Exercise NOBLE JUMP marks the first time that high readiness units have physically tested their response to rapid "orders to move" under the new Very High Readiness Joint Task Force framework. The training event marks a learning process that will allow NATO military staffs to identify both successes and shortfalls as the Alliance continues to refine its high readiness capabilities. NATO photograph by Staff Sergeant Andrew Davis, U.S. Air Force.

"Early engagement allows JWC's Observer/Trainers to guide the Training Audience to better utilise NATO Doctrine as a tool for interoperability."
IN RECOGNITION of the changing world, with new and emerging security threats, and the exposure of gaps in Allied Joint Doctrine following a deep analysis of recent NATO operations and exercises, the North Atlantic Council, through its Military Committee (MC), called on the NATO members to renew their emphasis on the analysis and development of NATO Doctrine in order to ensure that it remains relevant. "Doctrine" is a word that is often used in a wide variety of military discussions and debates, whether those conversations take place in the field, during a conference or a workshop, or indeed around the coffee bar. Much has also been written about doctrine, but how many actually understand what it is, how it is applied and more specifically in this forum, what role does the Joint Warfare Centre (JWC) play in helping with its development and application?
Defining "doctrine"
NATO’s definition of doctrine, used unaltered by many member states, is: “The fundamental principles by which the military forces guide their actions in support of objectives. It is authoritative, but requires judgement in application.” Some nations choose to elaborate further: “Military doctrine is a formal expression of military knowledge and thought (...); it is descriptive rather than prescriptive, requiring judgement in application. It does not establish dogma or provide a checklist of procedures, but is rather an authoritative guide, describing how the army thinks about fighting, not how to fight. As such, it attempts to be definitive enough to guide military activity, yet versatile enough to accommodate a wide variety of situations.”

Military doctrine is the expression of how military forces contribute to campaigns, major operations, battles and engagements. It is designed to provide a common frame of reference across the military, to assist with the standardization of operations, facilitating readiness by establishing common ways in which to accomplish military tasks. Doctrine links theory, history, experimentation, and practice. Its objective is to foster initiative and creative thinking. Doctrine provides the military with an authoritative body of statements on how military forces conduct operations. For the majority of nations, military doctrine is treated as a guide to action, rather than a lexicon of hard rules for use by military planners and leaders. As the linkage above shows, doctrine is a natural subject for review and development through the medium of exercises, where NATO seeks to draw lessons from theory, experimentation and practice.

In the recent past, NATO military operations, principally those in the Balkans and in Afghanistan have provided the best vehicle for the development, or indeed, creation of NATO Doctrine, but with the drawdown of NATO influence in both of these theatres of operations, the focus has now turned to NATO exercises to provide the forum for such activity.

The relationship between doctrine, strategy and other military factors
Doctrine is often confused with strategy, which it is not. NATO’s definition of strategy is “presenting the manner in which military power should be developed and applied to achieve national objectives or those of a group of nations.” Of course, given that NATO is first and foremost a political Alliance, this definition encompasses more than military action alone; military strategy provides the rationale for military operations. Military strategy is often described as the derivation of military aims and objectives from political will. Conversely, doctrine seeks to answer several questions in order to provide a common conceptual framework for a military organization:

- “Who are we?” — What the military organization perceives itself to be;
- “What do we do?” — What its mission is;
- “How do we do that?” — How the mission is to be carried out;
- “How did we do that in the past?” — How the mission has been carried out in history.

In a similar vein, doctrine is neither operations nor tactics, but serves as a reference point for uniting all three levels of warfare from strategic to tactical. It is, and should be, used extensively at the operational level of command, where many of the questions posed above should be addressed given that one of the major roles and responsibilities of the operational commander and his staff is to interpret strategic direction and guidance, determine the art of the possible and deliver intent to any military force tasked with the execution of an operation.

HQ SACT’s responsibilities for doctrine development
As has been stated, in the wake of ISAF operations and to support the Alliance’s ongoing transformational activities, the Military Committee (MC) has directed that NATO needs to rediscover doctrine, which is broadly defined...
as the 45 operational level Allied Joint Publications (AJPs). SACT’s Terms of Reference currently direct him to maintain the Bi-SC lead for enhancing NATO interoperability and standardization initiatives, including doctrine development. Acknowledging this responsibility, SACT has stated that improving doctrine coherence is one of his highest priorities, and has re-developed a strategy to improve the output and relevance of NATO Doctrine, which will be delivered through the Allied Joint Operations Doctrine Working Group on behalf of the MC’s Joint Standardization Board.

The NATO Standardization Office, located at NATO HQ Brussels, remains the MC’s lead agency for the development, coordination and assessment of operational standardization in which doctrine plays an important role. The Joint Standardization Board, therefore, remains the highest authority within the NATO Doctrine ‘hierarchy’.

