


# LOOKING BACK ON OPERATION

# Jump Start

By DAVID M. CHURCH



National Guard Soldier watches border overlooking Nogales, Mexico, during Operation *Jump Start*

U.S. Army (Jim Greenhill)

**F**or decades, the imbroglia of illegal immigration has permeated American society due to the Nation's Southwest border being extremely porous. Today, the topic has reached center stage on Capitol Hill as it receives the necessary attention, especially in a post-9/11 era. Since the attacks of September 11, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has received additional funding, manpower, infrastructure, and resources for border security. For example, there were 9,736 CBP agents in 2001, and the number of agents forecast by the end of 2009 is 18,319.<sup>1</sup> To help reach this aggressive goal, in May 2006, President George W. Bush initiated Operation *Jump Start* (OJS) under which the National Guard helped bolster the Border Patrol in anticipation of CBP hiring and training additional Federal agents from 2006 to 2008.

As the National Guard takes on a more prominent role in homeland security, we can expect joint operations such as OJS to become more frequent. The onus will be on future

forces to unite for mission accomplishment. OJS was unique because it was the first time both the Army National Guard (ARNG) and Air National Guard (ANG) came together in significant numbers in the homeland to conduct a major operation of extended duration. Lessons learned from OJS should prove invaluable to future joint operations. These lessons could preclude organizations from making the same mistakes, thus preventing wasted money, time, and energy. Two areas of emphasis that contributed most to these lessons were organizational cultural challenges and interagency information-sharing and collaboration.

In any operation, unity of effort is a necessity, and this is particularly true where joint operations prevail. Interagency collaboration and cooperation coupled with interagency coordination are essential instruments contributing to homeland secu-

urity. According to the *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, homeland security cannot be accomplished by the Federal Government alone, so partnerships need to be established at the Federal, state, and local levels.<sup>2</sup> To achieve this unity of effort, there must be a fundamental cultural appreciation and understanding among the agencies and organizations involved.

## Challenges to Jointness

During Operation *Jump Start*, the primary organizations were CBP, ARNG, ANG, and the National Guard Bureau (NGB). The overall success of this operation was a direct result of the aggregate unity of effort that developed among these four organizations. However, a significant problem during the first several months was a tenuous relationship between the two National Guard organizations. A more profound appreciation

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LTG Blum talks with Border Patrol agents in New Mexico

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and understanding of each other's organization at the inception would have benefited both parties and the mission in general.

Indeed, we can expect these two components to see more of each other. Since 9/11, "National Guard operations to protect lives and property of American citizens here at home have been joint affairs."<sup>3</sup> Even though this was not the first time these two components worked together, the initial rift between the organizational cultures suggested otherwise. With the Army and Air National

(JTF), discord still existed in areas such as force structure, personnel and administration, and funding.

In May 2006, President Bush's visit to Yuma, Arizona, marked the call for the Federal Government to assist CBP through the mobilization of the National Guard in the fight against illegal immigration. Immediately after the President's declaration of OJS, both National Guard entities were required to come together and work as a joint force. President Bush called for 6,000 Guardsmen for the first

as task force (TF) commanders and senior enlisted positions were all filled by Army personnel. Furthermore, the two top commanders of the Arizona operation were Army officers. As a result, Army culture and temperament dominated. Many Soldiers held that since this was a *ground* mission, it should be carried out by Army personnel, despite the 75 percent/25 percent branch personnel requirement. In addition, many Army Guardsmen viewed the Air Guardsmen as solely *facilitators* for the mission.<sup>5</sup> These fallacies, along with the lack of education on the Air Force's capabilities, impeded unity of effort. This initial absence of jointness resembled a "stovepiped" model, as both agencies "worked and operated independently."<sup>6</sup> In a joint mission, an imbalance of leadership is apt to cause discord.

