



Leap from Jointness to Integration: Redefining Military Processes for Multi-Domain Operations in the Twenty-First Century

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Abstract— Warfare is evolving at a rapid pace, adhering to the ongoing technological advancements coupled with Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) escalating across the ongoing conflicts. This paper highlights the need for contemporary warfare to have full transition towards integration; to fight as a single coherent force. The word 'jointness' refers here to the improved coordination between independent military services and military effectiveness in the late twentieth century. With this transition being discussed, the integration across various domains through the assistance of a centralized headquarter must be spread across the intelligence departments, logistic, cyber domain, kinetic and electromagnetic domains respectively. The effectiveness of this integration can be highlighted through various real time warfare examples that are taking place in this era, the Operation Sindoor from 2025, The Israel Gaza war (2023-Present), and lastly the Israel-Iran-United States conflict 2025-2026, all demonstrated the modern integrated military systems leading to the battlefield success. This paper highlights the integration through an Integrated Multi Domain Command Framework, highlighting how this integration is not a choice anymore but a need of the hour, a strategic decision!

Keywords— Multi-Domain Operations, Military Integration, Jointness, Theatre Command, Electronic Warfare, Intelligence Fusion, Pakistan Armed Forces, OODA Loop, Integrated Command Framework.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Multi-Domain Operations- The Evolution of Warfare

Warfare is evolving at a rapid pace, adhering to the ongoing technological advancements coupled with Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) escalating across the ongoing conflicts. These conflicts lay a heavy weight on the adaptation of various operational and logistical structures and operations which eventually equip the cross-domain effect in intense battlespace. Moreover, this multi domain will also dictate the prominence of the future conflicts and its adversary with the ever-evolving complexity of Air Littoral and EMS, Electro Magnetic Spectrum.

These collective synergetic effects lead to the successful compression of the OODA loop across multiple domains with precise effects consequently.

Single domain warfare does not support modern adverse conflicts. The confinement restricts the synchronization

required for precise attacks. The synchronization of land with air attacks in joint coordination with cyber-attacks, IT, missile systems and the rest. The legacy joint coordination system equips military with each component planning separately through joint coordination and effects de-conflicts the situation, leading towards a reliable multi domain integration that is critical for the Pakistani military environment.

B. Problem Statement

In order for the integration process to work, it is essential to have joint doctrines, standardized procedures and decisions, and streamlined processes of training, talent and capability development with the support of AI to aid in decision making at tri services level, incorporating Common integrated Picture (CIP), Common Operation Picture (COP), and Common Logistics Picture (CLP).

C. Research Questions

This paper discusses three interlinked research questions. Firstly, why is jointness not a sufficient solution in modern warfare and what differs integration from coordination. Secondly, looking at the real time warfare recent examples, Operation Sindoor, Gaza Israel war, Iran Israel and US conflict, this paper addresses the operational requirements of multi domain integration. Thirdly, to equip this integration, what institutional processes and commands are necessary.

D. Methodology and Scope

This paper uses analytical case study method to examine the recent conflicts in military operations to extract learning lesson relevant to this agenda of integration. It further uses authoritative doctrinal sources including JP 3-0, JP 3-85, JP 5-0, NATO Allied Joint Doctrine, and strategic works by Clausewitz, van Creveld, Locher, and Vego. The scope of this paper discusses the conventional military operations and deterrence, devoting 70 to 75 percent to the conventional examples.

II. FROM JOINTNESS TO INTEGRATION

A. Historical Background

The WW II combined operations depict the benefits yet the limitations of the multi service warfare. Operations like OVERLOAD in 1944 revealed that integration can achieve what no service can single handedly achieve combining naval, airborne, and land operations. But if it lacks structure and coordination, the integration may fail miserably.

Learning from the Vietnam War, the sobering effect corrected the joint operations in terms of its effectiveness and criticality where the absence of joint operations and lack of integrity lead to lack of coherence and synergy. This gave rise to the legislative reforms in the state.

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 is the most significant structural reform in US military history. Responding to operational failures at Desert One (1980), Beirut (1983), and Grenada (1983), it established clear joint command authority through Geographic Combatant Commanders, made joint professional military education mandatory, and fundamentally restructured civil-military relations. The transformation, as the Locher documented, lead to the shift of rivalry into a genuine warfare capability.

