



White Paper for the DOD CIO

Assessment of United States Forces - Iraq Records and Records Management Activities

**Joint Staff Secretariat
Information Management Division
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Executive Summary

This Joint Staff Assessment of USF-I Records and Records Management Activities was a continuation of a recent comprehensive approach to the records management oversight responsibility assigned to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) by the Office of the Secretary of Defense in DOD Directive 5015.2.¹ With the drawdown of military operations in Iraq it is critical that records of the United States' military operations and military activities are captured and maintained in accordance with governing instructions. Therefore, in the late fall of 2009 the Joint Staff announced its intention to conduct an assessment of USF-I records and USF-I records management activities. The purpose of the assessment was to ensure that USF-I in-theater war records are maintained in accordance with applicable governing mandates (as listed in the reference section of this document). In addition to compliance, the DoD is mandated by law to safeguard its wartime records.

In April 2010 the Joint Staff team assessed the status of records and records management activities underway at USF-I and made onsite recommendations to ensure the security, integrity, and accessibility of operational and historically valuable USF-I records. The Assessment Team estimates that at the time of the assessment USF-I had 20 to 50 terabytes of information (or two to five times the amount of data held in all the books catalogued in the Library of Congress). Most of this data was unstructured, had little or no metadata and lay unmanaged.

The areas which require USCENTCOM's immediate and sustained attention are:

- Garnering the necessary sustained support in USCENTCOM to identify, migrate and preserve USF-I data.
- Instituting a programmatic approach to data capture and storage, including a USCENTCOM program manager dedicated to the task. This is necessary as long term e-discovery and FOIA search and retrieval capabilities need to be for this information
- Engaging with USJFCOM to ensure that units preparing to deploy are provided with requisite information management training prior to entering theater
- Coordinating with MILDEPS on lines of responsibility and authority for management of theater data, with an eye to possibly redrawing these lines of optimal data capture
- The application of lessons learned from the USF-I assessment at the earliest opportunity to ISAF – Afghanistan. This includes indentifying information management POCs, establishing and promoting information and records management policy and guidance, conducting follow up activities to ensure that contingency, operational and historical information is preserved.

The reason why the military stores information and collects the knowledge which is produced is not to reflect reality but to manipulate it. For the combatant commands and the Services, failure to properly manage information can lead to the failure of the mission.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The primary purpose of the Joint Staff Records Management Program Assessment of USF-I Records was to ensure the preservation of records created/maintained during armed conflict. In addition, the accomplishment of this assessment was to set the stage for DOD to:

- Establish an Operational Records Archives for the Joint Staff and MILDEPS
- Create a records management collection plan to collect, protect, preserve and transport records of armed conflict to INCONUS and to ensure that the business and historical requirements are met for future military warriors
- Ensure that correct taxonomies are being used on all records
- Determine the scope (quantity and format) of records being collected
- Determine ownership of records, OSD, JS, Service Components
- Determine how to remove the records from the AOR and return them to the United States, to include consideration of transporting records in current format or scanning them in country and destroying them onsite
- Determine where additional records of armed conflict may be located INCONUS or other areas outside the AOR
- Ensure that unit commanders are in compliance with all governing laws and directives
- Determine if web-base archives can be created to house records from the AOR
- Use newly established records of armed conflict records collection plan to collect records from Afghanistan and other future deployments or conflicts
- Communicate with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) our intent to preserve and protect records of armed conflict

1.2 Background

Following concerns over the weak status of COCOM RMPs in the aftermath of the first Gulf War, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) tasked the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with oversight of all COCOM RMPs. It required the Chairman to report back to OSD on program status but did not provide a report format or specific periodicity requirement. With the prosecution of Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF/OIF) and the continued drawdown of personnel operating under USF-I, the appropriate capture and preservation of historically important information is a major concern. In August 2008, MNF -I's (the precursor to USF -I) SharePoint portal suffered a catastrophic failure with a consequent loss of record material. Since then, plans and activities by USF-I to capture records in a compliant repository have been underway, but with minimal guidance and resources to meet requirements. The result is that not all USF-I's records are currently kept in a compliant DOD 5015.2-STD repository. Other records remain on shared drives, desktop platforms and even in paper format with little or no resources or guidance for their proper maintenance. Of critical interest, operational records are kept in non-compliant Focal Point, ACCM, SPECAT and SCI channels/repositories.

