

A COMMON LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

The *Universal Joint Task List* was developed to empower Joint Commanders and the Services with a common language to communicate mission requirements.

Early in the development of the UJTL the decision was made to allow each Service to develop its own tactical level Task List. This held the promise of a richer task list for describing mission requirements. The result has been an unacceptable divergence of language, rather than a convergence. The Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard issued Universal Naval Task List is fully compatible with the UJTL. The Navy is using it extensively. Unfortunately, when it came time to update the latest version of the UNTL, the Marine Corps balked. The Army Universal Task List, compatible with the UJTL, is close to but still not published. Unfortunately, the AUTL has begun to diverge from the UJTL. The Air Force developers rejected the hierarchical framework of the UJTL, believing their mission capabilities demanded a single-level Task List. The Air Force Task List is incompatible with the UJTL and violates a number of the rules of the UJTL taxonomy. At the same time, the US Forces Command developed its own supplement to the UJTL, providing an additional set of Tactical Tasks.

From 11 September 2001, we have seen increased emphasis on emerging and non-traditional threats. This has given new urgency to the development of an Interagency Task List to complement the UJTL. Thus, while the Services diverge, new players are joining the game.

It is time to remerge the Service Tactical Task Lists with the UJTL and to once again provide a common language for all. A new process is needed that focuses on agency and interagency capabilities along those of the Services. This process must provide the basis for the affirmation of a common language and a hierarchical structure—the objective of the UJTL since the beginning. Greater commonality will increase communication, not only within the DoD, but also across agencies, as we move to cope with non-traditional threats.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Clifford R. Krieger is employed by Dynamics Research Corporation (DRC). Mr. Krieger became engaged with the UJTL process while still on active duty as the Chief, Strategy Division, the Joint Staff. Upon his retirement from the Air Force in 1994 he became an active member of the team developing UJTL Version 2.0. With the publication of UJTL Version 3.0 Mr. Krieger has been involved in Interagency Task List work. In addition, he works on the National Air and Space Model (NASM) program, where DRC is a subcontractor to the Raytheon-SAIC Team. His first work on NASM was as a conceptual modeler. He then moved on to responsibilities as the platform and weapons Systems Analyst for the NASM Systems Integrated Product Team. In addition, Mr. Krieger works with the DRC Team at Leavenworth, Kansas, working on scenario development. Mr. Krieger is a graduate of the Air Force Academy and has a master's degree from the University of Southern California.

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The Universal Joint Task List (UJTL) was developed in response to a Joint Training requirement to provide a common language for expressing joint training requirements at the level of the combatant commands and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The original UJTL was based upon the Army's Battlefield Operating System (BOS) concept. The BOS itself was an attempt to provide a common language for the various branches of the US Army. The UJTL has provided that common language and is being emulated in other nations¹

The first step toward the Universal Joint Task List was the Blueprint of the Battlefield, which came out in 1987. This was followed by both an attempt to produce a combined Army and US Marine Corps Blueprint. In October of 1993 the Joint Staff published the first version of the Universal Joint Task List (MCM 147-93). This was followed by version 2.1 in May of 1995 and Version 3.0 in September of 1996.²

It was with UJTL Version 3.0 that the decision was made to not go with a common language for the Tactical Level Tasks of the UJTL. The UJTL has a four level taxonomy of Service Tasks. The levels are the National Strategic, Theater Strategic, Operational, and Tactical. This four-level approach, which is different from the DoD Dictionary definition of three levels of war, was selected based upon usage, including the testimony of then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral William Crowe to Congress, in which he stated that the Combatant Commanders did indeed have a strategy for their individual theater of war.³

¹ Those who have examined a task list based approach to understanding training include the United Kingdom, New Zealand and Australia, as well as SACLANT. However, due to a lack of coordination, these parallel efforts promise to provide a Babel, rather than a common language. That a common language can be achieved is demonstrated by the NATO AAP-6, *NATO Dictionary*. This document not only pulls together three English-speaking nations, but also three Franco-phone nations and then unites the two language groups in a parallel dictionary.