Operation Desert Storm (1991) supported and proved the Goldwater-Nichols operational reforms. The order for Air Tasking Order was synchronized for over 1000 sorties, daily. Despite the engagement of strategic, tactical and operational targets and ground campaign, the Operation Desert Storm unveiled the limitations of the concept of jointness where the systems, including electronic and cyber

warfare were not closely integrated, giving birth to the further revolutionary requirement.

B. Why Jointness is No Longer Sufficient

Jointness targets the achievement of integration of capability under a command that is common. However, it coordinates but does not fuse. This is where we have integration, fusing the capabilities. The outputs in joint command is coordinated but the processes cannot be directed. With integration, a system is born that is more coherent as compared to the operation that is more service centric. Integration stands mandatory in an environment where adversaries occur. The simultaneous coordination between kinetic, electronic, cyber and IT is critical.

The timely initiation of the transition from coordination to fusing; Jointness to integration, by the Chief of Defence Forces and Defence Forces Headquarters has paved way for the transformation from stove piped function to a force that cohesively plans and executes the operations in an integrated manner, shaping the whole character of warfare.

C. Jointness vs Integration: Comparative Analysis

Almost across eight dimensions of operation, the following table highlights the captivating differences between integration and jointness, highlighting the analytical points that will aid in evaluating the reforms proposed in the paper.

Table I: Jointness vs Integration — Comparative Dimensions

DIMENSION	JOINTNESS	INTEGRATION
Command Authority	Parallel service chain of command; Overall Commander coordinates but does not own organic service assets	Unified command with authority over all domains and all assigned assets under a single operational banner
Planning	Service-specific planning under individual service commanders coordinated only after all individual service plans are complete	Single integrated operational plan developed jointly from the outset within one planning framework under one command structure
Intelligence	Services' intelligence cells	Permanent tri-services fusion

	share selective information; unnecessary delays due to organizational procedures before reaching overall commander	centres providing real-time common operational picture to all command echelons
Logistics	Parallel service logistics systems without any inter-service coordination; duplication of effort	Integrated Joint Logistics Service with uniform visibility and distribution of all stocks
Electronic Warfare	Service specific EW assets operating in shared EM spectrum; deconfliction necessary to prevent mutual interference	Unified electromagnetic spectrum management; EW sequenced with cyber and kinetic effects as single plan; no deconfliction or duplication of efforts
Decision-Making	Sequential coordination; services' inputs consolidated before commander's decision; high latency and impractical decisions	AI-enabled Common Integrated Picture; simultaneous parallel inputs; compressed OODA loop; real-time on ground dictation of decisions by overall commander
Accountability	Service chain of commands retain authority; overall commander influences but cannot fully direct service assets	Single overall commander with defined authority, responsibility, and accountability over all assets

To highlight the core argument of this paper, Jointness brings coordination while integration fuses. The force that achieves successful integration will consistently outperform the force that merely coordinates, because integration

compresses the OODA loop while coordination functions on a closed loop.

III. INTEGRATION ACROSS WARFIGHTING DOMAINS

A. Kinetic Domain: Sensor-to-Shooter Networks

The Joint Integrated Targeting Cycle, as outlined in JP 3-0, integrates intelligence, fire support, and data analysis into a continuous process translating strategic objectives into tactical effects [2]. In a conceptually integrated force, this cycle becomes a sensor-to-shooter grid: ISR assets across all domains feed targeting data to a common system; an automated software routes engagement command to the optimal platform—artillery, air-delivered munitions, naval firepower, or cyber-attacks while battle damage assessment is fed immediately back into the planning cycle. The consequence is a dramatic compression of engagement timelines: from a 72-hour deliberate targeting cycle to minutes.

Integrated ISR is the enabler of precision engagements. No single service possesses the full ISR systems required for modern targeting: ground sensors, ISR aircrafts, maritime patrol aviation, and satellite-based assets must all feed into to a single integrated picture. Achieving this requires not only shared systems but shared processes—common data systems, interoperable networks, mutual trainings and a command authority capable of directing ISR tasking across inter-service lines. Vego's framework for joint operational warfare identifies ISR integration as the foundational enabler of all other integration [3].