In September 2009 the Joint Staff sponsored a Joint Staff/Combatant Command Records Management Conference at USNORTHCOM. In addition to the attendance by COCOM records officers, and by invitation from the Joint Staff, NARA sent representatives to express its concern for the proper management of in-theater war records. The Joint Staff anticipates that at least one member from NARA will accompany the assessment team under an "observer" status. In addition to the proper management of records, a second objective of the assessment team is to create a template collection plan for records of the USF-I armed conflict which can further be used during other deployments (to include Afghanistan). Analysis and research of this rich data will provide improved deployment/business processes for future warriors. There is no better repository for operational archives than the official records from armed conflicts.

2 Concept of Operations for Assessment

2.1 Assessment Team Roles and Responsibilities

The governing authorities for the assessment comes from CJCSI 5760.01, "Records Management Policy for the Joint Staff and Combatant Commands" series, which describes organizational records management roles and responsibilities; and CJCSM 5760.01A, "Joint Staff and Combatant Command Records Management Manual: Volume I - Procedures," current version, which goes into further detail regarding processes and requirements. For this assessment program, the following roles and responsibilities apply:

The assessment team conducted visits across most of the major organizations within USF-I headquarters from 05 Apr 2010 through 09 Apr 2010. Most visits were conducted at the O-5 and O-6 level. The meetings were held at various locations within the Victory Base Complex. Video teleconferences were held with organizations housed at the International Zone due to the security situation at the time of the visit. The assessment team was made up of the following organizations:

Joint Staff:

- Conducted RMP oversight IAW DOD Directive 5015.2 on behalf of the CJCS and the Joint Staff Assessment of USF-I Records Concept of Operations (CONOPS)
- Worked with USCENTCOM to plan the details of the assessment
- Ensured compliance of the Joint Staff and USCENTCOM with all applicable Records Management laws and directives
- Worked with the Records Manager at USCENTCOM to develop a comprehensive RMP improvement plan as a way forward and as a basis for further Joint Staff oversight.

USCENTCOM:

- Ensured compliance with all applicable Records Management laws and directives
- Made arrangements to receive the JS assessment team
- Determined which personnel at the command should be present for in/out briefs and advised Joint Staff IMD accordingly
- Worked with Joint Staff Records assessment team to thoroughly assess the condition of USF-I and to developed a comprehensive program improvement plan as a way forward following the assessment and as a basis for further oversight by the Joint Staff

MILDEP Records Manager Representatives from US Army (RMDA) and Department of Navy:

- Conducted RMP oversight IAW DOD Directive 5015.2 and MILDEP directives on behalf of the MILDEP Secretary
- Worked with Joint Staff and USCENTCOM to plan the details of the assessment
- Served as functional representative for MILDEP records management issues, to include assisting in the coordination of MILDEP equities
- Ensured compliance with all applicable MILDEP Records Management laws and directives
- Assisted Joint Staff and USCENTCOM in submitting a this CJCS-endorsed report to ASD(NII)/CIO and MILDEP CIO offices on the status of the USF-I records (with information copy provided to USCENTCOM, MILDEPS and NARA)
- Worked with MILDEP Admin Officers within USF-I to develop a comprehensive RMP improvement plan as a way forward and as a basis for further Joint Staff oversight.
- Determined which MILDEP personnel at the command should be present for in/out briefs and advised Joint Staff IMD accordingly

National Archives:

- Two individuals for the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) assisted the assessment team

3 Major Findings

- No RM draw-down plan in place at USCENTCOM/USF-I at the time of assessment
- Volume, location, size and format of USF-I records was unknown
- Guidance on records capture requirements not fully implemented or disseminated (this include information on email capture, training, file plans, cleaning out folders, what is a record? etc.).
- Meridio project under resourced and poorly managed
- In spite of published issuance, actual lines of demarcation between Joint and Service records/RM activities unclear
- Large gaps in records collections exists, resulting in the failure to capture significant operational and historical active

