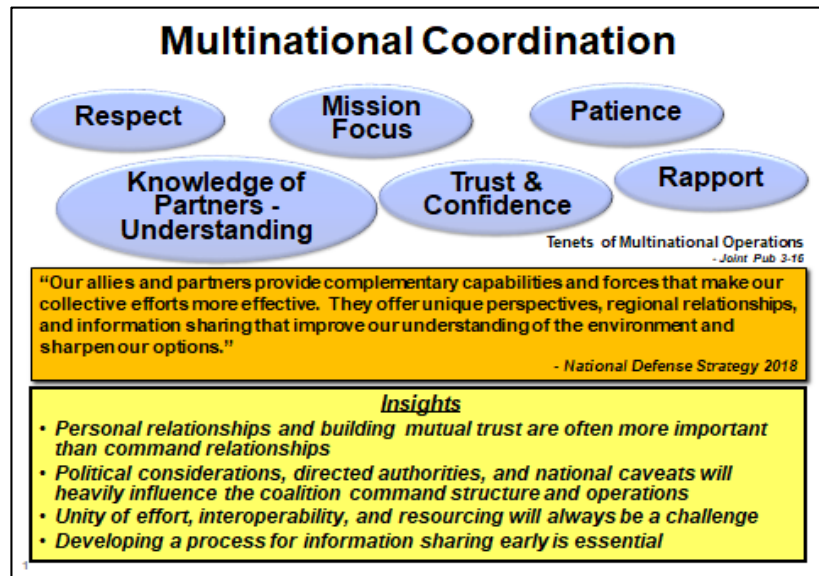
An effective CSEL helps ensure a common understanding throughout the force by communicating with all staff members (i.e., officers, NCOs, junior enlisted, civilians, contractors, and coalition partners), as well as higher, subordinate and supporting organizations. The CSEL fosters trust by building enduring relationships and through his/her actions. They maintain trust through transitions and change. Building genuine trust takes time; it doesn’t come at H-Hour.

**“You cannot surge trust.”**  
- Senior Flag Officer

As a practitioner of operational art, the JFC translates strategy into action where ends, ways, and means are balanced, and risk is identified, shared, and mitigated. The experienced CSEL contributes to this dialogue at all echelons—strategic, operational, and tactical—and assists with inclusion of mission and coalition partners. The CSEL helps articulate the JFC’s vision and operational approach to subordinate and supporting units and organizations focusing on the “Why” of the mission. Armed with the “Why,” subordinates can figure out the “How to.”



**3.0 BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS.** In today's complex operational environment, JFCs strive to achieve a comprehensive approach with mission partners through continuous dialogue, translation of this dialogue, development of desired conditions and favorable outcomes, and issuance of guidance and intent to subordinates to achieve unity of effort with mission partners. Their CSELs must possess the ability to establish, leverage, and foster relationships in order to grow and maintain trust. The objective is to achieve relative harmony among organizational leaders and organizational philosophies as they work together to achieve respective outcomes. Inclusive behaviors during design, planning, operations, and assessment with partners facilitate a common understanding and equip commanders with the insight to make holistic and informed decisions.



Working with multinational and coalition partners presents unique opportunities and challenges. Whether in a mature HQ like that of CJTF Operation INHERENT RESOLVE (OIR) or a short-term, no-notice crisis response to a disaster like the Haiti earthquake, we will always work with and alongside multinational military, governmental, and nongovernmental stakeholders. Personal relationships and understanding between commanders and staffs of multinational and coalition partners are critical to the effective integration of forces and capabilities. Like any relationship, trust is a critical component. It must be nurtured throughout an organization and be an integral part of the command culture. Understanding and taking into consideration our partners' national caveats, restrictions, and capabilities is critical to planning and mission success. Similarly, partner nations need to understand the US has caveats and restrictions, which may affect parallel planning efforts. Finally, we must give due consideration to the depth and breadth of information sharing. Technical challenges aside, commanders and leaders must determine what mission-essential information we can and will share. Are there policies that prevent information sharing? What level of risk are we willing to assume by sharing information with our multinational partners and stakeholders? Can we efficiently and effectively write for release to avoid information sharing challenges? Do we correctly leverage foreign disclosure officers (FDOs)? Often, political considerations, directed authorities, and national caveats will influence the coalition command structure and operations. Maintaining unity of effort and reaching an adequate level of interoperability and resourcing will always be challenging but is doable. Develop and employ an information sharing process early on. *Refer to Section 5.4 for further discussion on information sharing.*



