

# Is NAVSO Organized and Staffed To Do Its Job?

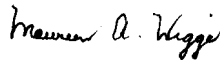
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## Introduction and summary

The Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command (COMUS-NAVSO), asked CNA for help.<sup>1</sup> This new command, the Navy component command to U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), was established in February 2000. The staff was cobbled together from various existing commands, which it in part replaced, and no official manning review was involved in its inception. The focus of our study was on this question: Is NAVSO organized and staffed to do its job?

To answer this question, we had to understand

- NAVSO's job
- NAVSO's organization, with a focus on its relationships in the administrative/Navy chain of control
- NAVSO's staff.

As background to these efforts, we needed to look at the history of Navy component commands in the SOUTHCOM AOR. This work produced insights into the genesis of NAVSO and the form it took.

In looking at NAVSO's job, we examined the command's doctrinal responsibilities, missions, and functions. We looked closely at its relationship with Commander in Chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet (CINCLANTFLT) and researched how that relationship helped or hindered the command's ability to do its job.

We also compared the staffing of NAVSO with that of its predecessor organizations and its current peers. We examined the potential for information technology to contribute to the workings of the small

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1. The acronym NAVSO is used instead of NAVSOUTH to prevent confusion with the NATO command NAVSOUTH. Similarly, we use USCINCSO, not CINCSOUTH, for U.S. Commander in Chief, Southern Command.

staff, and we laid out some alternative structures for the command. This paper documents our analysis.

## Findings

### COMUSNAVSO's job and staff

COMUSNAVSO's responsibilities in doctrine as Navy component commander (NCC) to a geographic unified combatant commander are identical to those of the NCCs to the other geographic CINCs. In addition, COMUSNAVSO serves as the senior Navy representative to Puerto Rico. Tasking from USCINCSO has increased since he received a dedicated NCC located in the AOR, but the staff dedicated by the Navy to the job has not grown. In fact, our analysis indicates that fewer Navy personnel are dedicated to the region now than before the stand-up of NAVSO.

COMUSNAVSO's staff is significantly smaller than those of his closest peers, COMUSNAVCENT and CINCUSNAVEUR. This imbalance is not without cause. The scope of COMUSNAVSO's responsibilities is not as great, because fewer Navy forces deploy to the SOUTHCOM AOR and the threat they face is also at a lower level. In addition, COMUSNAVSO's command is new, and his unified CINC has acquired the waters surrounding Latin America and the Caribbean only in the past five years. Thus, USSOUTHCOM's maritime nature is only beginning to be recognized, as is COMUSNAVSO's existence as one of only five NCCs to geographic CINCs.

At least some of NAVSO's challenges are due to the newness of the command; however, COMUSNAVSO is under-staffed given the missions he is tasked to perform and the extent of the AOR.

### COMUSNAVSO'S organization

COMUSNAVSO is currently what we term an "echelon 2-1/2" command. That is, in the Navy chain, he reports to the CNO through CINCLANTFLT. This unique arrangement has proven awkward at times, and underlines COMUSNAVSO's status as the junior, two-star NCC.



## Potential for information technology

Modest investments in information technology may help the small staff operate more effectively, but additional N6 billets may be needed to take full advantage of the potential of IT.<sup>2</sup>

## Recommendations

We offer the following recommendations to enable COMUSNAVSO to do his job in the operational and administrative chains of command.

### **Make COMUSNAVSO an echelon-2 command with clarified relationship to CINCLANTFLT**

We recommend that COMUSNAVSO report directly to the CNO as do the other NCCs. For COMUSNAVSO to represent the needs of his AOR with the same effectiveness as the NCCs to the other geographic CINCs, he also needs similar status within the Navy hierarchy. This status might be conferred by making COMUSNAVSO a three-star billet or double-hatting COMUSNAVSO as Commander, U.S. Fourth Fleet.

If COMUSNAVSO does not receive a third star or a Fourth Fleet designation, it remains crucial that he be included with his peers when they meet as NCCs or as numbered fleets, as he fulfills both of these functions in his AOR.

Further, we recommend that reachback support from CINCLANTFLT continue, but on the basis of a support relationship established by the CNO.