4 Recommendations

4.1 High-level Recommendations

The following recommendations require a significant and sustain effort by USCENTCOM to ensure the necessary sustained support to identify, migrate and preserve USF-I data. At issue is roughly 50 terabytes of USF-I information which must be managed during drawdown in Iraq:

- Institute a programmatic approach to data capture and storage, including a program manager dedicated to the task. Keeping in mind that long term e-Discovery and FOIA search and retrieval capabilities need to be built for this information
- Engage with USJFCOM to insure that units preparing to deploy are provided with requisite information management training prior to entering theater

- Coordinate with MILDEPS on lines of authority and responsibility for management of theater data, and look into redrawing those lines for optimal capture
- Immediately apply lessons learned from this assessment to Afghanistan War effort. This includes identifying information management POCs, establishing and promoting the necessary policy and guidance, and conducting follow on activities (as needed) to ensure the war's operational and historical information is preserved.

4.2 Recommendations accomplished at the time of this report

At the time of the assessment, the Team recommended the following activities to commence. We are happy to learn that, for the most part, the following short term recommendations have been acted upon and have either been completed or are in the process of completion:

- USCENTCOM guidance and draft memo provided by 16 April 2010
- J6 team in coordination with the Directorates develop index of records repositories including size, location, etc.
- USCENTCOM lead visit by 15 May 2010 to assist on-going RM activities
- E-mail: implement immediate capture of O-7 and above and key O-6 message

4.3 Recommendations needing further action:

- USCENTCOM to provide dedicated PM to ensure capture and migration of record data (scope to include Plan of Action and Milestones for use of Meridio and TRIM for migration effort)
- USCENTCOM to send qualified/trained civilians, units of historians, contractors and/or NCOs to USF-I to assist with RM/IM drawdown activities
- USF-I to capture and preserve key personnel work products/.pst files that are critical prior to their departure from theater
- USCENTCOM identify clear lines of authority for in theater war records
- Pre-deployment RM training provided before units go into theater (RIP/TOA, War Colleges, etc.)
- Periodic IG inspection for theater engagement
- USF-I work with USCENTCOM to establish policies and procedures for information capture, sharing and retention
- USF-I/USCENTCOM ensure Office of Security Cooperation has RM in place by June 2011
- DoD develop enterprise-wide plans, policies and procedures for in-theater records management activities
- DoD ensure all IT systems/networks have RM solutions built in up front (or in next spiral delivery) and with clear chain of command structure
- DoD provide clear guidance on capture of Web 2.0 and other media (i.e. phone records)
- JS Assessment Team members work to secure DoD enterprise-wide agreement of lines of authority and responsibility for in-theater records

5 References

- (1) Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1220, "Federal Records-General," Subpart B, "Agency Records Management Programs," current edition
- (2) Title 44, United States Code, Chapters 21, 29, 31, 33, and 35
- (3) DOD Directive 5015.2, 06 March 2000, "DOD Records Management Program"
- (4) DOD 5015.2-STD, June 2002, "Design Criteria Standard for Electronic Records Management Software Applications
- (5) CJCSI 5701.01, "Records Management Policy for the Joint Staff and Combatant Commands"
- (6) CJCSM 5760.01, Volume I, "Joint Staff and Combatant Command Records Management Manual: Volume I - Procedures,"
- (7) CJCSM 5760.01, Volume II, "Joint Staff and Combatant Command Records Management Manual: Volume II - Disposition Schedule," current version

ⁱ In 2008, the Joint Staff conducted Staff Assist Visits to all the combatant commands, the result of which was a White Paper to the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Networks and Information Integration)/Chief Information Officer (ASD(NII)/CIO) that listed recommendations for program improvement. Among the recommendations made to USCENTCOM in the 2008 White Paper were that "As CENTCOM oversees an AOR in which war is in progress, economy of resources is self-evident. However, CENTCOM cannot fail to meet the stringent requirement for managing records to a high standard to protect the interests of the command and the US Government, to document lessons-learned, as well as to comply with federal statute and DOD policy." And "Apply the [USCENTCOM headquarters records management requirements] to offices/functions of component or subordinate commands. Note: Fund CRM travel to subordinate commands to conduct mandated oversight." The White Paper further noted "the need for cooperation between CENTCOM and JFCOM to train units deploying to theater in proper RM procedures was identified and is being addressed."