- Be versed in emotional intelligence (i.e., the ability to know and manage our own emotions, and recognize, appreciate, and influence other individuals' emotions) and understand how it affects group member dynamics within the human domain. Do not allow emotions and ego to affect developing and maintaining relationships.
- Recognize that many nations do not imbue the same level of trust in their senior NCO corps as in the United States.
- Build and cultivate relationships with deputy commander(s) and HQ Chief of Staff (COS), as well as with higher, subordinate, and supporting commands/organizations—be approachable, be an active listener, keep private matters private, remain open-minded, and display a positive attitude.
- Expand knowledge of mission stakeholders and the operational environment to develop and sustain traditional and nontraditional partnerships.
- Make time for the J-Directors (J-Dirs) and HQ Special Staff (e.g., Staff Judge Advocate, Political Advisor [POLAD], Surgeon General, etc.) to build favorable relationships; seek them out; do not rely on them coming to you; be relevant. Include HHQ and interorganizational representatives, as well as liaison officers (LNOs).
- Value people who think differently and offer diverse perspectives.
- Understand that building relationships often requires humility and patience.
- Build and use a wide-ranging network of multi-discipline experts to bolster your value as a joint CSEL—it's not only what you know, but whom you know that knows.
- Recognize and respect the role and authorities of the US Ambassador and Country Team.
- Recognize the Country Team as a gateway to in-country agencies and organizations. Recognize the unique organization/capacity within each Country Team; building and nurturing personal relationships are key.
- Ensure the staff understands and respects the sovereignty of the Host Nation and its national prerogatives.
- Ensure the staff respects and leverages the unique skill sets and capabilities of each nation's force within the alliance or coalition. Maintain a C5 mindset: Command, Control, Cooperation, Collaboration, and Coordination.
- Understand cultural uniqueness of your coalition/mission partners. Cultural considerations may provide a framework for gaining insights into leader personalities.



- Recognize the deputy commander, COS, and CSEL are crucial in ensuring dual-hatted US and coalition commanders accomplish national and coalition responsibilities and maintain relationships with traditional and nontraditional (unanticipated/atypical) partners.
- Recognize that building a command team mindset may require additional effort by the JFC and CSEL if both leaders are not from the same Service with common professional backgrounds.
- Leverage the initial CSEL interview with the Commander to begin relationship building, especially in those cases where the JFC and CSEL have not previously served together.

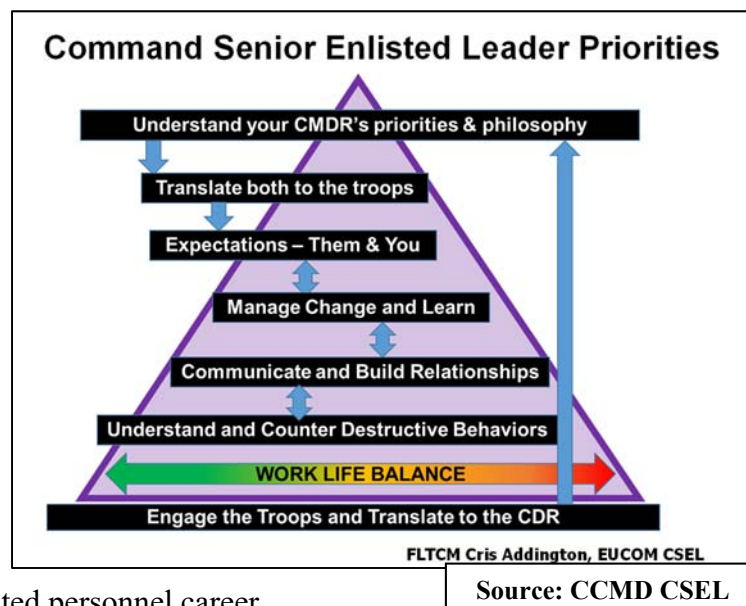
#### 4.0 KEY CSEL TASKS. JP 3-33, *Joint Task Force Headquarters*

<http://www.jcs.mil/Doctrine/Joint-Doctrine-Pubs/>, identifies key tasks of the joint CSEL.

However, we find that CSEL tasks are much more extensive and complex at the JTF or CCMD level than even those listed in JP 3-33. We note *some* CSEL-related observations, insights, and best practices observed at joint headquarters.

#### **Key Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:**

- Be accustomed to being the commander's "honest broker" and have proven value across the joint force's respective Services.
- Constantly seek timely situational understanding. Situational understanding is fleeting and will change as new conditions or circumstances appear in dynamic decision-making situations.
- Know what decisions the JFC is contemplating; provide advice, especially regarding risk.
- Be total force leaders (including active duty, Guard, and Reserve forces), not just for the enlisted ranks, but across the entire force.
- Read what your commanders read; be conversant on topics important to the JFC. Have the requisite security clearance. Read and study applicable orders, plans, and annexes, as well as the joint HQ SOP.
- Understand what constitutes unlawful command influence and how to prevent its occurrence.
- Be involved in talent management. Position the right talent in the right joint billets; stay engaged in multi-service enlisted personnel career management.
- Identify interorganizational partners, and advise the commander about both potential opportunities and challenges—focus on achieving unity of effort.
- Understand national limitations, caveats, and partner authorities.
- Represent your commanders in professionally developing partner and ally militaries.
- Participate routinely in key leader engagements (KLEs). JFCs and their CSELs are critical to gaining and maintain trust across national and international partners. Diplomacy is important.
- Understand authorities and associated funding implications (e.g., Title 10, Title 32, Title 22, Title 50, etc.), Department of State (DOS) organization and regional alignments, and General Purpose Forces-Special Operations Forces (SOF) integration.
- Understand all-domain related activities. Space and cyber are key to joint activities.
- Accustom the force to operating with degraded communications/automation. Assured communications and network accessibility cannot be guaranteed.



**5.0 SUPPORT TO COMMANDER'S DECISION MAKING.** This section amplifies how the joint CSEL supports the JFC's decision-making process. The following terms—design and planning, battlefield circulation and KLE, battle rhythm, information sharing, command messaging, and decision-making styles—all have substantial implications for the CSEL. A CSEL can contribute greatly to JFC's decision-making.