B. Logistics Domain: Integrated Sustainment

A principle established via Van Creveld's foundational analysis proves that: logistic is the foundation, not a strategic servant [4]. High-tempo, multi-domain operations require ammunition, fuel, spare parts, and personnel replenishment at rates exceeding the capacity of any single service's logistics system. Integrated sustainment architecture requires a Joint Logistics Command operating across tri-service boundaries, with a single logistics information system providing real-time visibility of stocks, integrated distribution networks, and AI-enabled predictive maintenance softwares.

Strategic mobility—the ability to rapidly move forces and materiel across strategic distances—is a humongous operation that requires deeply integrated planning and execution. Service-specific assets i.e airlift, sealift, and ground transportation must operate under a unified command structure to achieve the operational tempo that integrated operations require.

C. Electronic Warfare and Cyber Domain

JP 3-85 establishes that the electromagnetic spectrum is a contested and congested operational domain requiring delicate and complicated management [5]. Electronic warfare and cyber operations are equal operational domains that create effects on the physical battlefield sometimes larger than kinetic operations. Electronic attack—jamming adversary communications and radar—creates the state of confusion for kinetic strikes by degrading air defence sensors and command networks. While electronic protection prevents the same for friendly forces.

In the Electromagnetic domain, the spectrum does not comply with the inter service boundaries and thus, requires tri service integration. Without which, there are risky chances of a disastrous interference. Whereas, with integration, this interference can be avoided through well synchronized systems. Army electronic warfare, Air force jamming, Navy electronic support all require a well-integrated system.

D. Intelligence Domain: Fusion and Common Operational Picture

Intelligence fusion—the aggregation, correlation, and analysis of intelligence from multiple tri-service sources into a single coherent, actionable picture—is arguably the most critical enabler of successful military integration. Without a shared intelligence picture, commanders of different services cannot synchronize operations; without shared intelligence, integration remains a paper tiger rather than an operational reality. The Common Operational Picture provides every commander, from strategic to tactical level, a shared, continuously updated picture of friendly forces, adversary disposition, and all variable affecting the operational theatre.

Modern fusion centres, enhanced by AI-assisted data analysis, can integrate input from satellites, unmanned systems, signals intelligence, and human intelligence into a real-time picture covering target location, capabilities and weaknesses accessible to all authorized users. Operational requirement is the establishment of a permanent Joint Intelligence Centre at Centralized HQ level, with supporting strategic-level fusion cells, processing all types of intelligence for maintaining a continuously updated COP accessible to all commanders.

IV. LESSONS FROM CONTEMPORARY CONFLICTS

A. Operation Sindoor (2025): India–Pakistan Crisis

Operation Sindoor, India's unprovoked cross-border strike campaign initiated in May 2025 following the (domestically cooked up covert) Pahalgam false flag operation, provides the most relevant case study for Pakistan's integration

agenda. The operation demonstrates the operational potential of integrated multi-domain systems while highlighting the asymmetries created when one force achieves higher degrees of integration.

Air-land integration was central to the whole conflict. Indian Air Force strikes were though coordinated with Army's strategic-level operations and supported by integrated intelligence targeting that infused satellite imagery and signals intelligence, to develop targets but were deeply uncoordinated with tri services' air defense command and assets. Network specific systems that target precisely must be adopted via investment in joint command and control systems that help achieve targets independently yet, cohesively.

For a well calculated defensive response, it was critical for Pakistan to have Integrated Air Defense assets. With this integration, Pakistan military successfully neutralized Indian assets by carefully coordinating surface to air missiles, aircraft interceptors and early warning radars. This highlights how critical and beneficial integration is. In modern battlespace, it will only be harmful to not accept, integrate and experience the collective, precise electronic warfare and kinetic defense.

Pakistan due to integrated drone operations into a combined and integrated tri-services air defense systems performed significantly better than India's strategy of treating drones as a separate capability under an independent command. Command and control of drone operations requires integration with cyber, electronic warfare, and kinetic operations and Operation Sindoor exposed the gaps that exist as this integration was totally absent. The strategic lesson is unmistakable: the side that achieves superior integration of information, fire support, and command will dominate each operational wave and determine the conditions under which conflict finally terminates.

