

The Role of Joint Air Power - JAPCC Conference 2007

PANEL 3

"The Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Activity Leading to Physical and Cognitive Effects" (summarized statements)

There are no kinetic or non-kinetic effects; there are activities which achieve effects. Lots of recent activities are working on non-kinetic activities. The ultimate goal for air is to use both kinetic and non-kinetic in a single mission. With great importance, EBAO should be part of all our thinking, planning and results. The selection of kinetic or non-kinetic can be difficult. Our joint capability for non-kinetic is not that good. We have to prioritize non-kinetic activities. Plans should have section for non-kinetic activities. We have to change training and especially education for non-kinetic effects, and need more focus and room for improvement. Don't let us forget the urban warfare.

I like to point out four key effects for security and stability operations. 1. Deterrence. Can use show of force? Humanitarian aid. 2. Defence. Aims at protection of our own weaknesses. Air power can greatly contribute to force protection. 3. Coercion. Break the will of the insurgence and gaining good will of populace. Contain and coerce the enemy. 4. Denial. Insurgence may plan far from population. Non-kinetic effects can be used to deny their communication. And C2. So do we have the right stuff to fight today? Our campaign must have a boosted media campaign. Need to adapt role of AP to use kinetic and non-kinetic. Must we have weapons that are scalable?

I can't forget that the "Big War" is an objective to be ready for. We must be trained for it. We must continue to put money and train for the "Big War", mainly kinetic weapons. Second point, western nations are good at state to state wars, but have difficulty with state to non-state war. Humiliation: Our forces are humiliating the local populace. Legitimacy: Look at perception and local populace and the legitimacy of our operations. We must produce the effect for the enemy we are facing. 3. Ground forces are the best for non-kinetic activities. What can we do with air power? We have to produce effects where the ground forces are not present. Culture: Cognitive effect will depend on the culture of enemy leader and populace.

Effects vice versa activities. It is more important to talk about activities. Non-kinetic activity can have different effects. Majority of sorties in AOR are non-kinetic. SOF and ISR: In non-war, non-kinetic activities will dominate. Airmen have to be as competent in irregular warfare as regular. Non-kinetic activities are influencing. Influence is a primary goal and we must get better, therefore our homework must be done and it's difficult. ISR tracks target to farmhouse. Info passed to HQ. ISR maintains eyes on and vectors ground force to capture the target. Then they can exploit the target. This way is better than dropping a bomb on the target. We need creative thinking. How else might we do it?

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We have to change the mind of the population or we can not be successful. Russians were not able to change permanently the mind of the local population and lost and left. We need to ask them what they need; it might be different from what we think. Air presence (AP) is good for strategic acting, but not against suicide bombers. Non-kinetic actions may be constructive or non-constructive. AP is precise and can act quickly. We should be able to deliver it to a single village, or school. Example: providing aid and information. If precisely deliver 1000 small leaflets with \$10 and a radio to 1000 families, it could provide an effect.

Q&A

Q

I will give a few examples. AP in Afghanistan is non-kinetic. Use air presence and ISR over open roads. We must use fast jets to check roads. The other side of air presence: Taliban learned that we can respond in 20 minutes with AP, now they leave after 15 minutes. AP had unintended effect. Kinetic effect, it can be proportional to drop a 500lb bomb on a person in a market, depends on the military necessity. Collateral damage perspective depends on where your activity is and populace. One activity, local population rose up to support a bombing (killed Taliban). Some civilians were killed because they were being used as human shields and they held no malice for friends/family being killed. The question is how we put our western requirements on the execution, and not on how the populace would respond or react.

A

We need to consider our training. Open some of our education/training schools to other nations. To the Middle East and Africa. By having them in Staff College we could learn how they think and work.

A

A comprehensive approach is difficult and complicated. One part of the answer is that in a fighter, you can not approach their culture. We need to have a common understanding of their culture when considering a comprehensive approach.

A

In Afghanistan, if we spent money to speak to Pashtun people, we would have had greater results. The influence of different culture must be considered, but we have big problems to explain dropping a 500lb bomb on a crowded market. You know your strategic end state: win heart and minds, and that needs training and education early on.

Comment

Need to be careful of the target audience. The home team needs to be educated. The media and the politicians. Our understanding of their culture isn't sophisticated enough yet. A media plan is not part of the campaign plan. They need to understand our non-kinetic effects.

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Q

This is a provoking debate by introducing new terms, but not defining new terms. It is not good to change effect into activity. Is it relevant to change those terms?

A

We know the scientific meaning of kinetic. We need these terms to be able to talk about effects. Mingling of kinetic/non-k, effect/activities must be discussed. Other terms could be misleading. AP will be needed in the future, you must have this discussion. We may change something, like effect to activities.