### **Align relationship with Commander, Fleet Forces Command**

It is important that input from all the NCCs be received by the new Commander, Fleet Forces Command, when he puts together the fleet's integrated requirements. Current documentation includes

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2. A detailed treatment of IT requirements at NAVSO is in [1].

only the three four-star NCCs in the process [2, p. 74]. Aligning this relationship so that COMUSNAVSO's requirements are incorporated, along with those of all the other NCCs, is crucial. The process should be separate from the reachback support provided to COMUSNAVSO by CINCLANTFLT

## **Address critical staff shortages**

COMUSNAVSO has by far the smallest staff of the NCCs. Here we note two areas that cry out for more billets; other shortages exist throughout the command.

### **Build up the N3 department**

Travel demands and representational requirements drain the small N3 department. Besides the N3 itself, the Operational Command Center is very short-staffed. Because the staff stands watch 24/7, it requires additional personnel to attain quality-of-life standards and to ensure appropriate levels of training and attention to watch duty. This is, after all, the Navy's operational command center in the vast SOUTHCOM AOR.

### **Provide COMUSNAVSO with an N8**

If the Navy is to support USCINCSO commensurate with the requirements, COMUSNAVSO needs an N8. Requirements need to be articulated by someone who is knowledgeable not only of the Navy's PPBS system, but also of the needs of COMUSNAVSO as NCC to USSOUTHCOM. We suggest a staff of two: an O-6 for representation and a civilian for continuity and expertise.

## **Improve communications with CINCLANTFLT**

For reachback to work better, more continuous liaison with CINCLANTFLT staff is needed. We suggest establishing a new billet--NAVSO liaison officer to CINCLANTFLT--to make this relationship work more smoothly and effectively for all concerned.

## **Retain Puerto Rico detachments**

Whether the Navy leaves Vieques or not, staff will still be needed for liaison with the Government of Puerto Rico.



# Evolution of Navy componentency in Latin America and the Caribbean

In this section, we briefly outline the recent history of Navy componentency in the SOUTHCOM AOR, ending with the stand-up of COMUSNAVSO in February 2000. An appendix gives a fuller treatment of the evolution and organization of Navy commands in the region, dating back to the 19th century.

The Navy has organized and provided forces for operations in the region for almost 200 years. A continuous record of naval presence exists from the organization of the distant stations in the early part of the 19th century through today. The Navy organized to provide this regional support in accordance with the practical needs of the time.

## The Cold War

During the Cold War, the Navy provided Navy component commanders to the unified CINCs that exercised regional responsibilities. For purposes of this study, these were USSOUTHCOM and USACOM.<sup>3</sup> Until the mid-1990s priority went to support for USACOM. USACOM was responsible for the major maritime area both regionally and across the Atlantic. World War II experience had proved that the Caribbean/Gulf of Mexico region was the primary sea line of communications (SLOC) to support Europe. The supplies and petroleum that would be necessary for NATO to win a war with the Warsaw Pact would pass through the region. From a Navy perspective the need for unity of command across the entire maritime region was obvious. For

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3. By USSOUTHCOM, we include the predecessor unified command Caribbean Command (1947-1963). By USACOM, we include predecessor organization LANTCOM (1947-1983). Until 1972, Pacific Command (PACOM) also had regional responsibilities in the Eastern Pacific.

this reason, Navy component support in the region was directed primarily toward USACOM.

## After the Cold War

The end of the Cold War changed the equation. The major potential maritime threat was not to the sea lines to Europe; rather, it was from drugs transiting sea and air lines of communications emanating from South America. Unity of command was still necessary, but now the threat and major SLOC were different. A change to the Unified Command Plan (UCP) in 1995 recognized this shift by assigning the maritime areas around South America and in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico to USSOUTHCOM.

Changes in the UCP were not the only events of the mid-1990s to affect naval componentcy. Drawdown of naval forces following the Cold War, coupled with continuing worldwide presence requirements, strained Atlantic Fleet resources.<sup>4</sup> Counterdrug deployments were conducted by “pulsing” ships for short (4- to 6-week) deployments between 6-month battle group deployments to the Mediterranean and/or Persian Gulf.