The NATO Allied Joint Operations Doctrine Working Group is largely comprised of national representatives, normally drawn from national doctrine development centres, who are complemented by invited Partnership for Peace (PfP) nations’ representatives and other members of the NATO Doctrine Community of Interest (COI) including those from the Centres of Excellence and the so-called “Triple J” (Joint Warfare Centre, JWC; Joint Force Training Centre, JFTC; and Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre, JALLC).

The doctrine COI, through the auspices of the Allied Joint Operations Doctrine Working Group meets twice a year in the spring and autumn to discuss a wide range of doctrine-related subjects, which now includes a renewed emphasis on doctrine development and how it can be facilitated through new initiatives.

As SACT is seeking to establish Bi-SC structures and processes that will provide coherence between lessons learned, concepts, analyses, operations, exercises and doctrine development in order to support NATO’s Connected Forces Initiative (CFI), it is clear that the ACO-sponsored and ACT-scheduled NATO exercise programme provides an extremely useful vehicle with which to bring this work together. Given the key role that JWC performs on behalf of SACT in the design, delivery and analysis of exercises, it is clear that we have a major part to play in the doctrine development process.

In fact, MC 510 clearly states that in addition to our operational level training outputs, the JWC “supports NATO Level Concept Development, Experimentation, Lessons Learned and Doctrine Development processes” and it is these requirements that underpin JWC’s contribution to the Alliance’s transformational activities and widens our remit beyond that of a training provider to encompass our role as a warfare centre.

There can be little doubt that the loss of NATO’s ability to conduct doctrine development through the medium of actual operations, particularly in the analysis of new or evolving doctrine is significant. However, the exercise environment does offer some distinct advantages. First and foremost, through its operational level exercises, JWC offers NATO a safe and controlled environment in which to evaluate extant, heavily revised and new AJPs. Our ambitious Programme of Work, which encompasses the delivery of exercises to both of the Joint Force Commands, together with those HQs and formations that make up the new NATO Force Structure, also provides us with a unique opportunity to accelerate the development of doctrine through the rapid turnaround of lessons learned or the identification of doctrinal voids. This is especially important as NATO wrestles with the emergence of new doctrinal requirements to tackle new threats such as those posed by cyber, hybrid warfare and Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD), or potential initiatives like Battlespace Management, for which NATO Doctrine is either non-existent or, woefully, inadequate. The complexity of some of these topics underlines the scale of effort that needs to be applied to educate and guide the NATO community.
JWC’s pivotal role in doctrine development

As NATO’s principal exercise facilitator and a centre in unique position in both concept development and capability integration, JWC, therefore, has a pivotal role in doctrine analysis and development — so how is the organisation tasked to conduct such work? There are, in effect, two ways in which the JWC can help to deliver doctrine development to the NATO Doctrine COI. ACT maintains that the JWC should be the Command’s “primary actor with regards to assessing whether extant joint doctrine needs revision.” (4)

On those occasions where there is an urgent requirement to analyse emerging or revised doctrine, this translates into the JWC Doctrine Analysis and Development Section being tasked directly by ACT, through the Allied Joint Operational Doctrine Working Group, with undertaking a study through the medium of the exercise phases into a particular doctrine set. The methodology for these tasks is similar in nature to that we use for experimentation and requires the sponsor, normally through ACT and in concert with the JWC, to identify a suitable exercise and insert doctrine development tasks as early into the exercise planning process as possible.

Ideally, this should be during the Exercise Specification (EXSPEC) cycle in order to allow JWC to include such tasks in its own analysis of the exercise requirements prior to the commencement of exercise design.

The sponsor should endeavour to take into account a number of exercise parameters which may include, but are not limited to the nature and scope of the exercise, the Primary Training Audience (PTA), the broad scenario and supporting relationships. There is, for example, no point in introducing a doctrine development task for BMD, if the exercise scenario and setting does not support BMD, or the PTA is unlikely to ever be responsible for such a military task. Whilst the introduction of a doctrine development or analysis task at the EXSPEC stage is advantageous, it is not entirely prescriptive and JWC is always prepared to accept such tasking during early stages of the exercise design process, providing such tasks do not overly interfere with either the existing exercise or Training Objectives.

JWC is also capable of self-generated, direct tasking. (5) As such, the Centre will routinely raise doctrine lessons identified (LIs) during its interaction with Training Audiences in the planning and execution phases of the exercises that it hosts. This may include an analysis of extant doctrine or the identification of doctrinal voids, based on a wide range of considerations including a comprehensive knowledge of the PTA, the latest developments in force capabilities or the nature and scope of the exercise.

Below: Major General Reinhard Wolski and Lieutenant General Mark O. Schissler, Deputy Chairman of the NATO Military Committee, listening to a briefing during exercise TRIDENT JAGUAR 15. Photograph by JWC PAO.

JOINT WARFARE CENTRE HANDBOOKS

No article on Joint Warfare Centre’s role in NATO Doctrine Development would really be complete without a few words on the JWC handbooks and the role they play. It must be stressed that these handbooks are not official doctrine per se, but are designed to bridge the gap between doctrine and its practical application at the operational level.

