

ANGLICO and OIE

The Marine Corps' counter to "Little Green Men"

by Maj Jacob Corl

In today's world, information is gathered, analyzed, and acted on at speeds no one thought possible 30 years ago. These drastic changes have had enormous effects on modern militaries directly affecting the United States' ability to maintain its military dominance. Today's world is back to near-peer competition and conflicts that have been a part of every other period except for the last half century.

The U.S. military has finally seen the writing on the wall and has redirected its efforts to address current force designs to meet these the evolving threats. Under the Tri-Service Maritime Strategy and the *Commandant Planning Guidance*, Marines today will be tasked with enabling commanders with dedicated all-domain reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance forces which will see smaller units capable of delivering a wider range of battlefield effects to ensure freedom of movement for the Naval Service while denying the same to our adversaries.¹ These all-domain teams, with their access to allied and coalition partners, will be the backbone for the future Naval Service and ensure a place for the Marine Corps by giving us the capability to regionally counter hostile "Little Green Men"² around the world. With the current Marine Corps force structure, equipment, and training, the base unit for all-domain effects teams are the Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Companies (ANGLICO) because of its seasoned combined arms and liaison officers and staff non-commissioned officers, their ability to quickly task organize from within the MEF Information Group (MIG), and overt access to allied countries that can generate effects within the fast paced, information intensive style of warfare across competition and conflict.

Our rivals have seen our might and adapted to counter it. Russia and China

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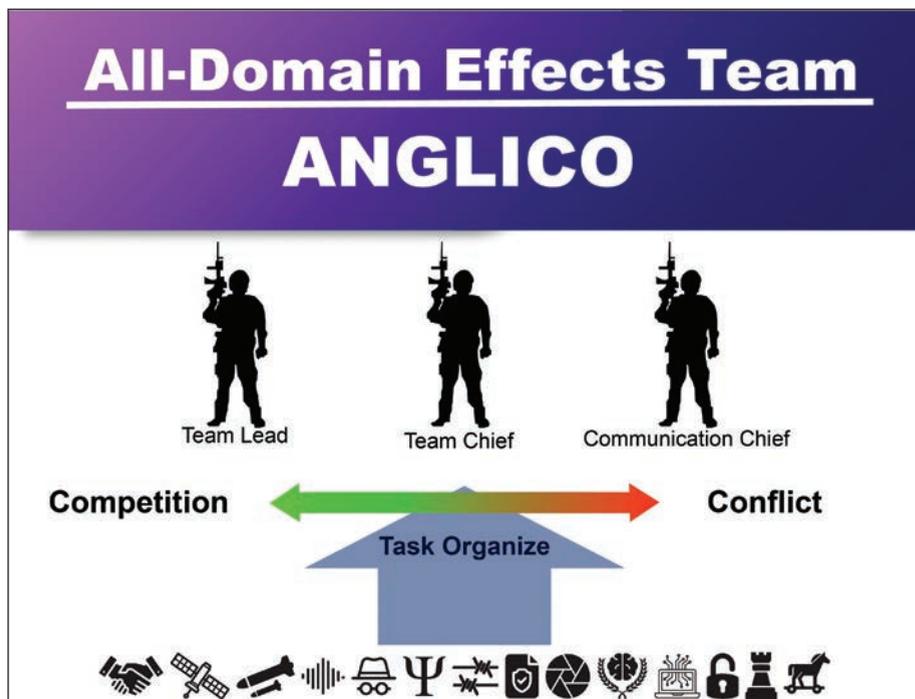


2D ANGLICO with its foreign partner's at the conclusion of Burmese Chase 19, an annual exercise incorporating British, Norwegian, French, and Dutch forces. (Photo: courtesy 2D ANGLICO.)