As the operation progressed, the Arizona headquarters recognized the need not only to faithfully maintain the Army and Air Force personnel ratio, but also to strengthen the unity of effort between the two. Air Force personnel started to crop up in key leadership positions, strengthening the unity of effort. This reduced the likelihood that either organization could blame the other because it was not included in a particular concept of the operation. As the adage goes, perception is everything, and when a

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Guards, we see two different organizations, two cultures, and two ways of doing business. At the beginning of the operation, there was some obstinacy, as each component favored its own organization and did not fully embrace jointness. Both agencies were more concerned about seeking out 2,400 volunteers for the operation than obtaining and practicing unity of effort. Meeting the suspense of personnel fills was the ultimate priority for both agencies.<sup>4</sup> Although there was a coordinating and command relationship between the two organizations under Arizona's joint task force

year with a drawdown to 3,000 for the second to support CBP across the Southwest border states (California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas). Of the four states, Arizona received the bulk of the forces (40 percent) in the form of both rotational and durational forces. Seventy-five percent of the forces were designated as Army Guardsmen, while the remaining 25 percent were Air Guardsmen.

In relation to force structure, Arizona was initially overwhelmed with Army versus Air Force volunteers, thus instantly causing a void in the unity of effort. Key positions such

compilation of both components surfaced, the joint concept began to flourish. The grafting of Army and Air Force personnel in key leadership positions sent a strong message. It also created greater flexibility and productivity as it established a more stable work environment in a joint atmosphere.

The balance of joint personnel within a JTF strengthens its command structure. As we learned from Hurricane Katrina, the partition of command structure between Active-duty forces and the National Guard “hindered their unity of effort.”<sup>7</sup> As a commander, the biggest challenge I faced daily was maintaining cooperation between Army and Air Force personnel, especially as Soldiers and Airmen came and went on a rotational basis. I quickly ascertained that by keeping a mixture of Air and Army personnel in key leadership positions, I was more able to maintain a spirit of joint cohesiveness devoid of cultural antipathy.

Another measure to preclude an imbalanced effort is to schedule routine joint training exercises and events and to maintain active joint relationships before the next crisis. The prior integration of Army and Air Guardsmen, both support and operational elements, is the building block for future joint operations. The ongoing interagency training, networking, and relationship-building before an event allow the establishment of unity of effort to be second nature. By training as we fight, the next time a joint operation comes along, the impediments to cohesiveness should be kept to a minimum.

The culture of the two organizations also differed in the area of personnel and administration. On the personnel side, the Air Force relied on the Deployment Requirements Manning Document, while the Army used a Unit Manning Report to source and manage personnel. Initially, many prominent Army personnel did not know how the Air Force monitored manning requirements and vice versa. While the Air Force centrally controlled its manning requirements, the Army delegated control of its requirements to the respective units on the ground. Furthermore, while the Air Force filled vacancies strictly according to skill set at the headquarters level at NGB, the Army accepted both volunteers who were already cross-trained and those who were not. Hence, the Army’s manning document provided more flexibility than the Air Force’s, permitting more decentralization and allowing vacancies to be filled more quickly.

Moreover, both organizations used separate documents and procedures to process such requirements as leave. Each agency had its own regulations and procedures for administrative functions. For example, while the Army was able to process leave at the unit level, the Air Force had to process it through the home unit in the respective state. The unit administrative officers were able to issue leave control numbers to Soldiers but not to Airmen. As a result, the administrative staff at the unit level did not have control and oversight of Air Force leave unless it was personally requested. One unit level administrative officer asserted that he felt his hands were tied since he had no direct control over the flow of Air Force personnel going on and returning from leave.<sup>8</sup>

Through joint training and strengthening interagency relationships, both Airmen and Soldiers could become more acquainted with the others’ procedures and customs. Consequently, interagency interdependence would replace agency independence in joint operations. For example, the complications behind the sourcing of personnel could have been limited if each agency had preliminary and fundamental knowledge of the other’s

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manning procedures. By the Air Force administrative personnel becoming familiar with the Army’s procedures and vice versa, a spirit of interdependence would have been more likely to surface. Basic situational awareness of the opposite branch’s personnel processing system would have contributed to a more sound unity of effort by reducing organizational uncertainty.

Another measure that could have reduced this cultural disparity in the administrative field is having separate and *single* Army and Air Force administrative officers versus one Army *or* one Air Force administrative officer without joint experience at the headquarters level. If this is not possible, the joint administrative officer should be required to manage both organizational methods. Representation from both Army and Air Force

under the joint administrative office eliminates one branch from being overlooked. The drawback is that it would require additional funding and resources to support two administrative officers, one from each component. A cost-benefit analysis, however, would justify the need to support the separate positions if an experienced joint administrative officer is not available. The administrative workload for both components would be reason enough.