B. Israeli Operations in Gaza (2023–Present)

Israeli operations in Gaza since October 2023 have demonstrated, at enormous human cost, the operational advantages of an intelligence-kinetic integration system. The IDF employed a range of intelligence fusion technologies, including AI-assisted targeting systems, signals intelligence, and imagery intelligence, to generate targets at a speed and volume that previous operations could only dream of.

Intelligence fusion was the operational centrepiece. The IDF's intelligence system integrating Unit 8200 signals intelligence, aerial ISR, and AI-enabled data analysis produced targeting intelligence at industrial scale. Ground-air asset integration demonstrated the fusion of combined arms operations supported by air power in complex urban terrain; ground commanders had direct communications

with air support coordination elements, and fire support was integrated with manoeuvre at tactical level. The lesson is that ground-air integration must be built into the command structures and training concepts rather than achieved at ad-hoc basis under operational pressure.

In order to adopt precision targeting, a close fusion of human, technical, and geospatial integration is important. As individually, on its own, every source is ineffective.

C. Iran–Israel–United States Conflict (2025–2026)

The Iran-Israel-United States conflict from 2025 to 2026 demonstrate the perfect example of well integrated, fusion inspired military attacks.

Missile and air defence integration was demonstrated at unprecedented scale. Israel's layered missile defence structure—Iron Dome, David's Sling, and Arrow, operating alongside US THAAD batteries—intercepted the majority of Iranian ballistic missiles and drones during but were overwhelmed by the sheer volume of Iranian munitions providing a significant insight into the inherent shortfalls of technological advancements. This performance was a product of years of integration: overlapping communications architecture enabling Israeli and US systems to share tracking data, pre-delegated command authority enabling rapid decision-making, and exercises that had stress-tested the integration. The operational lesson is that missile defence integration requires institutional investment over years, not last-minute hasty coordination.

Long-range strike coordination between Israeli and US forces during the June 2025 operations demonstrated strategic-level integration. US B-2 strikes, Israeli Air Force operations, and supporting electronic warfare and intelligence collection assets operated in an extensively coordinated campaign requiring integration of strategic and operational planning and intelligence sharing. Cyber operations disrupted Iranian air defence radar networks prior to air strikes; Iranian cyber operations targeted Israeli infrastructure; while US electronic warfare assets supported strike operations throughout.

D. Comparative Analysis and Strategic Finding

The evaluation against all the variables, intelligence, logistics, centralization of command, operational performance etc, finally proves that the higher the degree of integration, superior is the operational success. With rapid decision making, efficient systems, and efforts synchronized, helps military achieve what unintegrated systems can simply not.

The battlefield success greatly depends on the integration of these military systems. Clearly, a system that cannot embed integration into itself is proven to be less operational than the other that is well integrated to fight the conflicts with

precision and centralized command. This proves to be a strategic need for all modern militaries.

V. MILITARY PROCESSES REQUIRED FOR INTEGRATION

A. Planning Processes

The Limitation: Military operations and planning are self-centric. Operational plans are developed within service structures and coordinated through shallow joint coordination organizations after individual service planning is complete. This sequential approach is consistent with jointness but lacks highly if integration is the aim; it produces plans that reflect service capabilities rather than integrating them in convergence for simultaneous effective execution.

Required Reform: Integrated operational planning, as outlined in JP 5-0, requires planning within a joint framework from the outset [6]. A joint planning staff at the Integrated Theatre/ Strategic Command level, representing all services and operational domains including logistics, cyber and electronic warfare, must concoct up plans that incorporate the full might of military power and support mechanism—kinetic, non-kinetic, cyber, electronic warfare, logistics, information operations—in a single integrated unit framework. The joint targeting system must similarly be restructured to include cyber, electronic warfare effects and logistics from the very initial phase of the planning process, not merely as a support plan after kinetic planning is complete. **Expected Operational Benefit:** Operational plans that generate convergent multi-domain effects rather than sequentially service specific effects.