have mobilized to create militaries that seek to perfect information operations that outthink, out maneuver, and out cycle us. Russia gave us a full demonstration of how current conflicts will play out with their invasion of Crimea. During this event, Russia was able to use its extensive cyber-attack capabilities, troll farms, and propaganda skills to push for political unrest in the disputed Crimea region of Ukraine. Under this cover, they moved Russian "volunteers" along with a broad force of armor, long-range artillery, special operations forces, unmanned aerial vehicles, and electronic warfare equipment across the border to safeguard Russian citizens and assets. These tactics allowed these "Little Green Men,"³ (a reference to them posing as a green camo-clad paramilitary force with no recognizable insignia) to cut a bloody swath through the unprepared Ukrainian forces. They performed lethal attacks initiated through inventive and novel target location means by using cell phone signals of senior-level Ukrainian

officers, catfishing Ukrainian soldiers, and hacking military computer applications that tracked Ukrainian friendly positions. Once the Russians had this information, they would use their extensive long-range towed and self-propelled artillery to eliminate those targets. In one particular case, the Russians tracked down a Ukrainian artillery battalion through its commanding officer's mother via Facebook, which subsequently cost him most of his battalion and his life. Russian forces controlled the narrative on the regional populace, which allowed them unprecedented levels of freedom of movement and support from sympathetic people. No other time in history has this level of speed and all-domain combined arms lethality ever been seen. This new character of warfare serves as a catalyst for change in the U.S. military.

ANGLICO extends the MAGTF commander's influence by providing a liaison capability that plans, coordinates, and terminally controls fires for joint, allied, and coalition forces. At



ANGLICO-led All-Domain Effects Team. (Image provided by the COMMSTRAT Company.)

the same time, ANGLICO is capable of leveraging joint, allied, and coalition assets to enhance the MAGTF’s operational capabilities. As a result of its mission, ANGLICO is specially manned and equipped with a higher number of captains and senior non-commissioned officers in order to quickly task organize and operate in small teams independent of MAGTF units. Operating independently creates a culture founded upon being flexible, adaptable, and able to solve complex dynamic problems. ANGLICO’s access and amount of time training to combined arms is unmatched. Properly task organized capabilities from the MIG make ANGLICO lead teams the ideal unit to conduct combined arms across all domains.

Properly tasked organized, (e.g. cyberwarfare (attack or defense), intelligence (open source intelligence, human intelligence), psychological operations, communications strategy, and operations, the ANGLICO-led all-domain effects teams can achieve combined arms effects across all domains in competition through conflict.⁴ These teams could affect theaters by informing friendly decision makers with information environment battlespace awareness

while influencing enemy’s decision making cycle through projected information messaging—all the while effecting the normal perceptions, attitudes and beliefs of everyday life.⁵ These teams are also able to convey that awareness through its organic communication equipment and command and control (C2) architecture across MAGTF, joint force, and allies forming a fully integrated fires system into the operations in the information environment (OIE). These teams are what the Marine Corps needs to match Russian and Chinese capabilities and are exactly what the Navy and Marine Corps believes will be critical for success in the OIE: “Navy information warfare hinges on three fundamental capabilities: assured C2, battlespace awareness, and integrated fires.”⁶

ANGLICO extensive relationships with allied forces create immediate access to strategic locations and enable the MAGTF commander to leverage their assets. These relationships are already being utilized by 2D MIG all-domain effects teams. There is currently a team providing OIE battlespace awareness to the British Navy in support of the maiden voyage of their aircraft carrier the Queen Elizabeth.

These opportunities give the MIG and ANGLICO Marines crucial experience on how to shape these all-domain teams as the Commandant’s and the Tri-Service’s Maritime Strategy are implemented. OIE in the competition phase depends on mature, capable teams who have organic assets and personnel who understand and have the proper authorities to take advantage of or to counter hostile nation-states.

These ANGLICO lead all-domain effects teams could quickly transition to conflict by adding additional delivery and detection capabilities such as electronic warfare, cyber intrusion systems, long-range persistent command, control, communications, computers, cyber, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting, to standoff weapons systems like the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System armed with Naval Strike Missile.⁷ These capabilities at the hands of the all-domain effect teams would drastically reduce kill chains and be able to achieve operational- and strategic-level objectives at a fraction of the footprint of comparable elements. This greater capability allows for this team to be assigned missions that would normally be reserved for higher echelon forces and staffs. These teams create a greater degree of flexibility and lessens the degree of risk to the force.