### Creation of the Western Hemisphere Group

Reduced ship numbers and increased deployments were addressed by fleet-wide reorganization of operational assets in 1995. As part of this reorganization, the Atlantic Fleet created an entirely new entity in the Navy chain of command—the Western Hemisphere Group—on 1 September 1995. This new organization was assigned 16 ships (Aegis cruisers, destroyers, and frigates) with a primary mission of conducting the counterdrug, UNITAS, presence, and contingency missions in the Latin American region.

The Western Hemisphere Group was not created in response to near-simultaneous UCP changes. Decisions were largely driven by Navy priorities related to responsibilities for organizing, training, and

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4. Navy-wide surface warship levels went from 212 in 1989 to 128 in 1995: a 40 percent reduction.

equipping forces and not by unified CINC priorities. WESTHEMGRU, however, quickly assumed attributes of componency.

**Western Hemisphere Group becomes a “functional” Navy component commander**

Establishment of the Western Hemisphere Group in 1995 resolved the issue of sourcing Atlantic Fleet (but not Pacific Fleet) surface combatant ships for routine Latin American regional operations. It did not resolve Navy regional command relationships. Four major commands remained directly involved in Navy Latin American operations:

- CINCLANTFLT remained the Navy component commander for both U.S. Southern Command and U.S. Atlantic Command.
- COMWESTHEMGRU was given Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) responsibilities for 13-16 surface combatant ships focused on providing support for counterdrug operations and UNITAS.
- USCOMSOLANT, located in Puerto Rico and reporting directly to CINCLANTFLT, retained primary responsibility for planning and conducting the JCS-directed UNITAS exercise with Latin American navies.<sup>5</sup>
- COMSECONDFLT was responsible for Service-specific training, joint training, contingency operations (as CJTF 120), and operational control and scheduling of Atlantic Fleet ships operating in regional waters.

Over the next 3 years, Navy componency issues and command arrangements involving these commands were addressed in a variety of ways. The Western Hemisphere Group was at the center of these issues and arrangements.

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5. USCOMSOLANT was also responsible for planning and conduct of the West African Training Cruise. He also retained operational and planning responsibilities under the TF 84 organization.

From a component standpoint, COMWESTHEMGRU assumed ever-increasing responsibilities. The appendix tracks these shifts in detail. In 1996, COMWESTHEMGRU was designated NAVSOUTH (Forward) for USSOUTHCOM. Additional operational adjustments in 1998 further solidified COMWESTHEMGRU's functional component when the command was assigned operational control (OPCON) of attached surface and air assets operating in the SOUTHCOM AOR. By the end of the summer of 1998, COMWESTHEMGRU appears to have been exercising almost all Southern Command Navy component functions. For routine support, the command was, in all but name, the naval component commander. Reporting to CINCLANTFLT, COMWESTHEMGRU planned engagement and exercises, reviewed plans, monitored events, conducted training, directed deployments, and exercised OPCON over deploying units supporting USSOUTHCOM. What COMWESTHEMGRU did not do were those Service component commander functions related to planning, programming, and budgeting and other Service-unique functions.

## Establishment of COMUSNAVSO

By early 1999, both CINCLANTFLT and the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV) were exploring options to provide a dedicated, full-time, Navy component commander to USSOUTHCOM. OPNAV concerns centered on a desire to have a full-time Navy advisor to the unified commander and a full-time "senior" naval officer representing Service interests in Puerto Rico [3].<sup>6</sup>

OPNAV recognized that significant Navy facilities related to both training and operations in support of Southern Command were located in Puerto Rico. Preserving access to these facilities was impor-

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6. Options presented to the CNO included retaining the USCOM-SOLANT flag billet, relocating it to Mayport, and retaining the flag officer as an operational deploying commander. The option approved by the CNO included assigning the deputy COMWESTHEMGRU with operational responsibilities and shifting ISIC responsibilities to Commander Destroyer Squadrons 6 and 14. These were modified before presentation to USCINCSO after discussions between OPNAV and CINCLANTFLT staffs.



tant. Since the disestablishment of COMFAIRCARIB in 1995, no full-time Navy flag officer had been present on the island.<sup>7</sup> OPNAV, using the model of Commander Naval Forces Marianas in the Pacific, intended to again provide full-time flag liaison to the Government of Puerto Rico for civil-military matters. If possible, OPNAV also believed that the Navy flag officer should have central coordinating authority for joint matters [3].

