

# The Strategic Plans and Policy Officer in the Modular Division

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**T**HE ARMY'S TRANSFORMATION from a division-based to a modular-brigade-based force structure has led to a number of significant changes to the division headquarters. Under the modular design, the division headquarters is now a joint-capable organization that is a potential nucleus for a joint task force (JTF) or an Army forces headquarters. The division now executes functions previously done at the corps level, and the division's next higher headquarters may very well be a theater army or a JTF. These changes dramatically increase the division's scope and responsibilities. In light of the changes, this article describes the roles of the functional area (FA) 59 strategic plans and policy officer in the modular division headquarters, presents some lessons learned from the deployment of FA 59 officers to Iraq and Afghanistan, and looks at some future ramifications for FA 59 officers at the division level.

## An Introduction to Functional Area 59

The strategic plans and policy functional area has existed since 1997, with the implementation of Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) XXI (later retitled OPMS III). Department of the Army (DA) Pamphlet 600-3, dated 28 December 2005, describes the functions of an FA 59 officer: "To provide Army organizations, combatant commands, the Joint Staff, and the interagency community the capability for strategic analysis in support of the development and implementation of plans and policies at the national strategic and theater strategic levels. FA 59 officers execute key institutional and operational core processes, including formulation and implementation of strategy and strategic concepts and policies, and the generation, strategic projection, and operational employment of decisive joint and coalition land combat power."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the common leader competencies discussed in the chief of staff of the army's "Pentathlete Vision," FA 59 officers perform four unique functions: strategic appraisal; strategic and operational planning; joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) integration; and strategic education.

*Strategic appraisal*, in execution, requires a comprehensive assessment of the strategic environment, which is often complex and uncertain. FA 59 officers' assessments enable their organizations to iteratively reassess and

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PHOTO: Forward Operating Base Dagger, 28 February 2006, after the first combined rehearsal for Operation Zair El-Esad (Roar of the Dragon) with the 4th Iraqi Army Division and other Iraqi and U.S. organizations. (101st Airborne Division PAO)

adjust their operations and plans to meet adaptive adversaries, changing ends, and complex situations. Strategists are also trained to recognize cultural and organizational constraints that inhibit effective strategy analysis. For these reasons, FA 59 officers are usually educated in military history or international relations theory to improve their judgment when facing complex or poorly defined problem sets.

*Strategic and operational planning*, often termed campaign planning, covers the development of actionable plans or recommendations that translate operational means into political success. FA 59 officers provide specific expertise on the use of military forces and the combinations of national capabilities that can best achieve the commander's strategic end state.<sup>2</sup> The FA 59 officer is educated to exploit interdisciplinary approaches in support of diagnosis, analysis, assessment, and execution, thereby facilitating the commander's ability to see and operate beyond traditional operational concepts in order to achieve desired strategic effects.<sup>3</sup> This is perhaps an FA 59 officer's most important contribution to a division planning team: he is predisposed to operate beyond the analytical confinement of the rapidly-turning Military Decision-Making Process (MDMP).

In addition to operational planning, FA 59 officers are well versed in institutional planning and the resourcing processes. With the division's FA 50 force management officer, they support the division's new institutional planning functions under the modular design.

The FA 59 officer's *JIIM integration skills* enable military organizations to operate more effectively with other elements of national power. FA 59 officers are educated to gain broad perspectives on national power so that they may provide non-partisan approaches to integrating service policies for combined strategy. Within this process, FA 59 officers provide particular focus to articulating military operations (with emphasis on land-power capabilities) and logistics. At the division level, FA 59 officers may serve interface functions between the division headquarters and the wide variety of organizations operating within (and over) the division's area of operations (AO). Due to the FA 59 officer's knowledge and focus on JIIM integration, he (or she) is well suited to lead planning processes and integrate staff coordination with JIIM partners.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, FA 59 officers support *strategic education* across the Department of Defense. To assist, FA 59 has established supporting networks to disseminate best practices across the community of strategic planners. While the strategic education function does not tie directly to an FA 59 officer's support to the division, the support network does provide the division staff another conduit of education to improve its planning and JIIM integration functions.

The modular division is authorized two FA 59 officers (strategic plans officer, coded 59A00 MAJ) in the G-5 (plans and analysis) section. Although initial versions of the division headquarters had a billet for an FA 59 officer as a functional planner for the Joint Planning and Execution System (JOPES), both positions are now general in focus, and consequently much more flexible in purpose. The duties of the strategic planner can encompass conventional operational planning, but are often political-military, joint, interagency, or multinational in nature. The unique Title 10 competencies incident to FA 59 also have institutional planning implications.

At present, six division headquarters, four in Iraq and two in Afghanistan, have completed deployments with FA 59 officers. Most observations here stem from the 101st Airborne Division's tour as Multi-National Division-North (MND-N) during Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) 05-07.