**5.1 Design and Planning.** Design is a commander-centric effort. During design, senior leaders invest their time, experience, intellect, education, creativity, intuition, and judgment up front in problem setting, i.e., identifying and framing the correct problem. Problem setting then proceeds to problem solving where more detailed planning occurs. Planning seeks to solve a problem within an accepted framework and generally follows the procedural steps within the Joint Planning Process (JPP). Throughout the JPP, initial facts and assumptions derived during design need to be revisited to ensure the correct problem(s) is being addressed. The importance of commander-led design, to include understanding the problem, cannot be overemphasized. If design efforts fail, all that follows will likely be flawed.

### ***Thoughts for CSEs***

- **Focus on framing the problem before attempting to solve it**
- **Maintain a broad perspective on the environment; it's more than a mil-on-mil conflict; think through a comprehensive approach**
  - Understand the power of DIME on PMESII
- **Commander's vision / guidance and intent provide clarity in today's dynamic environment**
  - Mission-type orders remain key to success
  - Commanders who work with their staffs, giving guidance, and then staying with the staff and helping them, get better solutions in a fraction of the time
- **Rely on your instinct and intuition**
  - Anticipate and seize opportunity
  - Guard against the staff tendency to "over-control" the fight
  - Work with and through your subordinate commanders
- **Be inclusive versus exclusive with your JIIM partners in how you assess, plan, and make decisions**

### **Key Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:**

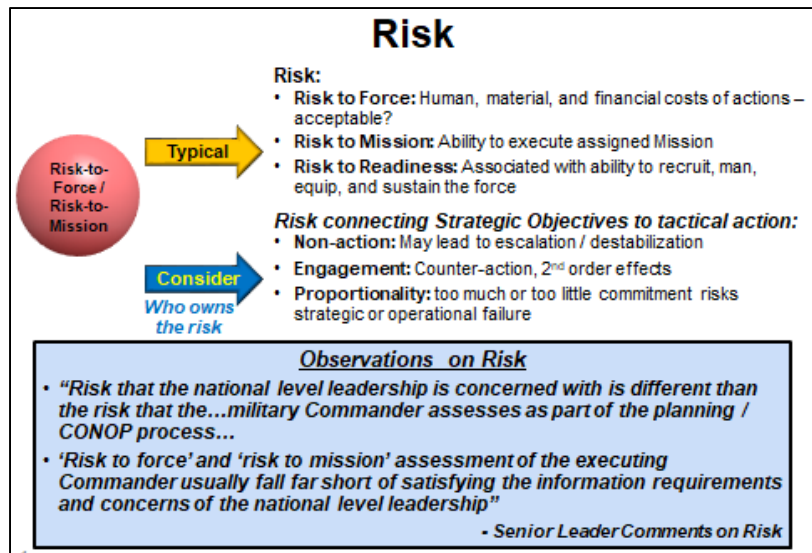
- While operational art, design, and planning have largely been the exclusive realm of senior commanders and their staff officers, a CSEL's access, sound perspectives, and valued relationships have the potential to contribute substantially to JFC-led problem-framing (design) and developing solutions.
- Spend time up front with the JFC to help define/frame the correct problem; this requires understanding and dialogue. The CSEL's unique perspective can assist the JFC and staff with clearly defining the problem. Attend JFC "touch points" with the staff to stay informed.
- Help the JFC articulate the implications of decisions made by HHQ or senior national leaders during the design and planning process. Assist the JFC by encouraging and facilitating vertical and horizontal dialogue. Such dialogue can help identify potential mission creep, and help reduce risks to mission, force, and strategy by identifying and clarifying any perceived ambiguities in senior leader's guidance.
- Advise leaders on risk. CSEs are positioned and networked to sense when risks (including mission partners' risks) have been assumed by multiple command echelons, and when the accumulated risk could jeopardize the mission. Understand that problem prevention is as important as problem solving.
- Understand that the staff will use the JPP to make well-coordinated and timely recommendations to the JFC. On occasion, circumstances will not allow for the desired



coordination, detailed mission analysis, and thorough course of action analysis and war gaming. Accelerated JFC-led crisis planning can still occur using the basics of the JPP.

- Enable crisis planning and decision-making process by: helping the JFC and staff to frame the problem at hand; encouraging divergent thinking and scrutiny of initial facts and assumptions; and

articulating the JFC's thinking, intent, and guidance to the staff, subordinate commands, and supporting organizations. This is important because the CSEL can bridge gaps caused by different echelons of command operating at different speeds. This also allows the CSEL to provide unvarnished feedback to the JFC and staff.



**5.2 Battlefield Circulation and KLEs.** Battlefield circulation and KLEs are not limited to the commander. The JFC empowers those who can transmit the command's messages, and the CSEL is a primary messenger for the JFC and command. CSELs are force multipliers and have critical roles in battlefield circulation and KLEs. Some battlefield circulation and KLE observations, insights, and best practices are provided below.