B. Decision-Making Processes

The Limitation: Modern militaries maintain separate operational systems with no tri-service Common Operational Picture present or accessible to commanders at all levels. This creates information blackspots and decision latency at precisely the moments when time and information matter most.

Required Reform: An AI-assisted (for obvious security reasons) Common Integrated Picture at DFHQ level, with designated access at strategic to tactical levels, integrating inputs from tri-services' ISR assets into a single continuously updated operational intelligence picture. A shared battle assessment interface—common daily briefings, common targeting conferences, and common assessment processes—must be institutionalized across the tri-services. The Common Logistics Picture alongside the CIP will provide the operational commanders with sustainment visibility enabling integrated operational planning and decision-making. **Expected Operational**

Benefit: Planning and Decision cycle compression from days to hours at the operational level; from hours to minutes at the tactical level and increased efficacy of conducted operations.

C. Intelligence Processes

The Limitation: Intelligence processes within contemporary militaries remain organized along intra-service lines with limited fusion of source intelligence at the tri-service level. This stove-piping was identified as a limiting factor during Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos and must be addressed before the next strategic operation.

Required Reform: A permanent Joint Intelligence Fusion Centre at DFHQ, with strategic-level fusion cells at Integrated Theatre/ Strategic Command level, having access to all intelligence and intelligence sources from Army, Navy, Air Force, and national (nonmilitary) intelligence assets. Intelligence processes must be standardized across the tri-services—common formats, terminology, and dissemination platforms. The JIFC must develop predictive analytical capability employing AI-assisted analysis to provide proactive rather than merely reactive intelligence.

D. Communications Processes

The Limitation: Service centric communication, Service-specific communication systems, incompatible standards of encryption, the lack of secure common network create barriers that are fundamental at tactical and operational level.

Required Reform: An inter-service secure communication system providing voice, data, and video connectivity from the strategic to the tactical level, incorporating tactical data links enabling real-time sharing of targeting data, and logistics status across all formations and services. Cybersecurity of this architecture must be a primary design consideration, hardened against adversary cyber-attacks. Preferably standardization aligned with NATO Allied Joint Doctrine communication standards, would enable interoperability with partner forces [7]. Expected Operational Benefit: Real-time information sharing enabling the sensor-to-shooter grid and common operational picture required for integrated operations.

E. Training and Human Resource Processes

The Limitation: Professional military education and operational training is inherently service-specific. While cross education exists at service specific staff colleges and defense universities levels, it is shallow in scope and does not develop the multi-domain integration mindset required for integrated operations from the get go. While operational exercises are a whitewash which rarely test the full complexity of integrated multi-domain operations.

Required Reform: Mandatory Joint Professional Military Education for all officers from the rank of major and equivalent till above, incorporating multi-domain simulations, cyber-kinetic integration scenarios, and integrated operational planning exercises. Cross-posting of officers between the tri-services starting from the mid-career level to develop in depth understanding of tri-service cultures, capabilities, and limitations. Annual tri-service multi-domain exercises incorporating cyber, electronic warfare, kinetic, and logistics domains in parallel, conducted against realistic adversary models with all Centralized HQ and Theatre/ Strategic Command structures engaged in. Expected Operational Benefit: Officers who think in terms of joint effects rather than service specific capabilities, enabling extensive integration rather than merely just better coordination.

VI. INTEGRATED MULTI-DOMAIN COMMAND FRAMEWORK

A. Framework Overview: IMDCF

The Integrated Multi-Domain Command Framework (IMDCF) proposed in this paper comprises of three tiers: A State level Military Integration Council, Integrated Theatre/ Strategic Commands at the operational level, and Multi-Domain Integrated Task Forces at the tactical levels. Information flows vertically through this organization via the Common Integrated Picture and Common Logistics Picture, while laterally across commands through shared tactical data links and common intelligence dissemination networks. The IMDCF directly addresses the structural limitation of legacy joint command: that service specific components retain authority over their own, preventing genuine integration.