One method to eliminate the difference in the two sets of regulations and documents is to have one joint regulation and one set of joint operational documents and forms that would supersede the respective branches’ documents. Joint standard operating procedures would need to be established for all joint areas. The challenge here is that each component would have to renounce its traditional regulations and set of documents and forms, step out of its comfort zone, and adopt the joint regulations, documents, and forms. Since Airmen and Soldiers are steeped in their own respective cultures, there has to be faith in the effectiveness of the joint concept. Familiarization with these joint regulations and forms would be achieved through joint training and interagency coordination. There would no longer be two separate administrative and personnel standards, but one standard for all participants in a joint operation.

Another primary difference between the two cultures was in funding and budgeting. While the Air Force received its funding directly from NGB, the Army received its moneys from its respective state. The Army had a more decentralized system of receiving and distributing its funding. Moreover, the Army talked about dollars while the Air Force talked about days when it came to expending funds. This difference contributed to conflict between Airmen and Soldiers. For example, while Airmen were allowed to sell back leave, Soldiers could not without formal approval. While the Air Force calculated leave automatically into Guardsmen’s orders by designating a predetermined end date, the Army had to obligate funding to cover leave that was to be sold back. This variance resulted in Soldiers questioning why Airmen could sell leave back yet they could not. Frustration ensued as Soldiers saw a double standard.

To help settle this funding disparity, the optimal goal should be for both Army and Air Force funding and budgeting transactions to be addressed and taken care of at the unit level. If not, one alternative to help



bridge the gap in the funding difference would be to maintain the separate systems, but to establish a joint training program on Army and Air Force funding and budgeting. If each organization understood how the other distributes and budgets funds prior to a joint operation, interagency uncertainty would be less of an issue when a joint mission occurred. Prior education and training on each other's monetary procedures reduces future tension, thus allowing personnel to be more focused on the task at hand.

Another option is to use one central U.S. Property and Fiscal Officer at the state level for both components working a specific joint mission. With one central funding office at the headquarters level, the unit staffs from both branches of Service could deal directly with that office. This would imply the need for joint training on funding and budgeting issues to allow each branch to become familiar with the other's system. It would also require each component to be receptive to the other's funding and budgeting culture. Hence, cultural egos would have to be set aside. By centralizing funding, money is procured faster, funding requirements are met sooner, administrative processes are less obstructed, and both components share a common system.

One of the most significant lessons learned from 9/11 was that we must have stronger interagency partnerships with incessant and unhampered information-sharing among the different agencies at all levels of government. According to Joint Publication

mission was of a different type on a much broader, more robust, and sustained level. According to one Border Patrol supervisor, "Anytime you put two organizations together without planning, you are going to have some head butting."<sup>10</sup> The sudden formation of OJS allotted both organizations little time for preparation, acquaintance, and coordination. Without prior coordination and a solid unity of effort between them, the flow of communication becomes stifled, the sharing of information will be obstructed, and consequently interagency cooperation suffers. As with any other operation, communication is paramount, and without it the gap between organizations widens, which in turn degrades operational readiness. As the National Guard and Border Patrol became accustomed to one another, the fragmentation subsided and interagency cohesion matured.

One contributing factor to the initial breakdown in information-sharing and unity of effort was the false perception that some Border Patrol agents had of the National Guard's mission. They believed that the National Guard's role was to secure the border for the Border Patrol.<sup>11</sup> The actual mission of the National Guard was to help secure the border by providing the necessary resources to *reinforce* the Border Patrol. One of the Border Patrol's primary objectives is to "deter illegal entries through improved enforcement," and the National Guard's role was simply to *assist* in providing this enforcement for border security while the Border Patrol augmented its force.<sup>12</sup> This mistaken portrayal

in national security. Afterward, I had a more profound appreciation for the role Border Patrol agents play in enforcing border security, especially in the post-9/11 era. In any joint operation, respect for the other organization pays dividends in the long run.

Another area that contributed to the lack of information-sharing at the inception of the operation involved the structures of the task forces. Originally, these units were designated by function and included TF Diamondback for engineers, TF Raven for aviation, TF Maverick for supply and logistics, TF Gila for surveillance duty, and TF Sidewinder for Guardsmen working at Border Patrol stations. This functional arrangement of units distorted and derailed communications because agents in both the Yuma and Tucson sectors had to communicate to several commanders versus one regional commander since all the units had representation in both. As a result, there was not a direct and clear system of information-sharing between the two agencies.