² CJCSM 3500.04A

³ The theater of war, as opposed to the theater of operations, represents the total area of a combatant commander. By and large, during World War II, our

The decision to sever the Tactical Level of the UJTL and allow the Services to develop their own Task Lists was done as part of the effort to achieve Service buy in to "a standardized tool for describing requirements for the planning, conducting, assessing, and evaluating of joint and multinational training."⁴ The impetus for the severing of the Tactical Level list from the UJTL itself came from USCENTCOM/J-3.⁵

The decision to sever the Tactical level from the rest of the UJTL made sense in terms of what the UJTL was being used for at the time. The Joint Training Policy of the Armed Forces⁶ saw the UJTL as a way for the combatant commanders to express their training requirements in a resource constrained environment. The UJTL was also a way for those same combatant commanders to express their training readiness.

The use of the UJTL as a way of expressing training requirements is the basis for the Joint Training Information Management System (JTIMS). The JTIMS is a web-based system for developing training requirements in terms of Joint Mission Essential Tasks (JMETS). These JMETS provide the basis for making decisions as to which forces will be trained, in what training areas, on what training ranges, and at what times. It also provides a tool to represent to decision makers the training readiness of units to accomplish their Mission Essential Tasks for given operations plans. What has not yet happened is the description of those Mission Essential Tasks as part of the combatant commander's operations plans.

As the value of the UJTL as a common language has grown, other audiences have looked to it as a way of describing unit capabilities. For example, in response

noted commanders, such as General Eisenhower and Admiral King, conducted their operations in a theater of operations, rather than a theater of war.

⁴ Universal Joint Task List, CJCSM 3500.04A, 13 September 1996, Joint Staff Director Cover Memorandum

⁵ It was believed, at the time, that USCENTCOM Director of Operations was a stalking horse for the Air Force, which had its own problems with the UJTL approach.

⁶ CJCSI 3500.01, 21 November 1994

to a Defense Planning Guidance tasking to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness,⁷ the Under Secretary proposed that the existing Mission Essential Task construct be used as the framework for providing training readiness information to DoD leadership.

The use of the Mission Essential Task construct as a source of not only combatant command, but also Service and Defense Agency readiness places new demands on the existing system. Further, it brings to the fore the differences amongst the Services in how they do tactical tasks.

SERVICE TASK LISTS

While the UJTL Version 3.0 was under development each Service began work on its own Tactical Task List.

Universal Naval Task List

The US Navy undertook the effort by getting together with the US Marine Corps and the US Coast Guard to develop a Universal Naval Task List (UNTL). The first version of UNTL (1.0) was published concurrently with the UJTL Version 3.0.

The Navy immediately went to work in 1997 on a revision to the UNTL (to be UNTL Version 2.0). This version was to incorporate lessons learned from the implementation of Version 1.0. As the Navy, Marine Corps, and the Coast Guard proceeded in development of UNTL Version 2.0 the Marines' participation was sporadic and halted in 1999. The reason was that in the 1998-1999 time frame the Marines went through a training reorganization and the establishment of a new command, Marine Corps Training and Evaluation Command. As the new Marine training organization was established and shook itself out, it decided in the spring of 2001, it did not wish to continue participation with the Navy and Coast Guard in UNTL Version 2.0.

The Marines' official position was that they were currently undergoing a complete review of its service-level training, to include its interface with joint training. The Marines stated that this was a temporary delay and it should not be viewed as a change in their commitment to participation in the UNTL development

process or development of the Joint Exercise Management Package (JEMP). Their position was that current Marine Corps tasks listed in the UNTL should be used for updating what was then JEMP and is now JTMS.⁸

However, one might infer from the Marines' own actions, that it was at least examining the possibility that it needed its own task list to better represent the Marine Corps as a Service, as opposed to being an adjunct to the Navy. Much of this effort, which does not meet all the UJTL rules for development of tasks, was provided in a report titled "Development Of A Functional Assessment To Determine The Essential Warfighting Capabilities Necessary To Support Decision-Making At Each Echelon Of Command."⁹

So, while the Marines organized a new command, approval of the updated UNTL has been slowed. Without active Marine participation, the Navy and Coast Guard completed development of the UNTL Version 2.0 and began headquarters level coordination in June 2001. In fact, the Coast Guard has approved the document and the Commandant of the Coast Guard is awaiting final Navy staffing action to sign the instruction. It is before the Director of the Navy Staff as of this writing. However, there is no Marine Corps coordination and the "Naval" status of the document is in question. However, the Navy, as mentioned earlier, has made extensive use of the UNTL and the METLs process in training management and in other areas for mission and requirements analysis. The Navy's Commander, Fleet Forces Command (CFFC) has directed the completion of fleet Naval METLs (NMETL) by the end of 2003 to support development of a Navy Warfare Training System, which is somewhat modeled after the Joint Training System. The Navy has already started to develop the way ahead for the Navy's participation in the new Defense Readiness Reporting System which is to be based on the Mission Essential Tasks construct.

