

Dear JAPCC,

I have read the article 'C4ISTAR the Human Dimension' in the latest JAPCC Journal (edition 4) with interest. Unfortunately, as a NATO staff officer working ISTAR issues at CC-Air HQ Ramstein I was more or less disturbed by the content of the article. Unless I read it wrong, the authors of the article are implying that as long as we as military leaders within NATO approach NATO's ISTAR void enthusiastically with the right attitude and teamwork, everything will be alright. As a matter of fact, the article ends with "the stage is set, you have the leading part," indicating it is all there and up to us to make it happen. Although I agree with the fact that in general a pro-active visionary approach, positive attitude, enthusiasm and teamwork are prerequisites for successful leadership within NATO, I disagree with linking these issues as decisive success factors to the ISTAR challenge within NATO. I believe that the statements in the article are not applicable for NATO's ISTAR challenge and even disrespectful to all those people within the NATO organisation that are trying hard to make ISTAR work.

First of all, let me introduce myself. I am LtCol Marc P. Exterkate and I am assigned to CC-Air HQ Ramstein as Branch Chief A2 Plans and Requirements. For the last two years, I have been heavily involved in ISTAR issues pertaining to the Air Component level. I have been deployed to Afghanistan as Chief CCIRM and Theatre Collection Manager for ISAF VIII and recently I played a very significant role in the development of the CONOPS for the NATO buy/lease option of a Full Motion Video Airborne Theatre ISR capability in support of ISAF. Additionally, I am a member of the Allied Ground Surveillance Users Working Group and a member of the core planning team of Trail Quest 07. Finally, much of the information provided by CC-Air HQ Ramstein for the recently held JAPCC UAS Conference came from my hand, and my specific ISTAR experience during ISAF VIII was expressed in an article that I provided to JAPCC earlier this year in support of edition 3 of your Journal.

Unfortunately, based on my experience I have to conclude that the 'stage is absolutely not set' within NATO. Although some people within NATO like to make us believe different, NATO has never effectively had OPCON nor has it possessed anything that comes close to a robust ISTAR capability in the true sense of the word. The fact that various member-states are developing or have such a capability available does not mean that NATO can assume it 'owns' it or it will get OPCON over it, either in exercises or real-time operations. I base my statement on many observations and findings, of which I will address four below. Because NAEW (AWACS) is fully owned and operated by and fully integrated into NATO, I like to argue that NATO's ISTAR challenge is typically not applicable for AWACS. Moreover, AWACS' primary role is in my opinion not ISTAR as defined in the AJP 2.0, but Airborne Command and Control supported by a surveillance radar and an ESM suite in support of that mission. AWACS never flies directly in support of the intelligence collection effort such as Rivet Joints, EP-3s, Global Hawk, U2, Predators, etc.

Firstly, despite the fact that ISAF is our main operation, the one through which we can ensure our future, no genuine ISTAR is available under NATO OPCON in support of the intelligence collection effort. Although a variety of UAVs, SIGINT, TACRECCE and HUMINT are present in theatre, most of them are kept under national control and tasking and exploitation is done nationally, with finished

intelligence products only provided indirectly via cumbersome lines of communications. My findings from last year have recently been **re-acknowledged** by the current HQ ISAF CJ2 Chief CCRIM. Despite the fact that we now have taken over stage III and IV and actionable intelligence has become more and more important in the dynamics of fighting Opposing Militant Forces, no genuine ISTAR capability is available to COMISAF as defined in the doctrine. For instance, the fact that no theatre-wide airborne Full Motion Video surveillance capability is present under OPCON of COMISAF as requested in the Theatre CJSOR, is the reason that NATO is now vigorously trying to acquire such a capability through NATO exceptional common funding procedures.

Secondly, NATO's current experience with NRF 7 and 8. Until now member-states have been very relectant in providing the required ISTAR assets to NATO's second main mission, specifically NRF 7. Unfortunately, I cannot provide details due to classified nature of the information, but NRF 7 is well below 50% and NRF 8 just barely above 50%. Specifically, the numbers on UAS are appalling.

The third example is Trial Quest 07: As you probably know, Trial Quest 07 is a NATO ISTAR Standards demonstration and will be held in conjunction with the exercise Bold Avenger 07 (previously known as the NATO Air Meet). It will be used to demonstrate the value of an integrated coherent NATO ISTAR capability and to prove the **notional** NATO ISTAR Interoperability Architecture (NIIA). In order to circumvent the fact that such architecture does not exist yet, Trial Quest 07 will use the MAJIIC program. This project comprises a coalition of 9 NATO member-nations with NC3A in the lead and has the goal to develop and demonstrate operational concepts of employment and Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for the use of ISTAR assets in support of military missions, to include the use of a range of sensors and the integration of ISTAR information into C4 and Intel Systems. Although some virtual successes have been booked with MAJIIC during simulation exercises, the real thing has yet to be shown during Trial Quest. If all MAJIIC program member-nations are involved, Trial Quest will have the best opportunity for success. However, at present **no** nation has firmly committed itself to provide the necessary ISTAR assets.

Finally, even if NATO on occasion did have OPCON over an ISTAR capability during exercises or real-time operations, it does not possess the infrastructure in the widest sense to support this, nor does it have trained personnel to do so. For instance, NATO's WAN in Afghanistan until recently comprised of 128kb lines from HQ ISAF to its sub-ordinate units. Despite the fact that this has significantly improved lately, it is still not capable of supporting the effective and efficient distribution of ISTAR products in support of the mission, specifically large IMINT files or Full Motion Video. Even if it did, NATO does not possess the software to do so. And I can go on and on.

So, you can talk about leadership, teamwork, attitude and enthusiasm as much as you want but if there is almost nothing to begin with other than well established doctrine and a variety of stand-alone, early-stage projects and programs within NATO, it is really frustrating to see an article that appeals to everybody's loyalty and commitment implying that all that is missing to make NATO ISTAR to a success story is the human dimension.

On the contrary, I believe that the human dimension is the only factor that has prevented NATO's ISTAR from dying all together. It is the commitment of many people like us at all levels of our organisation that realise that with the modern challenges that NATO faces, ISTAR is unmistakably one of the most important prerequisite for success. It is the leadership, teamwork, enthusiasm and positive attitude I see in the AGS Users Working Group where we try to find solution for the tremendous challenge we face to operationalize the system (stationing, training, TTPs, etc). It is the leadership, teamwork, enthusiasm and positive attitude I see in the airborne Full Motion Video Surveillance CONOPS Working Group where we came up with workable solutions to embed this capability in an existing but very limited ISAF C4 infrastructure. It is the leadership, teamwork, enthusiasm and positive attitude I see throughout the operational intelligence community during live-fly and NRF exercises where despite the absence of assets and systems we try to make things work by increasing understanding of the ISTAR concept and constantly improving the TTPs from an theoretical point of view. I especially see the human factor in all organisations involved in supporting ISAF to make this operation successful. A last good example is the fact that SACT's JISR Integrated Capability Development Team has just recently been called together for a second meeting in order to establish the so needed co-ordination between the vast array of JISR programs, projects and work strands.

To summarize, there are so many examples where the human dimension makes a positive difference in the ongoing NATO ISTAR debacle, that I believe that your article is at least misplaced and creates more frustration amongst us 'war fighters' than that it invites to engage.

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