Three months into the mission, Arizona headquarters altered the design of its units by eliminating Task Forces Maverick, Sidewinder, and Gila and then implementing Task Forces Yuma and Tucson to more easily coexist with the Yuma and Tucson Border Patrol sectors. The units became organized strictly around location versus function. The three units disbanded as personnel were redirected into these two units. Task Forces Raven and Diamondback remained unchanged since their areas of operation were spread throughout the Yuma and Tucson sectors.

The difference between designing units around function versus area of operations became evident. The creation of the two regional units ameliorated aspects of command and control for both the National Guard and Border Patrol. From the National Guard perspective, it improved the accountability of personnel and equipment, expedited the reception and outprocessing of Guardsmen, and eased the flow of communication from the ground up. The biggest benefit that it brought to the Border Patrol was that each sector began to communicate with one regional commander rather than several commanders. A greater sense of organization and partnership thus developed.<sup>13</sup>

There were two primary channels of communication during the operation that needed to be fused. For the Border Patrol, each sector headquarters had to commu-

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3–26, *Homeland Security*, "selected homeland defense missions will require extensive integration and synchronization and may also overlap and occur simultaneously."<sup>9</sup> The success of the Arizona operation can be contributed to the eventual integration, synchronization, and synergy of information shared among all the agencies involved.

### Interagency Trials

Initially, information-sharing and collaboration between the National Guard and Border Patrol was somewhat fragmented. Although both organizations have had interaction under the Counter Drug Program, this

of the National Guard mission kept the two organizations from instantly embracing one another, freely communicating, and ultimately uniting.

A formal introductory briefing would have given each organization the rudimentary information and education about the other. This would serve as one method of uniting the two organizations under one common cause, and it would also allow the agencies to work toward a common operational picture. Moreover, it would increase appreciation for each other's organizational culture and mission. At the start of the mission, I had only a general idea of the exact role the Border Patrol played



Texas National Guard Soldier and Border Patrol agent use detection dog to check truck for contraband at Border Patrol checkpoint

U.S. Army (Jim Greenhill)

nicate with its respective station. For the National Guard, Arizona headquarters had to communicate with the subordinate units. In addition, the two organizations had to cross-talk to stay on the same level. There were times when agents felt as if Guardsmen were hesitant in communicating with them.<sup>14</sup> In several instances, there was a gap in communication on Border Patrol channels between the respective sector and its subordinate outlying stations. There were incidents where the Guardsmen at the outlying stations possessed information and guidelines pertaining to the mission that agents at the sectors did not have. When personnel from one organization possess information that the personnel of another organization should have but do not, misconceptions and uncertainty are prone to abound, thus disrupting the spirit of cohesion.

An alternative to enhance interagency information-sharing and cooperation between the two organizations would have been to hold periodic mandatory meetings at the different Border Patrol stations. The meetings would have included both parties and could have been held daily or weekly depending on operation tempo. Mandatory meetings force both sides to talk to each other and keep one another abreast of

any operational or administrative developments.<sup>15</sup> There should be a shared situation awareness, common operating picture, and understanding among all parties involved. The primary Guardsmen in charge at each of the Border Patrol stations had important roles. Not only were they responsible

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for performing their border patrol skill set and managing the other Guardsmen at the station, but they also represented the National Guard as they constantly networked with the Border Patrol. Communication and interagency information-sharing are largely the result of solid working relationships, and these mandatory meetings would have assisted in relationship building.

At the macro level, the gap in interagency information-sharing and collaboration could have been reduced between the two organizations if each border state had a liaison officer working in the Joint Operation Center at the National Guard Headquarters in

Washington. The presence of one liaison from each of the four border states at NGB would have strengthened the common operating picture among all the organizations. Ideal liaison officers would have been individuals having experience with the operation who could bring a sense of realism to the headquarters staff to keep it from making uninformed decisions. Without them, National Guard representatives in Washington lacked a complete picture of what was transpiring on the ground and a genuine appreciation of the desert environment and the remoteness of some of the locations where the Guardsmen worked. One Border Patrol supervisor spent several months as a liaison officer at the Border Patrol headquarters in Washington and observed when he returned to Arizona that there should be rotational liaison officers from each of the four states working at the National Guard Headquarters.<sup>16</sup> After all, liaison officers from NGB rotated to the four border states and spent time in each one.