Note that OPNAV's interest in establishing COMUSNAVSO in Puerto Rico pre-dated the 19 April 1999 death of security guard David Sanes Rodriguez in a bombing accident at Vieques. This incident set in train a series of events limiting access to the inner range at the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility on Vieques. Events following the accident did, however, affect the focus, structure, and organization of COMUSNAVSO. These events also appear to have hastened decision making related to establishment of the command.

In May 1999, the CNO presented USCINCSO with a proposal that would:

- Redesignate USCOMSOLANT as COMUSNAVSO
- Upgrade the billet to two stars
- Assign COMUSNAVSO as Commander Task Force 40
- Assign COMUSNAVSO additional duty as "USSOUTHCOM Representative to Puerto Rico" responsible for liaison with the Commonwealth
- Assign COMUSNAVSO as USCINCSO Navy component commander.
- Redesignate COMWESTHEMGRU as COMNAVSURFGRU Two, a one-star billet reporting operationally and administratively to CINCLANTFLT and under a dual hat as Deputy to COMUSNAVSO [4].

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7. COMSOLANT, while based in Puerto Rico, was usually absent performing UNITAS duties.

USCINCSO concurred with all recommendations except the “USSOUTHCOM Representative Puerto Rico” designation. COMUSNAVSO was established on 17 February 2000 as a major headquarters activity [5]. The staff was cobbled together from COMWESTHEMGRU and USCOMSOLANT staffs and received reachback support from staff within CINCLANTFLT. No formal manning review was conducted.

The new command shed most of the administrative functions that had belonged to COMWESTHEMGRU, ceding ISIC responsibilities to the new COMNAVSURFGRU Two. It assumed other engagement functions belonging to CINCLANTFLT/CNO. However, COMUSNAVSO shares some of the same attributes as the earlier arrangement between COMWESTHEMGRU and CINCLANTFLT. Although a “full-time” Navy component commander, COMUSNAVSO does not have claimant responsibilities. Like COMWESTHEMGRU, COMUSNAVSO must reach back to CINCLANTFLT for this and some other functions [6-7].

## Summary

**Why COMUSNAVSO?** COMUSNAVSO was established to provide a dedicated NCC to USCINCSO.

**Why now?** Its establishment was a logical consequence of the transfer of water to USCINCSO in 1996 and 1997. Events in Vieques hastened its establishment and confirmed the decision to locate the command in Puerto Rico.

**Why the form it took?** Its small size and operational focus can be traced to defense budget reductions and strict limits placed by Congress on major headquarters activities (MHAs). Two separate UICs were established to handle liaison with Puerto Rico. These activities do not come under the MHA restrictions.

In the next section, we outline COMUSNAVSO’s responsibilities.

# COMUSNAVSO's job

In this section, we delineate COMUSNAVSO's role in doctrine, outline the command's operational missions and administrative responsibilities, and discuss some grey areas where differing opinions exist as to who is responsible for what.

## Role in doctrine

Joint doctrine specifies the job description of a unified CINC's service component commanders. Joint Pub 0-2, *Unified Action Armed Forces (UNAAF)*, lists the following functions of a Service component commander at the CINC level:

- Recommend employment of Service forces
- Accomplish assigned operational missions
- Select and nominate Service units for assignment to other subordinate forces
- Conduct joint training
- Inform CINC of Service plans for changes in logistic support
- Develop program and budget requests
- Inform CINC of program and budget decisions [8].

Note that the last two functions would normally be assigned to an N8 department (Resources and Requirements), but COMUSNAVSO has no N8; these functions are performed largely through reachback to CINCLANTFLT. We will discuss this arrangement in depth later in this paper.

*UNAAB* also lists these functions of a Service component commander at any level, joint task force through unified CINC:

- Internal administration and discipline
- Training in Navy doctrine, tactics, and techniques
- Logistics functions
- Service intelligence matters.

The NAVSO staff does perform the first of these functions. They have little responsibility for the second function, as forces deploy to the theater already trained, and this situation is reflected in the absence of an N7 department (Training) on the NAVSO staff. Logistics functions are primarily performed by CTF 43, located in Mayport, Florida. The NAVSO staff has a small N2 department to handle Navy intelligence requirements.