### Key Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:

- Commander's priorities and intent should drive the joint CSEL's focus, battlefield circulation, and KLEs. Review battlefield circulation and KLE opportunities frequently and participate where appropriate. This is important because some events will require interaction at very senior levels. Identify appropriate engagement targets with interorganizational partners to overcome differing organizational structures, mission sets, and authorities.
- Battlefield circulation is not about the person who is circulating, but about the person being visited. The joint CSEL should foster a climate of inclusion and try to create a favorable outcome every time he/she travels. Battlefield circulation is central to the CSEL's personal battle rhythm.
- A CSEL does not always have to accompany the commander. The CSEL's access to people or units not typically visited by the JFC allows the JFC and staff to receive valuable input and unvarnished assessments from

***"Don't be a tourist; have a task and purpose when circulating."***

*Source: CCMD CSEL*

***"Where do I need to be...where will I have the biggest impact?"***

*Source: JTF CSEL*

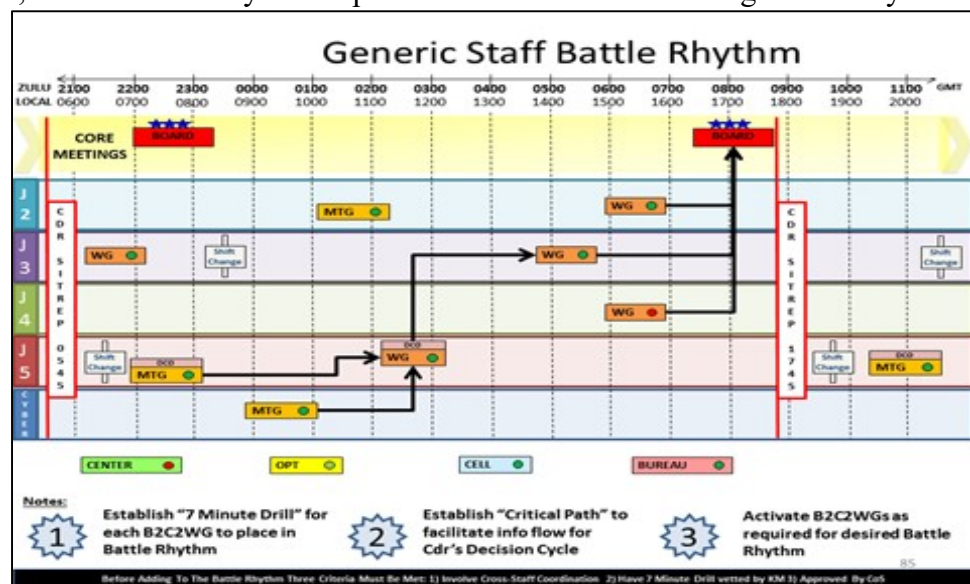
sources that only the CSEL can reach. CSELs are powerful directed telescopes.

- Many leaders now communicate decisions and direction via e-mail and other collaborative means in addition to face-to-face. Assist by following up face-to-face whenever possible. Trust is difficult to build through e-mail.
- Gain improved visualization of operational, intelligence, sustainment, and interagency activities by circulating through the Joint Operations Center (JOC), Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC), Joint Logistics Operations Center (JLOC), and Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) or Civil-Military Operations Center (CMOC). Visit night shifts routinely to assess the HQ staff's 24-hour workload.

*"I often liken our positions to that of IG [Inspector General], we can go anywhere, can be a part of anything with the flexibility of movement."*

Source: CCMD CSEL

**5.3 Battle Rhythm.** An effective and disciplined battle rhythm supports the commander's decision-making cycle, whether in steady-state operations or in a crisis. Although battle rhythm management usually falls under the purview of the COS, the CSEL can coordinate with the COS to ensure that there is "white space" built into the battle rhythm that allows the JFC time to reflect, think, and conduct battlefield circulation. Protect the commander's time and decision space. Additionally, white space can provide flexibility in the schedule to accommodate emerging requirements. The CSEL can help preserve white space by ensuring the staff understands how the JFC receives and digests information. While the JFC's "touch points" with the staff are somewhat dependent on the commander's leadership style and personality, the CSEL can help identify battle rhythm events that can be "shed" from the schedule.



### Key Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:

- Concentrate on the outcomes/outputs of key battle rhythm events such as commanders' update briefs and decision briefs. CSELs should not focus their efforts too much on internal HQs staff processes that are mainly conducted by action officers.
- Follow a personal battle rhythm that includes rest and thinking time. Stay healthy. Keep a sustainable and productive schedule. Stay at the top of your game intellectually.
- Understand and participate in the command's battle rhythm. Understand the boards, bureaus, centers, cells, and working groups (B2C2WGs) and operational planning teams (OPTs) that

comprise the command's internal battle rhythm. Know what anchor points form the cornerstone of the command's battle rhythm, e.g., a Secretary of Defense (SecDef) secure VTC or a JFC's conference call with subordinate commanders. Understand and selectively participate in the HQ battle rhythm's critical paths, i.e., those logical and sequenced arrangement of B2C2WGs that directly support decision-making.