Comment

The paper would like to define some of these terms. The difference between using killing weapons or doing it by another way, which doesn't need high velocity and big bangs. Non-kinetic, you can blind them, block things. You can achieve effects by doing activities. The problem is, when you are there (AOR) to do this stuff, you have people using their brain to do activities to accomplish something. We have to think about and figure things out. There are lots of things we do, but don't get credit for. It may not make good press, but we need to get better at explaining it. JAPCC should go down the path of explaining some of this.

Q

What is the background for using non-kinetic effects? What do legal advisors say for the use of microwave weapons?

A

It depends on what you are doing with microwave weapons, each nation will have another answer.

A

Using EW to explode IEDs. It's legal in the ROE. Some nations cannot use it, because we can't guarantee not having civilian casualty however, currently legal issue.

Comment

The technology is being harnessed to deal with IEDs in a practical way.

A

Finding the fine line...using non-kinetic. It could be chemical, biological, or laser. The legal part will be considered for use and is of utmost concern. The mechanical use of non-lethal weapons is easier.

Comment

I can have non-kinetic weapons to have lethal effects and kinetic weapons to have non-lethal effects. Please clarify your second question. Any weapon you use need to be appropriate for your fight.

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A

The prioritization is very important on the effects you want to achieve. Psyops or non-lethal effects.

A

We have new weapons. New weapons can be scary at first. We need to learn how to use them. People are afraid to use at first, but not anymore. Won't use microwave answer now, it's too new. But we have to use it to learn.

Comment

These weapons need to be applied with care. The system needs to provide the effects without hurting the people. You have to tailor your weapons and be sympathetic on how you employ them.

Q

Regarding influence effects. Everyone who is influencing needs to speak with the same voice. Local population, terrorist, those that support the terrorists, the region, home...all need to be saying the same thing to all. Coherence of the messages they are receiving. They should have a strategic communications plan. These attempts to provide coherent message doesn't last, so how do we get the coalition to send the coherent messages?

A

We must try. It is difficult to agree on what kind of message to send, because not all nations agree on what to send. In coalitions: this is the influence we would like to achieve. Then you can agree. If you can't agree on the influence, then you cannot agree.

A

Alliance training for Afghanistan means that all nations have their training preparation. We have good mission rehearsal and preparation. You don't reach everyone, but most. All the nations could be on the same sheet of music for preparation.

Comment

In a coalition, you have different opinions. The enemy will exploit.

Comment

One view of victory is: no destruction, but cease violence. Are we going to kill all of the Taliban? No. Only a few that will not change their mind. There are some misperceptions on what non-lethal weapons might do. In war, info operations name what these weapons are going to do? What kind of message are we sending? "Pilots can look into your house." "Our EW weapons will prevent you from having children." The story which is at first in the air, often wins, but not the right and true one. When we look at coherence, we can do better at various levels of commanders all saying the same thing from the PRT to the White House. If we can pull all weapons and thoughts together for a coherent plan, it could be very effective.

Q – from the audience

Are the education systems ready to provide this scope? Do we need exercises?

A

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No, schools and nations are not yet in the position to act. Some are more than others. Exercises must provide non-kinetic effect tools.

Q

We are not good at humanitarian operations. Dropping food for Afghan people was accompanied by bad media reports. The use of civilians as human shields to prevent AP has become a standard tactic. We hold back weapons, and they have won. If we drop bombs, they win since we killed civilians. We lose, they win. We need to have an aggressive prosecution of insurgents that use civilians for human shields.

A

I agree. Imbedded journalists joined the troops, mainly from western media. We need access to other media. We must spread our information among the western world. We should use other media too, so the locals can watch it. Afghanis don't watch CNN.

A

Embedded media. We have bad reputation because we don't take them along. The politicians see what is in the media. Media doesn't see air power, neither does it politicians. There is need to find a way how the media can watch effects from air power, not only in tanks from ground forces. This would help the reputation for air power.

Q

Airmen are still sorting out what non-kinetic activities they should take on. Hard to prove deterrence. Need to ensure the land campaign can understand what air power can do. Land component didn't care about air patrolling the crown jewels in Iraq. How can we make sure that air power will be understood by others?

A

You have second order effects for non-kinetic. You don't get credit for them. This area has to be specifically covered in planning, and then you reach an education effect too.

A

We need to understand the army. We must go to their HQ and understand their thinking, and then we can educate them on air power.

Comment

Joint training is good. The need is to be an expert in your own area. But then at the major level, you put them together and achieve better results.