One positive lesson learned from the operation in the area of interagency collaboration was that Arizona's OJS staff maintained a solid working and interdependent relationship with the rest of the Arizona National Guard not participating in the mission. The state Adjutant General encouraged this relationship throughout the operation. From the beginning, the full-time staff supported the operation's staff as interdependence flourished between the two groups. Moreover, the mission staff sought the assistance of the full-time staff to close out the mission. This collaboration allowed any leftover operational business to be handed over to the full-time staff after the mission staff left. This congenial relationship promoted continuous information-sharing. It also prevented Guardsmen working this operation from having to fend for themselves and to enjoy the total support of the state. Although the Arizona National Guard was heavily engaged in the war on terror and other state requirements, it remained fully involved with OJS over the 2-year period.

From June 2006 to June 2008, Operation *Jump Start* achieved numerous feats. Fifty-one states and territories supported this operation as nearly 18,000 Guardsmen rotated into Arizona. The state continues to be ground zero for illegal immigration, but the success of the mission has drastically stifled the inflow. The National Guard, in partnership with the Border Patrol,

apprehended thousands of illegal immigrants, confiscated thousands of pounds of illegal narcotics, constructed miles of primary fencing and vehicle barriers, and improved miles of roads for Border Patrol vehicles—in short, doing far more than helping the Border Patrol to enforce border security. OJS set the example for future joint homeland missions, and Arizona acquired valuable lessons learned that can be applied to future joint operations. Two of these lessons learned revolved around an appreciation of the different organizational cultures between the Army and Air Force and the importance of interagency information-sharing and collaboration among agencies.

Although organizational differences between the two National Guard entities continued during OJS, the operation showed that the two cultures can be fused to create a tenable resolution for future joint operations. This mission has manifested the importance

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of having unity of effort between the two components. The need to have a mixture of Army and Air Force personnel in key leadership positions was one takeaway. The operation also revealed the need to foster joint training events in anticipation of the next joint crisis. This entails each branch learning more about the other's culture in areas such as joint and operational doctrine, personnel accountability, administrative processes, and funding and budgeting. The basic comprehension of each other's culture will save time and money and will prevent dissonance in future joint operations.

After the start of the operation, considerable growth occurred with interagency information-sharing between the National Guard and Border Patrol. Both organizations underwent growing pains, but they transcended those obstacles to become a unified team. The two organizations morphed into "one seamless transparent team," and "this relationship matured to the point where it became one team, one fight."<sup>17</sup> There is always room for improvement, and Operation *Jump Start* displayed how collaboration and interagency information-sharing are priorities in joint missions. **JFQ**

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Government Accountability Office (GAO), "Homeland Security: Information on Training New Border Patrol Agents," GAO-07-540R (Washington, DC: GAO, March 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Office of Homeland Security, *National Strategy for Homeland Security* (Washington, DC: The White House, July 2002), 23.

<sup>3</sup> Lieutenant General H. Steven Blum, ANG, "Proposed Changes to the National Guard," Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, January 31, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Author interview with Lieutenant Colonel Michael Rall, National Guard Bureau liaison officer, Phoenix, AZ, January 2, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Author interview with Chief Master Sergeant Roberto Jaramillo, Task Force Tucson senior enlisted advisor, Tucson, AZ, January 10, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Author interview with Colonel Robert Centner, commander, Arizona Operation *Jump Start*, Phoenix, AZ, January 2, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> White House, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 2006), 55.

<sup>8</sup> Author interview with Captain Andrew McCrary, Task Force Tucson administrative officer, Tucson, AZ, January 10, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> Joint Publication 3-26, *Homeland Security* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, August 2, 2005), III-26.

<sup>10</sup> Author interview with Agent Shavon Theis, Tucson Sector Border Patrol liaison officer, January 12, 2008.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Office of Border Control, *National Border Patrol Strategy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, September 2004).

<sup>13</sup> Author interview with Agent Jose Gomez, Yuma Sector Border Patrol liaison officer, January 12, 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Author interview with Staff Sergeant Seth Israel, Arizona National Guard, January 8, 2008.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Author interview with Agent Mark McKay, Tucson Sector Special Operations supervisor, November 16, 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Author interview with Colonel Philip Stemple, Director of Domestic Operations, National Guard Bureau, January 8, 2008.



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