- Ensure the HQ battle rhythm is flexible and built to accommodate changes in mission requirements and HHQ demands. Furthermore, ensure the battle rhythm promotes staff and unit-level interaction and planning.
- Ensure low-density, high-demand subject matter experts are used effectively.
- Remember – A decision board provides an opportunity to combine multiple requirements for JFC or Deputy JFC guidance and/or decisions into one venue.
- When the JFC departs HQ battle rhythm events, stay behind for a few minutes because attendees may ask you questions seeking further clarity on the JFC's guidance and intent.
- Know the battle rhythms of your subordinate commands as well as HHQ, and how they nest. Look “down and in,” as well as “up and out.” Synchronize your schedule with the JFC's schedule to expand coverage.
- Encourage integrating the command's NCOs into B2C2WGs and OPTs and leverage enlisted leaders at higher, adjacent, subordinate, and supporting commands to attain and maintain situational awareness as well as to expand situational understanding.

**5.4 Information Sharing.** As a senior leader, the joint CSEL informs, instructs, inquires, inspires, interprets, enables, and empowers. Technically, the CSEL is an information node, information filter, information synchronizer, and information conduit. Each function mentioned is important; however, the CSEL has a larger information-sharing role in the HQ. The CSEL should have an appreciation for how the command identifies, receives, retrieves, prioritizes, analyzes, stores, displays, acts upon, safeguards, shares/distributes, and discards both unclassified and classified information. The CSEL has opportunities to find information-sharing gaps, seams, and vulnerabilities within the command. Subsequently, mitigating solutions can be identified and applied in conjunction with the COS, Information Management Officer (IMO), Knowledge Management Officer (KMO), FDO, and J6 Directorate.

#### **Key Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:**

- Encourage information sharing, both physically and virtually.
- Encourage the staff to write for release and use the FDO to approve release of select documents and briefing packets to traditional and nontraditional mission partners.
- Help the JFC identify gaps in information requirements; encourage information fusion.
- Verify the Request for Information (RFI) process includes all stakeholders.
- Help identify and reduce impediments to effective staff work and information sharing.
- Confirm that changes to JFC guidance and intent are distributed widely and effectively.
- Confirm that HQ unclassified and classified portals are identified, leveraged, user-friendly, and navigated easily; this includes collaborative tools.
- Verify Knowledge Management Representatives (KMRs) are distributed within the HQ.
- Confirm adequate foreign disclosure personnel are assigned to the HQ.
- Understand the JFC's information requirements, and know how to get important information back into the staff planning and analysis processes.

- Understand that there are differences between information, knowledge, and shared understanding. All too often, we see staffs present JFCs with raw, unanalyzed data, forcing the JFCs to accomplish the analysis, fusion, and assessment functions. Ensure staff briefings contribute to shared understanding and contain the “So what?” to better enable the commander to make informed decisions.
- Confirm the J3-managed common operational picture (COP) and supporting COPs (e.g., logistics COP, medical COP, etc.) are shared in real time among commands, support planning efforts, and build situational awareness and understanding.

### 5.5 Command Messaging and the Information Environment (IE). In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, our

leaders are forced to operate in, and navigate through an unforgiving IE. This requires us to be adaptive and proactive. A 24-hour news cycle compels us to evaluate our messaging and our audiences continuously. Veracity in traditional TV, radio, and print media is challenged by “fake news” and “crowd sourcing” on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube in real time. Capable and talented adversaries are able to communicate in near-real time to a broad audience from remote locations. With this knowledge, effective CSELs must be able to convey the command’s messages, both internally and externally, and tailor and deliver those messages to the many various audiences.



**There is no such thing as peacetime in the Information Environment:**

- Information ‘rounds’ are constantly being fired—especially at us
- Without situational awareness in the IE, you will not know you are being shot at
- If you don’t know you’re being shot at, you can’t respond or mitigate
- If you don’t know and you don’t respond, the cumulative effects could be like gamma radiation (i.e., you don’t know it’s harming you until you’re sidelined or dead)

**“Steady state” and “gray area” operations often defined via information-based conflict**

### Key Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:

- CSELs, as principal messengers for their JFCs and commands, need to understand the latitude to which they can speak for their commanders and their commands. Establish these parameters early with JFC.
- Be cognizant that people listen to what you say and watch what you do.
- Know your social media persona. Expand knowledge of social media and the implications.
- Effective CSELs apply their experiences to conduct messaging “credibility checks” within their HQs to ensure the alignment of words and actions—all to accomplish the mission and to minimize the “Say-Do” gap.
- Use the Public Affairs Office (PAO) to prepare for media interviews, to include rehearsals.
- Confirm there are clear approval processes for the command’s narratives, themes, and messages. Confirm the HQ staff lead for communication strategy and venues for decision.
- Understanding the adversary and threat narrative helps inform our narrative and strategy.



- Anticipate likely adversary actions and gain response-and-release authorities to respond rapidly in the “battle of the narrative.”
- Assessment is critical to refine the communication narrative and strategy.
- Guard against the tendency to trumpet success prematurely.
- A communication synchronization-related working group that is integrated with the targeting process and linked to a decision board enables effective synchronization.

**The Narrative:**  
- **Message Filters for the Operational Commander and CSEL** -

**How will what is done or said:**

- Be understood, perceived, or manipulated by my adversary?
- Be understood or perceived by my coalition partners?
- Mesh with President's schedule and what he is saying?
- Mesh with SecState, SecDef, and CJCS schedules and messages?
- Mesh with my boss's (or bosses') schedule and policies?
- Be perceived in National Security Council Deputies / Principals Committees?
- Play in our allies' capitals?
- Read on the front page of *The New York Times*?
- Read on the front page of the newspaper in my region?

