

I Corps Perspective

FA40s and Space Assets Critical to Operational Success

Although I Corps, one of the Army's largest commands, did not participate in Operation Iraqi Freedom, its soldiers have used lessons from the conflict in recent key exercises such as Ulchi Focus Lens in Korea. I Corps commander, LTG Edward Soriano, spoke to ASJ about implementing Space assets, in present and future operations.

For the last few years, I Corps has had a Space Operations Officer (FA 40) as part of your staff. How does I Corps integrate space capabilities into its operations during exercises like the Corps Warfighter and UFL?

Our individual FA40 isn't buried in some other staff section with Space as an additional duty. His job is "all space, all the time" for us. At the Corps level he is the Subject Matter Expert who interjects space effects and capabilities into every aspect of the Corps fight. For example, during the I Corps Warfighter last fall we operated in a location with decades old maps. The FA 40 obtained current imagery of our AO that showed us what had changed over the years from what we had. Roads that had been abandoned and bridges that had been moved where of critical importance to my supply and civil affairs sections in addition to my operators. Because he used commercial imagery we could share this not only with our allies but with humanitarian organizations as well.

What is your assessment of the SATCOM support available to operational and tactical commanders?

In the larger picture, the speed of our maneuver forces combined with our increased operational tempo will require the capability to communicate over greater distances and on the move. More and more, we will have to rely on SATCOM to meet our dynamic battle command and communication needs. We must have the ability to exploit our adversary's weaknesses and vulnerabilities

(similar to what our ground forces did in OIF). This means that we must be prepared to attack deep and in a rapid manner. SATCOM is absolutely essential to command, control and communicate over vast distances. We may find that our tactical units are spread across increasingly larger distances - distances that negate the ability to communicate via terrestrial means.

Systems coming online in the future will be heavily taxed with demands from all command levels. The ability to push products to the front will be a huge challenge for a Corps commander. What is done in days at a Corps headquarters may take a maneuver Brigade commander less than an hour to execute. The ability to transmit a map with operational information must be quick otherwise it is useless in battle and wastes soldiers' time. Hundreds of mega bits of information that now take hours to download may be fine at the Corps HQ but my subordinate commands can't afford that delay.

How are space-based systems integrated and synchronized into the I Corps targeting process?

Clearly, the targeting process relies heavily on space-based communications and surveillance and reconnaissance. Our ability to reachback to higher headquarters and home station is absolutely vital to our ability to See First and Understand First. Reachback cannot be fully achieved without SATCOM. The increasing use of commercial (multi-spectral and hyper-spectral) imagery along with our use of national systems is providing the warfighter with innovative means to visualize the battlefield. Reducing sensor-to-shooter timelines, especially for time sensitive targets like SCUDs, is especially important to the I Corps team. Space is essential to compressing these timelines and being able to rapidly strike targets of opportunity. Synchronizing our battlefield systems across extended battlefield distances and complex terrain requires SATCOM. Down the road, we see the

LTG Edward Soriano, Commanding General, I Corps, hands out three-star coins to deserving soldiers after a successful field exercise. Photo reprinted courtesy I Corps



emergence of a space-based radar capability as a critical enabler to our dynamic targeting process.

Blue-force situational awareness, a key contributor to our success in OIF, is enhanced through a common relevant operating picture (CROP). How would you characterize the role of space systems in maintaining blue-force situational awareness within I Corps?

The ability to understand and know the locations of our friendly forces is a critical enabler to battlefield success. Besides the obvious benefit of reducing fratricide, blue-force situational awareness allows for an increased operational tempo and the ability to make decisions faster. Over time, this compressed decision cycle significantly impacts our adversary's warfighting ability and allows us to retain the initiative. We must work hard on integrating and synchronizing the many varied types of blue-force tracking systems that are currently being used. The upcoming Joint Blue Force Situational Awareness ACTD should make major strides in this area. Similar to battle command and communications, blue-force situational awareness will likely heavily rely on satellite communications vice terrestrial communications. As we increase our reliance on space systems and capabilities, we must also ensure that these capabilities are protected and their use is assured. Finally, this situational awareness must be extended, not only to our maneuver forces, but also to our logistical operations.

How do you see the role of space shaping future operations?

As we move from Today's Force to our Future Force, space-based capabilities will play an increasingly important role across the spectrum of operations. As space-based capabilities proliferate, U.S. forces will face adversaries that also have greater access to these prod-

ucts and services. It will be critically important that our Armed Forces maintain our superiority in space as well as on land and sea and in the air. As we try to minimize our footprint forward, reachback to centers of excellence will play a much larger role. Land warfare will continue to remain at the forefront of military operations but our ability to integrate and shape emerging space capabilities will be critical to our future successes.

During the first Gulf War we saw some space capabilities on the battlefield such as GPS, but today we are even more heavily dependent on space. We route a tremendous amount of information from the front lines back to higher headquarters. Everything from battle plans to supply requests to e-mail. Without space, we could not have our precision-guided munitions hit a building with such accuracy while protecting cultural treasures next to it.

We are moving to the point where the ability to control "threat" systems will become as important a decision as launching a massive strike on a battle front. The ability to limit what the enemy is able to see or hear is just as important on the ground as it is in space.

Space-based Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance will be the principal "eyes and ears" of commanders. This is especially true of those times early on in an operation. Our forces will succeed with that 24/7 all-weather view of the battlefield. .

The Army has always been a team and will continue to be one into the future. Our very young "space forces" are an important part of the team today and must continue to bring the joint, national and commercial space capabilities to our Army of tomorrow.