### **FA 59 as a Conventional Military Planner**

During OIF 05-07, the 101st addressed planning and policy issues directly through Multi-National Corps-Iraq (MNC-I), the primary operational headquarters, and occasionally interacted with Headquarters, Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I), the combined joint task force leading the overall effort. In some cases, a division had to effectively create policy by providing hard task-and-purpose guidance to units on the ground in response to rapidly changing situations. The divisional FA 59 officer provided the division command and staff a long-term approach to executing the division's strategy, or, in more extreme circumstances, informed the commander on the creation of emerging policy and helped develop a sustainable strategy to fit it.

The division FA 59 officer provides commanders a greater diversity of opinion, tempered by relevant professional expertise, than they would

normally receive from their staffs. He gives the commander a wider range of options in assessment and planning. The different educational paths FA 59 officers take from their maneuver/fires/effects counterparts are principally responsible for this diversity of opinion. Until the officers assessed into FA 59 in 2006 complete their training and education, Human Resources Command will fill one of the FA 59 plans officer billets in each division through School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) student distribution.

One of the most common stereotypes of the FA 59 officer is that he is a graduate of SAMS. In reality, less than 20 percent of FA 59 officers have attended SAMS or one of its sister service equivalents.<sup>5</sup> The SAMS curriculum has some overlap with the FA 59 qualification course on topics such as joint operational art and strategic theory, but at different concentrations. There are also differences in focus between SAMS-qualified officers and FA 59s. Unlike the SAMS curriculum, which principally focuses on planning, preparing, and executing full-spectrum operations in a tactical and operational context, FA 59 qualification concentrates on strategic appraisal and planning at the political and military nexus.

As an operational-level headquarters, the division naturally retains a higher density of SAMS-qualified officers than it does FA 59 officers. One of the critical issues to be solved is how to best integrate officers with differing backgrounds and skill sets. The FA 59 functional area seeks to increase the number of SAMS graduates in its ranks to meet the demands of the operating force, because it views SAMS education as an excellent operational-level complement to the functional area's strategic appraisal, strategic planning, JIIM integration, and strategic education competencies.

## **FA 59 as a JIIM Integrator**

Much of what an FA 59 officer brings to a division headquarters is the ability to think in both the political and military arenas. Although the modular division headquarters is not authorized FA 48 foreign area officers (FAOs), the theater army could potentially attach FAOs to the division to further improve political-military integration. FA 59 and FA 48 officers substantially complement each other at the division headquarters. Working together, they

can provide the division planning cell with more thorough political, military, and planning assessments than can be formulated using only the MDMP. FA 48 officers have regional and cultural expertise, while FA 59 officers are expert in the strategic appraisal and planning functions. Operationally, the two officers provide a synergistic capability that enables the division commander to interface with a broad range of actors and target his operations more effectively in complex environments.

Coalition operations are common in the contemporary operating environment. For most units in OIF 05-07, this meant operating with Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), however, exercised tactical control (TACON) of Georgian and Albanian forces during its tour. Operating with host-nation forces in the host nation's own boundaries is one matter; exercising TACON over forces from a completely different country, with different levels of interoperability, is another. Operations with these forces called for a broad perspective above the tactical level.

During OIF 05-07, the 101st had to reposition Georgian forces in the division AO. The issue at hand was how arraying Georgian forces in the AO would affect U.S. relations with Georgia. Failure to take this into account could have undermined significant security cooperation work being done in the U.S. European Command area of responsibility. The FA 59 officer's strategic assessment skills and functional knowledge of the security cooperation framework of a combatant command were valuable in the ensuing deliberations. These skills, not taught in other intermediate-level military schooling, might have helped prevent an international incident. What made the deliberations difficult was the requirement to reconcile tactical needs against strategic priorities that were not apparent to anyone else.

The 101st's FA 59 planners also served as primary planners for infrastructure security, which required an interdisciplinary approach because the security arrangements for oil production, refinery, and distribution in the division AO involved Iraqi Army regular forces and strategic infrastructure battalions, the contracted Oil Protection Force guarding refinery and distribution sites, and other coalition forces. In many cases, too, the nature of the threat to infrastructure security was not insurgent in nature, but criminal. This required planners to address the



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The 101st Airborne Division and 4th Iraqi Army Division command and staff during an infrastructure security rehearsal at the 4th Iraqi Army Division headquarters, FOB Dagger, 10 March 2006 in Tikrit, Iraq.

underlying socioeconomic conditions contributing to attacks on the infrastructure as well as the military symptoms of security conditions.

The 101st also designated planners for each of the governorates in its AO. As with infrastructure security, many of the issues underlying governorate security were not military, but social, political, and interagency in nature. The Iraqi Army was the critical player for security within the governorate, but it often required external assistance through the division for strategic infrastructure forces, national and local police, and provincial and local governments. The FA 59 officer frequently found himself in a unique position to influence the division's plan because of his perspective and interagency duties.