## Operational missions

COMUSNAVSO reports to USCINCSO in the operational chain of command. His main role in the operational chain can be summed up as the “single point of contact for operational Navy matters in the SOUTHCOM AOR [7].” COMUSNAVSO exercises operational control (OPCON) of attached forces in his hat as CTF 40.

He has a major role in theater engagement, primarily as CTF 138, his hat in UNITAS. UNITAS is a JCS-mandated, major combined naval exercise conducted annually with Latin American and other navies. Other operational Navy engagement activities include Teamwork (Chile), SIFOREX (Peru), and New Horizons (Caribbean). Engagement activity also includes a large shiprider program, Operational Naval Committee meetings with most regional navies, and support for a variety of CINC exercises.

In addition, he exercises OPCON of Navy forces that are under the tactical control of Joint Interagency Task Force East (JIATF-East), which performs counter-drug missions. COMUSNAVSO was given expanded responsibility in June 2000 as USSOUTHCOM’s coordinating authority for the maritime functional area for the counterdrug mission.

COMUSNAVSO is also responsible for responding to crises in the SOUTHCOM AOR, and for providing antiterrorism/force protection (AT/FP) guidance and oversight to all Navy units in the region. All units in the SOUTHCOM AOR report TACON to COMUSNAVSO for AT/FP, regardless of who has OPCON. To perform this function, the command must have advance knowledge and tracking of units deploying to and transiting through the AOR. This responsibility is not small; over 200 USN and USNS ships transit the Panama Canal annually, and a large number of Atlantic fleet ships perform large-scale exercises at the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility (AFWTF) in Puerto Rico and surrounding waters.

## Service responsibilities

In the Service chain of command that runs from the Chief of Naval Operations, the component commander has responsibilities for administration and support of Navy units and personnel. In this chain, COMUSNAVSO reports to the CNO through CINCLANTFLT, an arrangement that will be discussed in detail later in this paper.

These administrative and support responsibilities include:

- Organization of forces
- Personnel management
- Unit logistics
- Individual and unit training
- Readiness
- Discipline.

COMUSNAVSO is unique among Navy component commanders in that he is not responsible for the bases in his AOR. Rather, the bases have remained under the administrative control of CINCLANTFLT through Navy Region Southeast (NRSE), based in Jacksonville, FL. Commander, NRSE, and the commanders of the bases in the region—Naval Stations Roosevelt Roads, PR, and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; and AFWTF (part of which is on the island of Vieques, PR)—report additional duty (ADDU) to COMUSNAVSO.

A newer activity, the Forward Operating Location (FOL) in Comalapa, El Salvador, is under the administrative and operational control of COMUSNAVSO. The FOL is one of four airfields in the AOR that are used by U.S. aircraft flying counterdrug missions.<sup>8</sup>

## Bones of contention

The recent history of Navy componentcy in the SOUTHCOM AOR has resulted in a number of areas in which the question, “Who’s in charge?” remains at issue. These areas of disagreement stem from the tension between USCINCSO and CINCLANTFLT, who used to be the component commander and whose unified CINC used to own the waters now belonging to USCINCSO. We describe some of the issues, many of which may be traced to COMUSNAVSO’s newness and the historic lack of water in USSOUTHCOM’s AOR.

### Operational control (OPCON)

#### **Routine**

As noted above, many Navy units in the region do not change operational control (CHOP) to USCINCSO when they cross the boundary into the AOR. Most of these are Atlantic Fleet units that train at AFWTF; while in the region, however, they often make port calls in the vicinity. Other units that operate in the AOR but do not CHOP include MINEWARCOM assets and submarines.

Additional units transit the AOR, and the issue of who should have OPCON of them has not been fully resolved. For example, in fall 2001, USS *Nimitz* circumnavigated South America as it changed homeport from Norfolk to San Diego following a refueling complex overhaul (RCOH). *Nimitz* is the first of its class to undergo the RCOH; these transits will continue as other West Coast carriers take their turn at the Newport News shipyard. USCINCSO believes that the opportunities for engagement that the transits represent should be utilized under his OPCON. CINCPACFLT and CINCLANTFLT, the Navy components that transfer ADCON of the carriers between them, have

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8. The other FOLs are Air Force activities.

expressed different opinions. After much discussion, OPCON was transferred to USCINCSO for the transit. Whether this precedent will apply in the future remains uncertain.