First developed by JWC some years ago as a “ready reckoner” for Observer/Trainers traveling with our Training Teams to participate in the operational planning and execution phases of the NRF exercises, these handbooks proved to be an invaluable resource for translating the theory of doctrine into practical application, covering a wide variety of subjects ranging from the “Effects Based Approach to Operations” to “Joint Time Sensitive Targeting” and “Joint Personnel Recovery”.

At some point, these valuable references were discovered by members of the Training Audience, who developed a voracious appetite for them and they have enjoyed a wide circulation amongst staff working in a wide variety of roles in headquarters at the operational level. It must be stressed that they are not designed to replace NATO Doctrine, but to compliment it by providing a quick reference guide.

After a brief hiatus, the JWC has relaunched the series and will publish the first edition of a new handbook, “The Operational Staff Handbook”, later this year.
operational planning and execution process, amongst others. As part of the JWC’s renewed interaction with the Allied Joint Operational Doctrine Working Group, these doctrine-related LIs are regularly extracted and presented to the members of the working group, many of whom have custodial responsibilities for the NATO AJP. In this way, we help to accelerate the process through which doctrinal inadequacies or voids are identified and reported back to the doctrine COI.

It should be readily apparent that doctrine development, from a JWC perspective, is not an activity restricted to any one entity within the Centre. It remains, very much, a whole headquarters activity in which a large majority of those JWC personnel involved in exercise design and delivery or capability integration have a part to play. As always, our Observer/Trainers (O/Ts) remain at “front of house” since they regularly interact with the PTA through their primary duties. Early engagement allows our O/Ts to guide the TA to better utilise NATO Doctrine as a tool for interoperability and not to see the publications as references to be taken off the bookshelf some days before the exercise. The continued engagement of the O/Ts throughout the delivery of the exercise then provides the optimum medium through which to analyse extant doctrine, assess its continued relevance and help to develop improved joint doctrine or identify voids through our Lessons Identified process.

Our exercise planners and those actively involved in monitoring doctrine development through capability integration should be equally engaged, directly or indirectly, with the wider doctrine COI to ensure that we continue to utilise our comprehensive exercise programme as a vehicle for the further development of doctrine as directed by SACT; all of which underlines our key role as not just a training provider, but as an organisation at the heart of NATO’s enhancement of its operational capabilities across a broad spectrum. 

END NOTES:
(1) Extract from Canadian Army Doctrine Manual.
(2) AAP-6(V) NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions.
(3) Enclosure 1 to MC 510: Terms of Reference for Commander Joint Warfare Centre.
(4) ACT Directive 80-38 (Extant).
(5) Based on anecdotal evidence and JWC internal staff observations.

NATO assessed its alert procedures for the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) for the first time during exercise NOBLE JUMP from 7-9 April 2015, which involved over 1,500 personnel from 11 Allied Nations. As such Germany, Poland, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, Lithuania, Croatia, Portugal and Slovenia tested their headquarters’ response to alert procedures while the high-readiness units from the Netherlands and Czech Republic physically deployed equipment and troops to airports and railheads.

This activity represents an important milestone as NATO continues to respond to emerging security challenges. The exercise has its origins in last year’s Wales Summit, where NATO leaders collectively agreed to establish the VJTF, or the so-called “Spearhead” force. These developments are part of wider enhancements to the NATO Response Force (NRF) in order to address instability on NATO’s southern and eastern flanks.

“NATO military planners have been working tirelessly to enhance NRF and implement the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force. Today, our progress is manifested in the rapid deployments we see happening in locations across the Alliance,” said General Philip Breedlove, Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). “These measures are defensive, but are a clear indication that our Alliance has the capability and will to respond to emerging security challenges on our southern and eastern flanks,” he added.

For the last several months, NATO has been developing the concepts behind the VJTF and established an interim force early in 2015. Exercise NOBLE JUMP marks the first time that high-readiness units have physically tested their response to rapid “orders to move” under the new VJTF framework. The training event marks a learning process that will allow NATO military staff to identify both successes and shortfalls as the Alliance continues to refine its high-readiness capabilities. “Moving military units at short notice is a highly complex process that requires careful planning and constant refinement and practice to maintain capability,” said Colonel Mariusz Lewicki, the head military planner for the VJTF at SHAPE. “We have had a very good start this week, but much work remains and we will continue exercising these concepts throughout 2015 and 2016,” he noted.

Increasingly complex exercises, trials, and evaluations will be conducted in order to develop, refine and implement the VJTF concept into the framework of the Readiness Action Plan and the NATO Response Force. Examples of future training activities include Phase II of Exercise NOBLE JUMP, 9-20 June 2015, where units assigned to the VJTF will deploy to the Zagan Military Training Area in western Poland, as well as exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2015 in Italy, Spain and Portugal from 21 October to 6 November 2015.

NATO SHAPE Public Affairs Office