B. Strategic Level: National Military Integration Council

The National Military Integration Council, chaired by the Chief of Defense Forces and comprising of the Chiefs of Army, Navy, and Air Force, the Director of the Joint Intelligence Fusion Centre and National Security Liaison (for liaison with non-military security/ intelligence outfits), provides the policy framework and resource allocation. The NMIC approves integrated operational plans, allocates resources, and ensures that strategic policy direction is strictly complied with. It is supported by a Joint Planning Staff Committee drawn from all the tri-services and the national intelligence community, operating directly under the centralized HQ. The NMIC's establishment authority flows from the National Action Plan; its decisions are binding on all tri-service assets.

C. Operational Level: Integrated Theatre/ Strategic Command

The Integrated Theatre/ Strategic Command is the critical operational-level node of the IMDCF. Commanded by a three-star general officer rotating between the tri-services on a fixed cycle, the ITC exercises operational command over all assigned tri-service assets within its area of operations. The ITC staff includes: A Joint Operations Directorate integrating Army, Navy, and Air Force operations; a Joint Intelligence Directorate operating the theatre intelligence fusion cell; a Joint Fire Support Directorate managing targeting and fire support across all domains; a Joint EW and Cyber Directorate; and a Joint Logistics Directorate managing sustainment. The ITC operates the theatre Common Operational Picture, accessible in real-time to all subordinate commanders. This organization follows the model validated by US Geographic Combatant Commands post-Goldwater-Nichols and NATO's Allied Joint Operations doctrine [7].

Command relationships within the ITC follow a unified chain of command: The Theatre/Strategic Commander exercises operational command over all subordinate commanders.

There is a structural mechanism that maintains the service identity while enabling integration. This structure is observed in the subordinate commander's administrative control over integrated force assigned by the theatre commander.

D. Tactical Level: Multi-Domain Task Forces

Multi-Domain Task Forces are the tactical building blocks of integrated forces. An MDTF is an extensively integrated force organized around the operational task rather than service identity. An MDTF for a major offensive operation would integrate an Army's brigade, Air Force's close air support and electronic warfare elements, Navy's maritime patrol aviation in a coastal theatre, cyber-attack teams, and a dedicated ISR element—all under a single tactical commander with a shared communication network and a common tactical COP. MDTFs are temporary formations assembled for specific operations and assets are reverted upon completion; their composition reflects the specific multi-domain requirements of the assigned task rather than a fixed stove-piped organizational entity.

E. Decision Cycle and Information Flow

The IMDCF's decision making process is designed to adhere to the OODA loop compression that integration enables. Intelligence flows from MDTFs through the fusion cells to the JIFC; analyzed data flows back to all command echelons simultaneously in the form of COP. The mission and operational orders flow from the ITC through subordinate commanders to MDTFs; execution reports flow back through the same channel. Logistics status is shared continuously through the CLP from tactical to strategic

level, enabling predictive sustainment that anticipates operational requirements before they become shortfalls. AI-assisted decision support tools process CIP and CLP data to provide commanders with courses of action that compress the decision time significantly.

VII. CONCLUSION

A. Conclusion

The paper argues that the integration mechanism is advancing the military space in the twenty first century. The coordination of the tri services in the military was necessary, further validated by the Goldwater Nicholas reforms. On the other side, the Desert Storm Operation demonstrates the operational effectiveness of this integration that has proven beneficial in the model warfare.

Contemporary warfare, as demonstrated extensively in Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos, Gaza, and the Iran-Israel-US conflicts, is characterized by simultaneous, multi-domain operations that warrant not coordination but fusion: the integration of intelligence, fire support, logistics, cyber, and electronic warfare into a single coherent operational system that fights as one organism. The force that achieves extensive integration compresses the decision cycle, generates convergent effects across multiple domains in parallel while operates at a tempo that coordination-based forces cannot even imagine. Battlefield advantage predominantly depends upon integrated military systems rather than individual service specific capabilities.

The transition from jointness to integration is critical and achievable at an exaggerated pace for modern militaries. The institutional foundations must be laid through the establishment of a centralized HQ while some already existing pillars must be utilized. The operational concept has been validated through recent examples like Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos and IDF's op in Gaza. The analytical framework for the transition—the Integrated Multi-Domain Command Framework with its National Military Integration Council, Integrated Theatre/Strategic Command, Multi-Domain Task Forces—*provides a concrete implementation and execution roadmap. Integration is no longer a choice. It has emerged as a strategic necessity—the need of the minute.*

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