**The Commander and CSEL are the most sensitive filters in the headquarters.**

**5.6 Decision-making Styles.** A joint CSEL engages in the JFC's decision-making process by virtue of his/her advisory role to the JFC. The CSEL needs to know the JFC's preferred decision-making style and help the staff to work within the JFC's preferences.

#### **Key Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:**

- Understand differences in commanders' decision-making styles and be flexible enough to adapt and complement them. Some JFCs use small groups. Other JFCs prefer using larger, inclusive groups to receive, deliberate on, and make decisions. Use of either style has information sharing and battle rhythm implications. The effective CSEL does not have to *adopt* the JFC's style but rather *adapt* to his/her JFC's style.
- Commanders have different preferences when interacting with the staff and subordinates, e.g., one-on-one, through the COS, by secure VTC, or in person. Determine your commander's preference and how to accommodate his/her preferred means.
- Understand how your JFC views the use of the CSEL, deputies, COS, J-Dirs, and Special Staff. Understand and leverage the command's Terms of Reference (TOR).
- Differentiate information requirements and preferred ways to receive information (e.g., CCIR, reporting, and briefing implications). Many commanders prefer graphics while others prefer words to support their decision making.

**Terms of Reference (TOR)  
for JTF HQ Senior Leaders**

---

- Codifies roles and responsibilities for JTF HQ Senior Leaders
- Establish as early in operation as possible, then routinely update / adjust
- Address JTF Commander's personal focus areas
- Can include CSEL, Deputies, COS, POLAD, J3, and other key staff

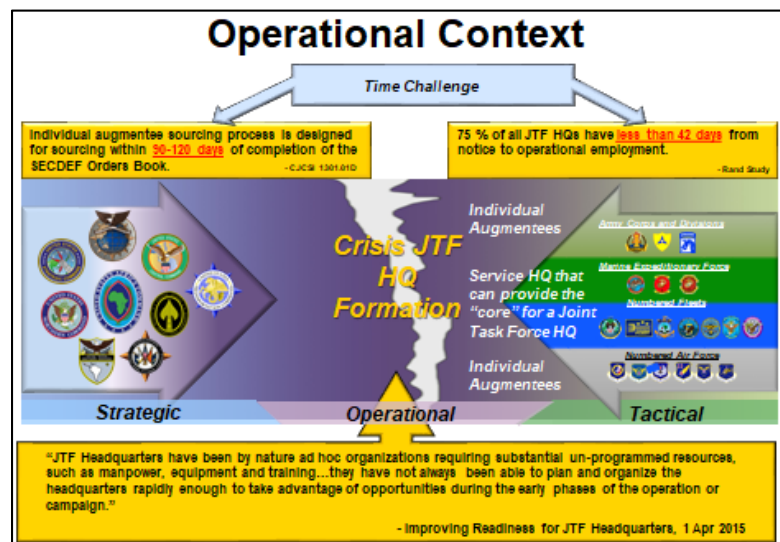
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Useful for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Senior JTF leaders (especially deputy commanders from other Services / nations)</li> <li>– External organizations (up and out, lateral, and subordinate)</li> <li>– JTF staff</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The COS or Secretary of Joint Staff (SJS) normally has responsibility for establishing and maintaining TOR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines JTF Senior Leader primacy areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– JTF authorities (e.g., second in command, targeting authorities, &amp; funding approval)</li> <li>– Oversight of JTF staff functions and associated battle rhythm events</li> <li>– Relationships / engagements with all key external organizations (e.g., HHQ, embassies) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarifies for Senior Leaders who they are responsible to engage / interact</li> <li>• Helps external organizations understand which JTF Senior Leader to go to</li> <li>• Should include responsibilities for home station oversight (if any)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
--	---

**6.0 CSEL SUPPORT IN JTF HQs.** Often a crisis has occurred and is deteriorating when a HHQ (i.e., establishing authority) activates a JTF HQ. In this crisis response situation, the JTF leadership is placed in a reactive mode. Seventy-five percent of JTFs formed during the last 15 years had less than 42 days from notification to operational employment. Accordingly, time-sensitive challenges ensue when forming, staffing, organizing, training, deploying, sustaining, and operating a JTF HQ. Furthermore, joint reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (JRSOI) activities are challenging, especially if an enemy contests JTF entry with asymmetric, unconventional, and hybrid anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities. Hence, CSEL engagement is crucial throughout the JTF life cycle, i.e., from pre-activation (HHQ decision is likely) until JTF disestablishment.

### **Key Observations, Insights, and Best Practices:**

- Prepare early for eventual JTF CSEL role; help prepare your HQ for a future JTF HQ role.

- Develop and maintain a list of critical tasks that the CSEL should do/can do when the HQ is notified it will assume a JTF HQ role. De-conflict and synchronize this list with the commander's and other senior leaders' lists of critical tasks. The tasks can be developed and documented during periodic tabletop exercises (TTXs) with other senior leaders, and by producing a JTF HQ TOR. Reinforce an expeditionary mindset within the HQ.