The issue for the combatant commanders is if the UNTL Version 2.0 is to be used to describe Marine operations or if they should be looking for another document. The adoption of the METs concept for readiness reporting will raise the same question. Is the Marine Corps in or out of the paper and the program?

⁷ DPG FY 2003-2007: "By March 2002, USD (P&R), in collaboration with the Secretaries of the Military Departments and the CJCS, will recommend to the Secretary of Defense guidelines and procedures for a comprehensive readiness reporting system that evaluates readiness on the basis of the actual missions and capabilities assigned to the forces."

The delay in approving UNTL Version 2.0 has been so long the Naval Warfare Development Command, working with the US Coast Guard, is already well

⁸ Previously mentioned Joint Training Information Management System

⁹ Final Report dated 28 September 2000.

along the way in development of UNTL Version 3.0 for coordination and approval. However, such progress is being blocked, to some degree, until final signature of the 2.0 version. The Marine Corps has indicated recently they will be ready to coordinate development of UNTL 3.0 later in 2002.

Army Universal Task List

The US Army responded to the opportunity to write its own Tactical Task List by engaging Headquarters Training and Doctrine Command to develop the new document. While drafts were being developed as early as 1996, final approval was to prove elusive.

As the Army was in the middle of its own transition, in light of the end of the Cold War, it was not prepared to publish its own Task List. By September 1999, US Army Training and Doctrine Command,

Deputy Chief of Staff for Doctrine had the Tasks, Conditions, and Measures for the Army Universal Task List (AUTL). At about this point the project was transferred to Fort Leavenworth.

One of the stumbling blocks was the question of the battlefield operating systems—how many there were and what they were. While the BOS system was the basis of the UJTL, the Army had undergone a change in doctrine and now had seven BOS, as opposed to the original six. For the Army the question was if it should change to meet this joint view or find a way to cross-walk the tasks from the Army BOS orientation to the UJTL six major tactical tasks.

In the words of the Army: “The six tactical task areas established in the UJTL do not reflect how the Army has traditionally organized its physical means (soldiers, organizations, and equipment) to accomplish tactical missions. Field Manual 3-0 establishes that the Army organizes its physical means into seven battlefield operating systems.”

The original six Army Tactical Tasks, running in parallel to the Universal Joint Task List, are shown below, along with the seven Army developed Battlefield Operating Systems (See Figure 1). The Army has, in fact, proposed a cross-walk of the Tactical Tasks in its draft FM 7-15, *Army Universal Task List*.¹⁰ That cross-walk is shown below (See Figure 2).

Army Tactical Tasks as Proposed in 1999	FM 7-15 BOS
ART 1 Deploy/Conduct Maneuver	ART 1.0 Intelligence BOS
ART 2 Develop Intelligence	ART 2.0 Maneuver BOS
ART 3 Employ Firepower	ART 3.0 Fire Support BOS
ART 4 Perform Logistics and Combat Service Support	ART 4.0 Air Defense BOS
ART 5 Exercise Command and Control	ART 5.0 Mobility / Countermobility / Survivability BOS
ART 6 Protect the Force	ART 6.0 Combat Service Support BOS
	ART 7.0 Command and Control BOS

Figure 1

¹⁰ Date of the draft referenced is 25 September 2000.