These types of situations can be traced to USSOUTHCOM's historic lack of control over the waters surrounding Latin America and the Caribbean. CINCLANTFLT's investment in training facilities in Puerto Rico and previous role as the Navy component to USSOUTHCOM are factors that affect USCINCSO's ability to gain OPCON of Navy units and COMUSNAVSO'S ability to exercise it for the CINC.

### **Contingencies**

A further area of uncertainty is the identity of the Navy warfighter and the role of COMUSNAVSO in a major contingency in the AOR. USCINCSO does not predesignate commanders of joint task forces (CJTfEs) or commanders of maritime component commands (CMCCs) in his concept plans for contingencies. Opinions differ as to the role that COMUSNAVSO would play in a contingency. The previous USCINCSO, General Peter Pace, did not view a warfighting role as appropriate for his Service component commanders. Rather, he would have designated appropriate force commanders to fill those roles. In his view, the Service component commanders have the responsibility to look after the entire theater, and their focus must not be narrowed to a single contingency.

In a major contingency, then, a three-star numbered fleet commander might become CJTF or CMCC. For this, among other reasons, General Pace believed all his Service component commanders should be three-star officers. The Marine Corps and Air Force component commanders are three-star generals; the Navy and Army provide two-star component commanders at this time.

### **Bases**

COMUSNAVSO appears to be the only Navy component commander who does not control the Navy bases in his AOR. Once again, this is a vestige of past command relationships and AOR boundaries. As a small, operationally focused staff, NAVSO is by design not "burdened" with administrative matters such as bases. Rather,

CINCLANTFLT has retained the bases, which host a mix of Title 10 and operational functions and commands.

AFWTF is the clearest case of an activity that performs the Service function of training; Navy forces under the COCOM of JFCOM and the OPCON of CINCLANTFLT perform battle group training there. Roosevelt Roads hosts a mix of administrative and operational functions, both Navy and other Service. The base is home to two of USSOUTHCOM's component commands (NAVSO and Special Operations Forces, Southern Command) and hosts Camp Moscrip, home of the deployed Seabee battalion; provides facilities to aircraft operating in counter-drug missions; and provides services to Navy vessels in the AOR on a variety of Service and operational missions.

Since closure of Atlantic fleet refresher training operations in 1995, the Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, has been more clearly operational in nature. It has been used for counter-drug and migrant missions, both now the purview of USCINCSO. It currently houses detention facilities for prisoners from Afghanistan. Even while the bases remain relevant operationally, however, they appear to be losing their value in supporting Title 10 functions. AFWTF's future is uncertain, and the recent Congressional decision to start a new round of base closings does not bode well for these bases that are not within the 50 states.

The FOL is a different matter. Although its operational value is clear, its administration has been complex, split between COMUSNAVSO, who has OPCON and ADCON, and CINCLANTFLT, who was the Navy component commander at the FOL's inception and hence has been involved in its planning and start-up.

## Seabees

Another friction point between the operational commanders and CINCLANTFLT is OPCON of the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion deployed to Naval Station Roosevelt Roads. Once again, this is a case of the forces remaining with the prior component commander—CINCLANTFLT—and being unique among the AORs. Seabees in U.S. European Command, for example, routinely CHOP to



the CINC upon entering the AOR, whereas USCINCSO must request change of OPCON for specific operations as they come up.

## Other matters

### **Inter-American Naval Telecommunications Network**

Another anomaly in the AOR is the chain of command for the Inter-American Naval Telecommunications Network (IANTN), a classified communications network for the Interamerican Naval Conference, which comprises the Navy Chiefs of the members of the Organization of American States. Unique in the world, IANTN maintains a permanent Secretariat, headed by the commander of the Naval Telecommunications Station at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads. Individuals from other member navies rotate through the headquarters, which is under the control of, and funded by, the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations.