- Spend time understanding the political and policy aspects of the mission, and the CCDR's mission, intent, end state, and processes to better understand the JTF role and mission. Participate actively in the commander-led operational design effort.
- Along with the commander and planners, read and study all establishing authority's (e.g., SecDef, JCS, CCMD, etc.) orders, directives, and guidance for the JTF. If further clarity is required, encourage the staff to forward unambiguous RFIs to the establishing authority.
- Based on experience, CSELs can play a key role in developing and translating authorities (e.g., rules of engagement [ROE]) into something that subordinate units can understand. JTF CSELs can also play a key role in reminding their commanders to seek necessary authorities.
- A well-understood JTF HQ SOP assists greatly. The Joint Staff J7 Common JTF HQ SOP can be used as a model— [https://jdeis.js.mil/jdeis/jel/jtfguide/sop\\_index.htm](https://jdeis.js.mil/jdeis/jel/jtfguide/sop_index.htm).
- Confirm that JTF HQ SOP, JTF HQ TOR, Joint Training Plan, Joint Manning Plan, draft Joint Manning Document (JMD), draft Joint Mission-Essential Equipment List (JMEEL), and personnel reception plan are developed and updated to improve JTF HQ preparedness.

- The JTF commander must seek to fill as many requirements as possible from his/her immediately available personnel assets.
- Review the JTF Manning Plan and JMD and determine where NCOs can help fill requirements in the various staff directorates. Consider the use of a JMD working group to manage the JMD development process.

Ensure the JMD defines the overall personnel requirements necessary to complete the mission.

- Consider that the individual augment sourcing process is typically designed for sourcing no earlier than 90-120 days from approval of the SECDEF Orders Book (SDOB).

	JTF Commander Focus Area:	JTF CSEL Focus Area:	Deputy JTF CDR for Ops & Intel	Deputy JTF CDR for Support	COS
Key Functions and B2C2WG Lead / Oversight	SecDef / CCDR SVTC, Daily CUB, Future Ops Synchron Board, Plans Coord Board	SecDef / CCDR SVTC, Daily CUB, Future Ops Synchron Board, Plans Coord Board, JRSOI, Readiness, and Force Protection	Joint Targeting Coord Board, Joint Collection Management Board, Current CUB	Personnel, Logistics and Comms, LNOs to and from external orgs, force protection	Staff synchronizer, Info flow and Battle Rhythm, Staff organization and manning, Coordinate / monitor TOR
Engagement Role Up and Out	SecDef, CCDR, Ambassador, MOD	HHQ CSEL, Sptg HQs CSEs & Sptg, Foreign SEL, Internal, Reps, LNO Teams	USAID; UN; CCMD J1, J4, J6, J8, TRANSCOM, CCMD Joint Log Board, Joint RQMTS Review Board	Higher, Adjacent, Lower COS, National Support Element	
Authorities	Transitions, Commit JTF reserve, changes to JTF C2	JFC Delegated & Enlisted Career Mgt	Second in Command, Approve JPITL, Target Engagement Authority	Third in Command, JPITL Approval (alt), TEA (alt)	Prioritize staff efforts Direct staff, As directed by JFC
Oversight of Sptg & Sub Organizations		JRSOI, Coalition & HN Enlisted & NCO Training & Development	CJFACC, CJFLCC, SPMAGTF, CFMCC, SOJTF, JTF Reserve	Sustainment and Signal, Service Comp Command, TSC/ESC	None

- Spend time up front developing training plans and continuity/turnover procedures designed to integrate incoming personnel quickly.
- Ensure the HQ establishes responsibility for JTF staff training, e.g., pre-deployment, reception, and continuous sustainment training.
- Participate actively in the JTF Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment (JIPOE) process. Develop comprehensive understanding of the joint operations area (JOA) to include transregional security threats, all-domain threats (e.g., air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace), and multifunctional threats (e.g., intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; information operations; and cruise and ballistic missile defense).
- Understand supported and supporting command relationships and associated authorities. JTF *access* to supporting capabilities may be more important than actual *ownership* of those assets.
- DOD may not be the Lead Federal Agency. The JTF may be in supporting role.
- Help the commander identify and prioritize critical resources and forces, as well as identify 2<sup>nd</sup>- and 3<sup>rd</sup>-order effects, i.e., unintended consequences, of pending decisions.
- Know the JTF subordinate and supporting organizations and their capabilities in order to identify potential shortfalls (e.g., low-density, high-demand assets) or excess capabilities.
- Assist in determining Initial and Full Operational Capability (IOC/FOC) criteria and/or requirements for the JTF HQ and the broader JTF.
- Ensure the JTF HQ maintains a “bias for action” by developing a lean organization. Small, well-organized JTF HQs are more efficient and sustainable than large bureaucratic HQs. The CSEL should recommend exchanging trained LNO teams immediately and requesting augmentation from USTRANSCOM Joint Enabling Capabilities Command’s (JECC’s) Joint Planning Support Element (JPSE) and Joint Communications Support Element (JCSE); USTRANSCOM’s JTF-Port Opening (JTF-PO); DLA-Energy; and DLA’s Joint Contingency

Acquisition Support Office (JCASO). These organizations provide tailored and functional capabilities and expertise to JTF HQs.