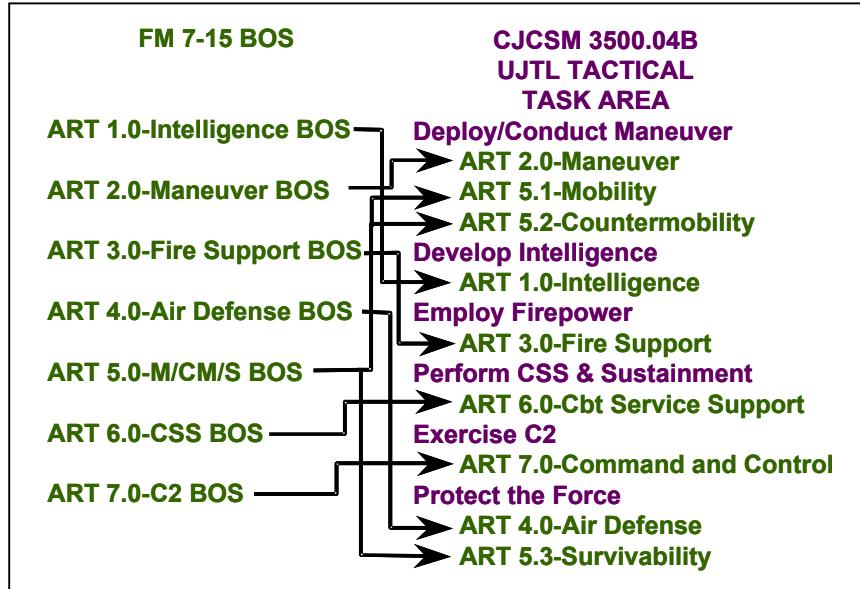


Figure 2

While the AUTL has not yet been published, it does provide a degree of confusion for those who are trying to understand tasks at the Tactical Level. What once was a common language is now becoming a puzzle to sort through.

Air Force Task List

The Air Force, having achieved the detachment of the Tactical Level Tasks via USCENTCOM, then came up with its own construct for a Task List. In publishing the Air Force Task List (AFTL)¹¹ the Air Force argued (to itself) that it was different from the other Services, in that it often operated at the operational and strategic levels of war, as when it planned and practiced for nuclear deterrence. Further, the Air Force argued to itself, any Task List should reflect Air Force core competencies (Air and Space Superiority, Precision

Engagement, Information Superiority, Global Attack, Rapid Global Mobility, and Agile Combat Support) and their command and control. Thus, the Air Force Task list, rather than roughly resembling the UJTL, as does the AUTL, reflects its own view of itself.

The Tasks in the Air Force Task List are:

- AFT1—Air & Space Superiority
- AFT2—Precision Engagement
- AFT3—Information Superiority
- AFT4—Global Attack
- AFT5—Rapid Global Mobility
- AFT6—Agile Combat Support
- AFT7—Command & Control

As with the Army, there is a cross-walk from the Air Force Task List to the UJTL Tasks (See Figure 3).

	TA1 Deploy/ Conduct Maneuver	TA2 Develop Intelligence	TA3 Employ Firepower	TA4 Perform Logistics & Combat Service Support	TA5 Exercise Command & Control	TA6 Protect the Force
Air & Space Superiority	X	X	X			X
Precision Engagement	X	X	X	X	X	X
Information Superiority	X	X	X	X	X	X
Global Attack	X		X			X
Rapid Global Mobility	X	X	X	X		X
Agile Combat Support	X	X	X	X	X	X
Command & Control	X	X	X	X	X	X

Figure 3

¹¹ Air Force Doctrine Document 1-1, 12 August 1998.

This type of chart is produced four times, once for each level of war, and then summed up in a final chart, which demonstrates that the Air Force operates at all four levels of war.

The AFTL is not only different in terms of not aligning with the UJTL, it is different in that it does not represent a true taxonomy of tasks. Rather, Tasks are repeated, with slight variations in wording, from AFT to AFT. The Air Force Task List uses a “Generic Task Organization,”¹² that goes from a core competency to the preparation for and execution of the task.

AFT x Provide “Core Competency”
AFT x.x Provide “Capability”
AFT x.x.1 Perform “task”
AFT x.x.2 Educate and Train “task” forces
AFT x.x.3 Equip “task” forces
AFT x.x.4 Plan to “task”

The Air Force Task list is the furthest from the UJTL norm, but the fact is that the Air Force, which has speed, range and flexibility, is a Service that operates at more than the Tactical Level of war, or even the Tactical and Operational levels of war. Of the other Services, the Navy is the one best positioned to assert such a claim.

Combatant Command Tactical Tasks

If this confusion of what was supposed to be a common language were not sufficient, the decision on the part of the Joint Staff to allow each of the Services to publish their own Task List prompted the US Atlantic Command, charged with orchestrating Joint Training, to add its own Joint and Interoperability Tactical Tasks. What was once a short list of less than two-dozen just joint/interoperability tactical tasks has grown to over 70 tasks at this time.

A sample of the TA 1 Tasks, having to do with deployment and the conduct of maneuver, show the degree to which the joint/interoperability tactical tasks have become their own Tactical Task List.