In order to be successful these all-domain effects, teams will require properly spelled-out authorities. The current authorities models are highly centralized with decisions resting at the highest levels. For all-domain effects teams to be fully leveraged, authorities would need to be decentralized to increase the speed to decide (with commander’s intent), detect, deliver, and assess effects to out cycle our adversaries. We need to shift from a delivering information to authorities approach to a moving authorities to the information approach. These authorities must articulate exactly what targets can be affected by which lethal and non-lethal fires, which adversary networks can be exploited, and the ability to influence the narrative to allow for an effective and unified strategy within competition and conflict. Without these spelled out authorities, this construct will not be



ANGLICO Marines routinely train with and operate alongside allied and partner-nation forces. (Photo: II MEF Information Group.)

able to operate effectively or at worst, restricted drastically. A solution to this problem, which 2D MIG is currently doing, is through iterative campaigning with allies and partners who already have those authorities. Combining those authorities from each nation with our own fills in the gap required for successful operations on the modern battlefield.

Another issue that arises is one of assets capable to meet the demands of command, control, communications, computers, cyber, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting in austere environment like the islands of the South West Pacific or on the shores of Eastern Europe. Russian and Chinese forces do not have to focus on C2 that spans large sections of the planet, but we will be required to defend and counter them. For command, control, and communications, more high frequency and satellite communications radios would be needed to achieve these ranges with low probability of intercept and detection in the quantities required to be successful. More capable and cheaper unmanned aerial systems to provide ISR with the additive manufacturing capability is needed to help sustain these small, isolated teams. Electronic warfare capabilities have been neglected for far too long and would need substantial reinvestment to be useful at the

small-scale and long ranges required for the types of competition and conflicts that we are already facing. We can solve this problem set by conducting live experimentation and employment with Marine Corps' and joint forces current capabilities. 2D MIG sent a team to support the Navy's Hershel Woody

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Williams, an E-class Navy ship, to gain a better understanding of MIG's and Navy's current equipment capabilities. Fortunately, sizeable amounts of resources are being invested into addressing these gaps, not only by the Marine Corps but also across the department of defense with many of these solutions being fielded in the near future.

In the *Tri-Service Maritime Strategy* and *Commandant's Planning Guidance*, the Marine Corps is seeking to be the scouting and screening force for the Naval Service through recon-

naissance and counter-reconnaissance operations.⁸ This article is not to say this is the only way the Marine Corps can counter "Little Green Men" around the world but seeks to open the door for discussion on what the way forward should be. Nor does this concept seek to mirror Russian or Chinese force designs, but it attempts to counter their capabilities and flexibility. There are few units, agnostic of authorities, which can match the capabilities, combined arms and liaison experiences, mature and flexible leadership that a task organized ANGLICO-led all-domain effects teams can provide for the Marine Corps in any competition or conflict around the world.

Notes

1. Headquarters Marine Corps, MCWP MAGTF Information Operations 3-32, (Washington, DC: April 2018); Department of Defense, "Advantage at Sea: Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power," (Washington, DC: 2020); and Gen David H. Berger, "Preparing for the Future: Marine Corps Support to Joint Operations in Contested Littorals," (Washington, DC: May 2021).
2. Christian Brose, *The Kill Chain: Defending America in the Future of High-Tech Warfare*, (New York, NY: Hachette Books, 2020).
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. MCWP MAGTF Information Operations 3-32.
6. Marine Corps Combat Development Command, *Tentative Manual for Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations*, (Quantico, VA: 2020).
7. Peter Ong, "Black Sea Drill Again Validates HIMARS As An Anti-Ship Weapon System," *Naval News*, (November 2020), available at <https://www.navalnews.com>.
8. Gen David H. Berger, "Preparing for the Future: Marine Corps Support to Joint Operations in Contested Littorals," (Washington, DC: May 2021).

