



360-degree Scenario Design and Development

The Joint Warfare Centre designs and develops training scenarios that provide a fictitious, but realistic political, military, socio-economic, infrastructure, information, and geospatial environment as well as the encompassing narrative on the political, strategic, and operational levels of warfare. These scenarios strengthen NATO readiness and responsiveness and allow the Alliance to practise and exercise its fundamental tasks: collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security.

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The Joint Warfare Centre (JWC) Scenario Branch provides comprehensive and realistic scenario background and supporting documentation to the JWC-directed exercises, tailored to meet both NATO and national requirements, and covering the Alliance 360 degrees geographically.

The mission of the branch is to support Allied Command Transformation (ACT), one of the two strategic commands at the head of NATO's Military Command Structure, in delivering training and exercise programmes to the Alliance. This is accomplished through designing and developing realistic, high-level exercise scenarios based on NATO's current and future approaches to the changing, complex strategic environment.

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Scenario support is one of the cornerstones of the JWC's mission portfolio, funded through a multi-million NOK annual budget within the Centre's overall financial plan. The scope of these scenarios allows for exercises in both Article-5 collective defence and non-Article 5 crisis response operations mode on various levels of effort, from divisional up to multi-corps, and in all domains and dimensions. Within this broad spectrum, and in addition to the conventional spectrum of warfare, the JWC scenarios can also accommodate a wide range of modern warfare threads, such as anti-access/area denial (A2/AD); civil-military interaction; cyber defence; hybrid warfare; and state and non-state actor-sponsored terrorism.

Before each exercise, military and civilian subject matter experts from a wide variety of fields develop the information and documentation needed to support the training audience with the advice and content to replicate key actors and entities during the execution phase. Focus teams for military-political, strategic and operational planning; intelligence; targeting; and geospatial development assist in channeling the information flow in order to create a realistic information environment as the source for the training audience's knowledge development. As a whole, scenario support is coordinated by a small team of scenario managers, who provide the interface to other critical elements and branches of the JWC's overall exercise programme.

The Scenario Branch's first generation of settings and scenarios included two settings that formed the basis for four related scenarios. The SKOLKAN setting was named after a fictitious peer-level adversary located in Scandinavia, whose activities ranged from hybrid through low-intensity, up to full-scale, high-intensity combat campaigns. Since 2010, the JWC has developed different versions of the SKOLKAN scenario, which was first used in 2012.



More Than One Terabyte of Information

A complete setting and scenario can encompass one terabyte (or 1,024 gigabytes) of information, which includes up to 7,500 pages, hundred-plus biographies of key personnel, 7,800 targets, 500 map sheets and hundreds of imagery products.



Setting

The strategic situation related to the regional context, which includes basic geographic, historical, political, military, economic, cultural, humanitarian and legal information on all potential actors involved in the exercise crisis or conflict

Scenario

The background story that describes the historical, political, military, economic, cultural, humanitarian and legal events and circumstances that have led to the current exercise crisis or conflict

The MEL/MIL

The main events list/main incidents list (MEL/MIL) includes storylines, events and incidents designed to trigger training audience decisions and activities connected to the exercise and training objectives.

These JWC scenarios challenge NATO's operational-level commands in both collective defence operations of Norway and the Baltic region, as well as in a non-Article 5 crisis response operation in a fictitious state in southern Scandinavia. As an example, during Exercise TRIDENT JAVELIN 2017, SKOLKAN 3 provided the scenario for one of NATO's largest and most ambitious computer-assisted command post exercises as of this writing. TRIDENT JAVELIN 2017 saw more than 4,000 participants and directing staff exercise command and control in a large-scale conflict spreading from Iceland through the North Atlantic and Norway to the Baltic states.

The SOROTAN setting, meanwhile, addressed NATO's capability to conduct operations not only within or adjacent to its territory, but also in austere conflict and peacebuilding regions in other parts of the world. To enable training and exercises reflecting this ambition, a wide array of fictitious states was created within the geographic contours of North-Western Africa and the Mediterranean. SOROTAN portrayed a combination of state and non-state actors that openly opposed NATO, failed states, states in the process of dissolving, and states seeking NATO's assistance. Tailored to the specific requirements of the training audience, these elements were combined into SOROTAN 1.0, the first scenario based on this setting, which came to life during the high-visibility, non-Article 5 Exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2015.

The Scenario Branch designed the next generation of settings and scenarios in response to NATO's 360-degree approach to current and future challenges. A setting in this context is defined as the geostrategic situation of the respective crisis region and includes a broad spectrum of relevant information on all potential exercise actors. Each setting is capable of "hosting" several scenarios, each of which describes events and circumstances that lead to the respective exercise crisis or conflict. Until 2024, JWC's Scenario Branch will develop three major settings in and around Northern and Eastern Europe, Northern Africa, the Mediterranean and the North Atlantic.

The OCCASUS setting assumes a synthetic geostrategic situation in which a fictitious peer-level opponent challenges NATO on a broad front of political, military, information, and economic storylines. Geographically, this setting will host multiple scenarios in an arc from the North Atlantic to the Black Sea,

RIGHT, CLOCKWISE

Members of the JWC Scenario Branch during a meeting; Lieutenant Colonel Sebastian Pysniak, exercise planner in the Scenario Branch; Lieutenant Colonel Michael Baur, the author, during Exercise TRIDENT JUPITER 2019-1; Exercise STEADFAST JUPITER 2021 training audience at the JWC

"NATO's Military Transformation is driven by the evolving threats and challenges we face — to the east and to the south. Everything we are doing has a 360-degree scope. We do not have the luxury of choosing between different challenges."

Ambassador Alexander Vershbow

Deputy Secretary General of NATO from February 2012 to October 2016
The JWC's *The Three Swords* magazine, October 2016





ABOVE

The main entrance of the Joint Warfare Centre's training facility

allowing the exercising of single, regionally limited scenarios, or a combination of scenarios adding up to a conflict across and around all of Europe. The scenarios will focus primarily on the operational aspects and level of collective defence operations during all stages of a potential campaign, but they will also support training on the strategic and political levels of the Alliance. OCCASUS scenarios are currently planned to be used in the exercises STEADFAST JUPITER 2022 and 2023, as well as STEADFAST DEFENDER 2024.

In addition, the FIKSO setting will specifically reflect NATO's approach to strategic challenges from the south, geographically ranging from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea. In an approach similar to OCCASUS, the FIKSO setting will include a range of various "hot-spots" that the training audience can combine into scenarios as required. The FIKSO setting will concentrate on specific non-Article 5 operation types such as counter-terrorism, disaster relief and peace support. FIKSO scenarios are currently planned to be used in the STEADFAST JACKAL exercises.

In summary, by 2024, the JWC's Scenario Branch will have developed and delivered complex, well-structured and synthetic environments consisting of both existing NATO and non-NATO actors and of fictitious state and non-state actors that cover most of NATO's area of responsibility. Within these environments, the variety and design of challenging "problem sets" and the ability to combine them into a multitude of different scenarios are critical with regard to flexibly tailoring major exercises to existing and emerging requirements. As a key facilitator in this, the JWC's Scenario Branch continues to follow closely geostrategic developments and prognoses in order to allow NATO to exercise not recent, but future conflicts. ✦



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has been working with JWC's Scenario Branch since 2018. Before joining the JWC, he gained NATO experience during previous tours at NATO Allied Air Command entities in Denmark and Italy.