TA 1	DEPLOY/CONDUCT MANEUVER
TA 1.1	POSITION/REPOSITION TACTICAL FORCES
TA 1.1.1	CONDUCT TACTICAL AIRLIFT OPERATIONS
TA 1.1.2	CONDUCT SHIPBOARD DECK HELICOPTER LANDING QUALIFICATIONS
TA 1.1.3	CONDUCT INFILTRATION/EXFILTRATION OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
TA 1.1.4	CONDUCT SEA AND AIR DEPLOYMENT OPERATIONS
TA 1.2	CONDUCT JOINT FORCES PASSAGE OF LINES

TA 1.2.1	CONDUCT JOINT AIR ASSAULT OPERATIONS AND AIR ASSAULT
TA 1.2.2	CONDUCT JOINT AIRBORNE OPERATIONS
TA 1.2.3	CONDUCT JOINT AMPHIBIOUS ASSAULT AND RAID OPERATIONS
TA 1.2.4	CONDUCT JOINT COUNTERDRUG OPERATIONS
TA 1.3	CONDUCT COUNTERMINE OPERATIONS
TA 1.4	CONDUCT MINE OPERATIONS
TA 1.5	GAIN/MAINTAIN CONTROL OF LAND AREAS
TA 1.5.1	GAIN AND MAINTAIN MARITIME SUPERIORITY
TA 1.5.2	GAIN AND MAINTAIN AIR SUPERIORITY

Interagency Task List

While the UJTL and the Service Task Lists have been evolving, the Joint Staff recognized the need to describe how the Department of Defense worked with, and trained with, other Departments and Agencies. This led to a program to develop an Interagency Task List. The idea behind the Interagency Task List was to examine where the Department of Defense supported another Department or the Department of Defense depended upon the support of another agency. Having identified the places where the two departments interacted, it was then necessary to determine if any tasks were being or could be performed that had not been previously identified, or if there were any new conditions of the environment not previously noted. The first agency examined was Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This agency was selected because of the broad and ongoing relationship between FEMA and the Department of Defense. While all Services work with FEMA, the Army in particular provides support, often through the National Guard. The study of FEMA identified seven new tasks. In addition, the study noted quite a few existing UJTL Tasks that could capture FEMA activities with small changes in wording in the Task Descriptions. In essence, this study found that the Universal Joint Task List was, indeed, universal. However, it was not comprehensive. There were still tasks to be identified.

Based upon the work with FEMA, the Joint Staff went forward with the study of three other agencies, Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In all three cases the study effort focused on where the department or agency interacted with the Services. Each of the three worked with DoD in different ways. For DOE the issues revolved around the nuclear stockpile and included issues of research and development, production, and the protection of weapons and the environment. With DOJ the issues pertained to crisis response and to support of law enforcement. For EPA the issues were in the areas of hazard identification and remediation. All three studies

¹² AFTL, Figure 4.1. Generic Task Organization

revealed potential new tasks for the UJTL. These tasks run the UJTL from the National Strategic Level to the Tactical Level. In the case of DOE the study found that a number of existing National Strategic (SN) Level Tasks, which have not been used up to this point by any of the combatant commanders in their JMETL, were very important.

The pressure for an Interagency Task List was only heightened by the events of 11 September 2001. Since then the JTMS software has been demonstrated to not only FEMA, but also to the Department of Justice and the Office of Homeland Security. We are now looking at a new Department of Homeland Security. This will be a vast agency with many disparate parts, all being pulled together to achieve a common goal. They, even more than the Department of Defense, will need a common language.

The Threat from Overseas

The UJTL is universal. The strategic planners in Pyongyang should be able to lay down the UJTL and develop their Mission Essential Tasks to brief President Kim Il-sung on any planned military operation. In the same way, the Combined Forces Command intelligence staff should be able to brief their commander, General Thomas A. Schwartz on their appreciation of the North Korean threat, using the same UJTL Tasks, Conditions, and Measures.

While universal, the UJTL is not the only solution to the Task problem. Nations with somewhat different views of military operations might develop a somewhat different taxonomy of tasks.¹³ As our allies develop their own Task Lists, we will find that we will have to have translations to keep everyone on the same sheet of music. While software should allow us to do much of that translation, it is often cumbersome to have to check the computer to make sure everyone is on the same sheet of music. Thus, there is a need for the Department of Defense to not only be paying attention to the interagency, but also to our friends and allies. The sooner we are all on the same taxonomy, the quicker we will achieve interoperability in terms of describing our training requirements and our readiness capabilities.