- Unless close CSEL-to-CSEL relationships already exist, the JTF CSEL must establish relationships with the higher, subordinate, and supporting HQs CSELs at earliest opportunity.
- Be well versed in the policies and instructions for other Services.
- The CSEL, in conjunction with the J2, J3, J4, and J6 Senior Enlisted Leaders, should be familiar with the JMEEL and help determine if the suite of communications- and intelligence-related equipment is adequate for the JTF HQ.
- Confirm that communications and network interoperability exists among JTF organizations.
- Understand HQ's role in building time-phased force and deployment data (TPFDD).
- Be aware of every capability that the command has access to, and endeavor to establish relationships that will ensure things are done. Be resolute in support of the JTF commander and command. Never take "No" from a person who does not have the authority to say "Yes."
- The JTF CSEL can help the commander by providing advice about both potential missteps and opportunities pertaining to interorganizational stakeholders.
- A JTF HQ normally works with at least one US embassy during a crisis; expand and leverage relationships with the embassy's Country Team, e.g., the Senior Defense Official (SDO), Defense Attaché (DAT), etc. The JTF CSEL could actually represent the commander, at least initially, as an LNO team chief at a specific US embassy.
- Force protection is always a JTF consideration; work with the US embassy's Regional Security Officer (RSO) and Marine Security Guard Detachment to address protection issues.
- Confirm a viable personnel recovery (PR) system exists and that certified PR experts are assigned to the HQ; request Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA) support if necessary.
- Multinational partners have different authorities, ROE, Rules for the Use of Force (RUF), national caveats, and restrictions. JTF CSELs can play an important role in sorting them out.
- Leverage the authorities and capabilities of mission partners to improve effectiveness, e.g., US Title 22 and 50 authorities and those of the individual coalition countries. Thoughtful delegation of authorities supports disciplined initiative.
- Spend more time with JTF elements with which you have least familiarity, e.g., other Services, SOF, interorganizational elements, joint augmentation elements, etc.
- Participate in JRSOI/mission rehearsals to expand understanding of pending operations.
- Anticipate an austere JTF environment. Manage your personnel's expectations.
- Establish a Senior Enlisted Council comprised of CSELs/SELs from the staff, subordinate HQs, as well as NCO peers from other nations' militaries.
- CSELs with recent JTF experience: Mentor future and newly assigned JTF CSELs.
- If the duration of JTF activation requires rotational manning, ensure the current CSEL transitions with the incoming CSEL (left seat/right seat ride).



## **Glossary**

### **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

A2/AD – Anti-access/Area Denial	JOPES – Joint Operation Planning and Execution System
B2C2WG – Boards, Bureaus, Centers, Cells, and Working Groups	JP – Joint Publication
C2 – Command and Control	JPP – Joint Planning Process
CCDR – Combatant Commander	JPRA – Joint Personnel Recovery Agency
CCIR – Commander’s Critical Information Requirement(s)	JPSE – Joint Planning Support Element
CCMD – Combatant Command	JRSOI – Joint Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration
CMOC – Civil-Military Operations Center	JSCP – Joint Strategic Campaign/Capabilities Plan
COP – Common Operational Picture	JTF – Joint Task Force
COS – Chief of Staff	JTF-PO – Joint Task Force-Port Opening
DATT – Defense Attaché	KLE – Key Leader Engagement
DIME – Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic (analytical construct)	KMO – Knowledge Management Office(r)
DLA – Defense Logistics Agency	KMR – Knowledge Management Representatives
DOD/DOS – Department of Defense/State	LNO – Liaison Officer
DTD – Deployable Training Division, Joint Staff J7	NMS – National Military Strategy
FDO – Foreign Disclosure Office(r)	OPT – Operational Planning Team
FOC – Full Operational Capability	PACE – Primary, Alternate, Contingency, & Emergency
GEF – Guidance for Employment of the Force	PAO – Public Affairs Office(r)
HHQ/HQ – Higher Headquarters/Headquarters	PMESII – Political, Military, Economic, Social, Information, and Infrastructure (analytical construct)
IE – Information Environment	POLAD – Political Advisor
IMO – Information Management Office(r)	PR – Personnel Recovery
IOC – Initial Operational Capability	RFI – Request for Information
ISAF – International Security Assistance Force	ROE – Rules of Engagement
ISIS – Islamic State of Iraq and Syria	RSO – Regional Security Office(r)
JCASO – Joint Contingency Acquisition Support Office	RUF – Rules for the Use of Force
JCS – Joint Chiefs of Staff	SDO – Senior Defense Official
JCSE – Joint Communications Support Element	SDOB – Secretary of Defense Orders Book
J-Dir – Joint Staff Director (e.g., J3, J4, and J6)	SEAC – Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
JECC – Joint Enabling Capabilities Command	SecDef – Secretary of Defense
JFC – Joint Force Commander	SEJPME – Senior Enlisted Joint Professional Military Education
JIACG – Joint Interagency Coordination Group	SOF – Special Operations Forces
JIIM – Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational	TOR – Terms of Reference
JIOC – Joint Intelligence Operations Center	TPFDD – Time-Phased Force and Deployment Data
JIPOE – Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment	TTX – Tabletop Exercise
JLOC – Joint Logistics Operations Center	UCP – Unified Command Plan
JMD – Joint Manning Document	VEO – Violent Extremist Organization(s)
JMEEL – Joint Mission-Essential Equipment List	
JOA – Joint Operations Area	
JOC – Joint Operations Center	

**This page intentionally left blank**





**The Joint Staff J7  
116 Lake View Parkway  
Suffolk, VA 23435-2697**

**Approved for public release**