### **Liaison officers**

In another remnant from the old command structure, liaison officers (LNOs) from seven Latin American navies remain at CINCLANTFLT. COMUSNAVSO also has liaison officers, but at a more junior level and from only two countries. It may be difficult for COMUSNAVSO to convince the navies of his AOR that he is the “single point of contact for operational Navy matters” when the more senior liaison officers are in Norfolk, with a different command. It is believed, however, that the LNOs to CINCLANTFLT prefer that posting because it is where the “ships, shopping, and schools” are. Convincing LNOs who want to work with the U.S. Navy to choose Puerto Rico may be difficult. One suggestion for handling this situation is to create a cadre of junior LNOs to COMUSNAVSO, to complement the more senior level at CINCLANTFLT. Ideally, each country would provide an LNO to both commands. This type of system would enable COMUSNAVSO to forge strong relationships with the navies in the AOR and preclude misunderstandings about the identity of the U.S. Navy component commander in the theater.

## Wrap-up

Many of the issues discussed in this section can be traced to the youth of NAVSO. The command is less than 2 years old, and many years' worth of tradition weigh heavily on Navy arrangements in the AOR. The waters in the AOR passed to USSOUTHCOM only in the past 5 years. We believe that many of these issues will be settled naturally as NAVSO becomes increasingly able to take over the responsibilities of NCC in the theater. Other issues threaten to remain contentious, however. Later in the paper, we suggest a change in organization that may help in NAVSO's maturation.

In the next section, we look at COMUSNAVSO's staff and its size relative to those at predecessor commands and two other Navy component commands.

## COMUSNAVSO's staff

Our analysis of COMNAVSO's staff involves answering three questions:

- How do the origins and circumstances surrounding its stand-up affect NAVSO's current personnel situation?
- How does the staffing of NAVSO compare with that of other commands?
- How do travel requirements affect NAVSO's staffing and ability to perform its missions?

### What we did

We began our analysis by comparing the manning of the commands that formerly performed component functions with manning levels at the current commands that perform the same missions.

After this initial examination, we compared NAVSO's staffing level with those of NAVCENT and NAVEUR. We differentiated the staff from the front office and also looked separately at officer, enlisted, and civilian numbers. Moreover, to draw some connection between the command's mission and staffing levels, we delineated the N-codes within each command. Last, we examined NAVSO's travel data for a five-month period (October 2000–February 2001) to gain insight into the impact of travel on NAVSO's staffing.

### Our data

We used two main sources of data in our manning analysis: official Navy databases and command telephone directories. We tried to be as consistent as possible in comparing the commands.

The official Navy data were extracted from CNA's "snapshot" databases. These files are constructed from the Navy's Total Force Manpower Management System. At the end of each quarter, CNA receives a snapshot of the file, which freezes these continuously updated databases at a point in time. We thus capture the demographic, training, and job characteristics of each of the Navy's personnel at one instant each quarter. Specifically, we had access to the following:

- Enlisted Master Record (EMR) and the Officer Master Tape (OMT). These are the Navy personnel files that contain information about the enlisted and officer members, respectively, and their current activity.
- Civilian Personnel Database (CPD). This file contains data on Navy civilian employees.

From these files, we extracted the records of personnel assigned to the relevant commands, identified by Unit Identification Code (UIC).

We also acquired telephone directories from COMUSNAVSO, COMUSNAVCENT, and CINCUSNAVEUR. All date from the spring or summer of 2001. The value of these phone directories lay in their inclusion of Navy personnel not assigned to the UICs, such as reservists and science advisers, as well as non-Navy personnel who work on the staffs---those from other Services, liaison officers from other countries, and contractors. Phone directories, however, have inaccuracies. We have some indications that they are not always updated, and policies for inclusion differ across commands; for example, some appear to lack entries for some staff members who don't have unique phone numbers, such as those who work in command centers. We know that the NAVEUR data are incomplete relative to the other two commands.

Our data are neither completely accurate nor completely comparable across commands. However, we believe that they are good enough to enable rough comparisons, especially of Navy enlisted, officer, and civilian personnel officially assigned to a UIC.

## The NAVSO staff: an overview

As of March 2001, the NAVSO staff was composed of 86 people divided among the core staff (those in Roosevelt Roads and the liaison staff at USCINCSO headquarters in Miami), the Puerto Rico detachments (San Juan and Civic Action), CTF-43 based in Mayport (which provides operational logistic support to Navy forces in the AOR), and the Forward Operating Location (FOL) in El Salvador (which provides facilities for U.S. counterdrug aircraft). The distribution of the staff is shown in table 1.