¹³ For that matter, people in the United States might do the same. Some would argue, for example, that the TWOs of the UJTL should not be focused on intelligence, per se, but rather on information, be it of the enemy or of us. This would avoid having information collection and management tasks in the other parts of the Taxonomy.

A PROPOSAL FOR A PATH AHEAD

It is time to bring the Services back into the UJTL, at all levels of war. The demands of readiness reporting alone require this. But, it will mean that the UJTL will need to be opened up for a serious revision. This does not mean that the current task list should be thrown out. Far from it. What it does mean is that we have to get back to the original intent of the UJTL-JMETL Process. We need to have a new buy in by the Services and the combatant commands, as well as the Defense Agencies. And, we need to give other Executive level Departments and Agencies a chance to play.

What is proposed is that the Joint Staff once again travel both, to the Service Doctrine Agencies to talk with those SMEs who write doctrine, and to the “CINCDoms” to talk with the operators who have to operate under this doctrine. This is not a case of providing a briefing from Washington or from the Joint Warfighting Center. The “field” has wisdom to impart—this is an attempt to absorb and implement that wisdom.

What is proposed is a process. The first step in the process is getting all participants back to the basics on the UJTL and task taxonomies. The rules exist to get us back on track. They are in the UJTL. They need to be applied. The rules are specify what the UJTL does and what it does not do. The UJTL captures tasks that must be performed; “what” activity must be performed. The UJTL does not define “who” should perform the task; “who” is not relevant to the process. As one commentator says, the Services bid to the combatant commander their capabilities to perform a Task and the combatant commander selects the best capability, in light of all his requirements. The Tasks of the UJTL must remain general enough to offer the opportunity for this healthy competition to exist for as many Service organizations as possible. The tasks of the UJTL must not be drilled down so low that they become alike in different areas. In the extreme, one would say that when the task got to the point that it was “Pick Up Pencil” it had become too specific. Tasks need to be unique. They are not unique when one is “Pick Up Intelligence Pencil” and another is “Pick Up Logistics Pencil.” The UJTL can go so far and no farther. At that point a different analysis tool is needed—is available—and should be used.

The next step is to identify those current UJTL tasks that are actually “operations” and to flesh out those tasks as operations, made up of existing UJTL tasks. This will serve as a method of reducing the number of Tasks, while stocking our library of operations templates.

At this point the UJTL team is ready to visit the Service Doctrine Centers and the combatant command headquarters. These trips would not be one time visits. Rather, several visits would be made, to provide information, to collect information, and to receive feedback on how the received information was packaged.

As the original developers always intended for this living common language, the resulting UJTL would look quite familiar, yet it would be different. Of the tasks that existed at the start, quite a few would go away, some fleshed out into operations and others eliminated or combined. At the same time, new tasks would be added at all levels.

Finally, when the UJTL team had gone as far as it could go, it would be time to ask for buy-in by the Services and combatant commands.

A WORD OF CAUTION

A word of caution about adding tasks to the Universal Joint Task List and the Service Task Lists. As we add tasks we run the risk of the whole edifice toppling over. When issued as UJTL Version 3.0, there were 680 Tasks. Now there are about 880 Tasks. Often, tasks have remained in the UJTL or have been added, for political purposes. Usually this involves buy-in by this or that part of the bureaucracy or appeasement of some powerful constituency. While each new task is a small addition, as they add up the cost becomes high. So, as legitimate tasks are being proposed, based upon

working with other Departments or Agencies or through legitimate research by the Services or Defense Agencies, we have to consider if there is some natural limit to the size of the UJTL, some point at which it will become so big its users will no longer see it as a common language, but rather as a vast warehouse of terms, accessible only by computer and blind luck. If that day ever comes, we will be in need of a new common language.

CONCLUSION

The combatant commands, and in particular US Joint Forces Command, continue to emphasize the importance of the JTMS software in managing joint training. The value of JTMS, beyond its scheduling capabilities, is provided by the use of the UJTL as a common language for the exchange of information, and specifically information in the form of JMETLs. Today the Department of Defense is looking to expand the use of the UJTL-JMETL approach from training requirements to Joint Readiness. For the combatant commands and the Services to gain the greatest benefit from a revised readiness reporting system they will need to identify requirements in a way all can understand. With this new requirement for the UJTL and the JMETL process it is perhaps time for the Department of Defense to take a new look at the UJTL. If it is to be revised in a significant manner, to bring more consistency among the Services, particularly at the Tactical Level, now is the time to do it. To wait is to lock in the current approach.