

Logistics Specialist (Submarine) 1<sup>st</sup> Class Anna Donelan, assigned to Gold crew of *Ohio*-class guided-missile submarine USS *Ohio*, scans for contacts while standing lookout watch on bridge, Pacific Ocean, January 22, 2021 (U.S. Navy/Kelsey J. Hockenberger)



## Executive Summary

In many parts of joint warfighting, getting the right situational awareness (SA) is essential to success, especially to those of us in a position of military or civilian leadership. I must admit to a lack of SA in recent years as I, like many, have been drawn into an information cycle centered around less-traditional media sources. Because I live and work in the Nation's capital area, I fully accept that I live in a “bubble,” where I may not have an accurate picture of events. But in recent years, with the rise of social media platforms—including active disinformation campaigns, both foreign and domestic—getting and keeping good SA is increasingly difficult. Where does one

scan to find an objective view? I often turn to the sources that seem the most credible, and that judgment is based on my belief that I have a fairly well-developed set of critical thinking skills. But still, I wonder, what am I missing? It seems that this questioning of my own view of the world is healthy, based on my conversations with experts in this field. Plus, the old-school habit of good leadership—of “leading by walking around”—has been nearly impossible for many during the pandemic.

As a retired officer who served in the Cold War period, before and after *Desert Storm*, in the Kosovo air campaign, and in Afghanistan mid-war circa 2008, my view of things is certainly shaped by

those experiences. As the car commercial caveats used to say, your mileage may vary. I will say the events of the past few years have sharpened my critical thinking in ways that I find essential to my mental health, especially with the way social media tends to “push our collective buttons” emotionally. And that issue of trying to keep my objective mind as separate as possible from my emotions I find increasingly challenging in today's world, where seemingly the collective “truths we hold self-evident” are under assault.

What Department of Defense leaders in recent months have made clear is their focus on getting the joint force's attention on a range of issues that causes concern about whether those in service

to our nation are fully committed to supporting and defending the Constitution. As events on January 6, 2021, seem to show, some Americans have a very different interpretation of how our government should work than what was considered the “norm” in the past. And those serving in the military need to have a clear understanding of their relationship to the Constitution, the chain of command, and the people they serve both in and outside of the military. The moment that becomes unclear in the mind of an oath-sworn person (military, civilian, any rank), then bad things happen. If you have served long enough, you have seen what unacceptable behavior looks like. The question, often asked repeatedly, is “what might you do to stop it?” And yes, any problem with good order and discipline is everyone’s problem.

The joint force not only reflects the society it comes from and serves, but it must also demonstrate a certain discipline that honors the rule of law and the norms of behavior necessary to control the awesome power our military is charged with. To allow any kind of behavior outside the norm results in events that we all can identify as immoral and detrimental to the mission of the joint force, from assaults and violent crimes in the barracks and on our bases throughout the world to criminal acts on the battlefield. How those of us in positions of leadership—from the tactical to the Secretary—respond, starting with increasing our situational awareness of these problems and our collective responsibilities to appropriately deal with them, is what will show whether we deserve to be called to serve as leaders. That is my take. Please let us know what you think.

This issue’s Forum offers three articles to help you explore and rediscover the dimensions of conflict today. When was the last time you worried about your communication links being jammed by the enemy—or experienced it? Scott Pence suggests that the joint force needs to organize, train, and equip for operating in a more contested environment, where taking modern communications for granted makes warfighters vulnerable both physically and mentally. Related

to communications vulnerabilities, Matthew Prescott has a number of solid suggestions on improvements to the joint force’s battle rhythm that drives decisionmaking and force operations. Seeing opportunities to update how the joint force influences potential conflict development, Kyle Wolfley believes shaping operations as critical to success.

JPME Today first offers you an article by Anand Toprani, a longtime CJCS and SECDEF Essay Competition judge and Naval War College professor, who examines the relationship between state power and the resources that fuel our machines. For years, the Defense Department has tried to stress the need for expanded language capabilities across the joint force. Our medical forces team of Douglas Robb, Brian Neese, and Cara Aghajanian shows us how their partners have worked hard to solve the perennial deficient between language requirements and capabilities.

Our Commentary section focuses on another place not necessarily in the middle of the Great Power competition ring. Forcing us to look back to the ancients, Joseph Rudolphi suggests we can find much to consider in how we might approach the concept of enemy retreat and desertion in the future.

We have a wide range of topics in our Features section this issue that I think you will find interesting. Looking to the recent shift in global joint integration, Francis Park offers suggestions on how to maximize the positive results from exercises and experimentation. Continuing our discussions on the medical side of the joint force, James Chambers lays out some important concepts for successful leadership in the increasingly expeditionary world of military medicine. Brent Sadler, a returning alumnus of *JFQ*, draws on history to write us a cautionary piece to help identify avoidable confrontations, and with the Taiwan Straits increasingly in our collective focus, Brent is on to something important. Recent remarks by Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III and others on updating our views on integrating older strategies and theories into the current environment make Mark Montgomery and Erica

Borghard’s article relating cyber issues to strategic deterrence very timely.

Rounding out this issue in Recall, another *JFQ* alumnus, Kevin Stringer, takes us back to World War II to relate Dutch and U.S. military support to local resistance movements to see what we might find useful today and beyond. Plus, you will find four engaging book reviews and the Joint Doctrine Update to further engage your thinking about the challenges today and ahead. As always, we look forward to hearing from you about what you think we need to do in the years ahead. *JFQ*

WILLIAM T. ELIASON  
Editor in Chief