Not surprisingly, the inherently joint, interagency, and multinational nature of strategic planning in the division AO made for frequent interaction with Department of State assets. The 101st had two regional embassy offices and several State embedded teams in its division AO during OIF 05-07. While execution responsibilities lay primarily with the brigade combat teams (BCTs) nearest to those State Department assets, much of the policy and strategy coordination occurred in the division headquarters. Some of the direct liaison in the division headquarters with State occurs in the division G-9 (civil-military operations), but the most likely

officer to generate unified action across the military and diplomatic domains for the division is the FA 59 strategic planner sitting in the G-5 section. Recent experience in Afghanistan corroborates the experience in Iraq. The 10th Mountain Division's strategic planner also served as the primary interagency planner and liaison to the division headquarters, which was the nucleus for Combined Joint Task Force-76.<sup>6</sup>

## FA 59 as a Force Generation Planner

A division acting as a JTF does not have a higher headquarters to execute JOPES and force-generation functions for it. Consequently, an FA 59 officer with knowledge of force-generation functions can leverage the transportation management coordination NCO in the division G-5 section to anticipate, plan for, and execute actions related to allocating strategic resources, whether they are equipment, units, or personnel. During OIF, the XVIII Airborne Corps employed one of its strategic planners solely in the force-generation role. In the legacy division, this responsibility belonged to the chief of plans.<sup>7</sup>

Given the modular division headquarters' new training and readiness oversight (TRO) responsibilities, the division staff requires a more robust capability for force planning. The division's TRO

relationship with its brigades is distinct from the mission oversight relationship that a division headquarters has over the brigades it operationally controls in theater.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the Army Campaign Plan now assigns installation commander or senior mission commander responsibilities to every active-component division headquarters for the BCTs assigned it for TRO.<sup>9</sup>

Under modularity, a division's chain of command no longer runs through a corps headquarters but directly to an Army service component command or, in the case of divisions in the continental United States, to Forces Command. As a result, divisions play a much greater role in the adaptive planning process and specifically in the sourcing of requirements mandated by the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review*. Under the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model, most divisions will staff their deployment force structure requirements directly to Forces Command, whereas previously, they had passed those requirements through a corps headquarters. Therefore, FA 59 officers at division level should be able to operationalize the actions required under adaptive planning and ARFORGEN.

While at home station, the paths of the division's FA 59 officers and the installation's directorate of plans, training, and mobilization (DPTM) should coincide. Division-level strategic planning under the ARFORGEN will drive the DPTM's strategy to support force readiness and employment. We should tie the FA 59 strategic planners in with the division's FA 50 force integration officer for many of those functions and assign the FA 50 officer to the division G-5. This relationship will become critically important to organizations conducting force structure and/or basing actions mandated by the Army Campaign

Plan. For deployed units, a division strategic planner is no substitute for a home-station DPTM, but in the context of the ARFORGEN, he can still assist BCTs in their long-range planning.

## Summary

The strategic plans and policy officer represents a powerful force multiplier for the modular division headquarters. Given the modular division's greatly expanded responsibilities, the FA 59 officer offers a significant new perspective, primarily through strategic appraisal, strategic and operational planning, interservice and interagency integration, and strategic education. FA 59 officers possess unique skills that are especially useful at the division level, where the only other officers of similar education are senior-service-college graduates. FA 59 officers can be most effective when organizations leverage nontraditional education and perspectives to increase diversity of opinion and planning options for commanders. **MR**

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## NOTES

1. Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3, *Commissioned Officer Development* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office: 2005), 389-90.

2. Department of the Army, G-5 Strategy, Plans, and Policy Directorate, "FA 59 Strategic Plans and Policy Update, September 2006" (PowerPoint presentation) (Washington: September 2006), slide 7.

3. *Ibid.*, slide 8.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Most FA 59 officers who have attended advanced intermediate level schooling are graduates of the School of Advanced Military Studies, but a few are graduates of the U.S. Marine Corps School of Advanced Warfighting at Quantico, VA. Other advanced intermediate level schools include the School of Advanced Airpower Studies at Maxwell Air Force Base at Montgomery, AL, and the Joint Advanced Warfighting School at Norfolk, VA.

6. Email correspondence with MAJ Scott Cline, strategic planner at Combined Joint Task Force-76, 7 September 2006.

7. Email correspondence with MAJ Mark Kneis, strategic planner at XVIII Airborne Corps, 12 November 2005.

8. Future revisions of Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Full Spectrum Operations*, and FM 7-0, *Training the Force*, will address this in more detail. U.S. Army Combined Arms Center-Training, *FM 7-0 Issue Paper #3, Training and Readiness Oversight (TRO) and Mission Oversight (MO)* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: 9 September 2006), 1.

9. Department of the Army, *Army Campaign Plan*, Change 3 (Washington, DC: 2006), A-16.