Table 1. NAVSO staff: March 2001<sup>a</sup>

Category	HQ + Miami	Puerto Rico dets	CTF -43	FOL	Total
Officer	27	8	2	3	40
Enlisted	16	1	5	3	25
Civilian	17	4	0	0	21
Total	60	13	7	6	86

a. Data provided by COMUSNAVSO N1.

## Comparison with prior commands

Our first comparison is between the commands that used to perform the same functions that COMUSNAVSO and COMNAVSURFGRU Two do now. We must consider SURFGRU Two because its predecessor organization, WESTHEMGRU, performed the NCC functions now performed by NAVSO and the ISIC functions that SURFGRU Two now carries out. We also include the two destroyer squadrons that report to SURFGRU Two as ISIC. Before the stand-up of NAVSO, WESTHEMGRU was the ISIC for the 16 ships in the two DESRONs. When WESTHEMGRU was disestablished, the ISIC duties for the ships were given to the DESRONs, and COMNAVSURFGRU Two was established as ISIC for the two DESRONs. With this shift in responsibilities went billets and bodies. So, to make our comparison accurate, we must include the squadrons and their personnel.

The question we are trying to answer is whether the combined personnel levels of NAVSO, SURFGRU Two, DESRON 6 and DESRON 14 remain the same as, are less than, or surpass the combined level of WESTHEMGRU, COMSOLANT, and the two DESRONS.

Table 2 provides the comparison, using data from CNA databases of Navy personnel records. For all commands, we include only staff at the parent UIC.

Table 2. Manning of prior and current Navy commands related to USSOUTHCOM

Command	September 1999	March 2001	Command
COMSOLANT	34	56	COMUSNAVSO
COMWEST- HEMGRU	79	36	COMNAVSURF- GRU Two
COMDESRON 6	12	21	COMDESRON 6
COMDESRON 14	17	25	COMDESRON 14
Total	142	138	Total
CINCLANTFLT N5	3-5	+6?	San Juan det?
CG personnel	10	4 <sup>a</sup>	CG personnel
Adjusted total	155-157	142-148	Adjusted total

a. One Coast Guard officer each is on the staff of COMNAVSURFGRU Two, COMDESRONS 6 and 14, and COMUSNAVSO

The last three rows in the table show gray areas. A small number of staff in the CINCLANTFLT N5 performed duties relating to CINCLANTFLT's job as Navy component commander to USCINCSO. These billets did not migrate to COMUSNAVSO. Also, COMWESTHEMGRU had a number of Coast Guard personnel attached to it. This group was responsible for much of WESTHEMGRU's planning and training. We don't have authoritative numbers, but an undated COMWESTHEMGRU fact sheet states, "The staff is supplemented with ten Coast Guard officers to assist in Military Operations Other Than Warfare (MOOTW)."<sup>9</sup>

9. Coast Guard Squadron 44 reported to COMWESTHEMGRU through a Memorandum of Understanding between CINCLANTFLT and Coast Guard Atlantic Area Commander.

We are of two minds whether to include the San Juan detachment in our comparison.<sup>10</sup> One of COMWESTHEMGRU's taskings was to serve as liaison to the Government of Puerto Rico, so theoretically he was performing much of the same job for which the detachment was established. However, he was based in Florida and COMSOLANT, the flag officer based on the island, was seldom there due to his focus on UNITAS. A significant factor in the decision to stand-up COMUSNAVSO was to increase the Navy's presence on the island of Puerto Rico and its contacts with the Government [3].

The scope of NAVSO's responsibilities seems to have grown in other ways as well. When the bulk of Army forces left Panama and only a small fraction of them was based in Puerto Rico, the Navy's role in engagement became comparatively more prominent. As the command begins to make its mark in the AOR, demand for its services grows.

Note that even though we don't include the FOL or Civic Action detachment, they still make demands on the staff and the commander's time. They receive administrative support and command oversight from COMUSNAVSO so their existence does increase the responsibilities of some segments of the headquarters staff.

It's hard to make exact comparisons between the current and prior Navy staffs dedicated to serving as Navy component commander to USCINCSO. Besides the complications already discussed, there are the difficulties of taking into account the reachback support provided by CINCLANTFLT to COMUSNAVSO and determining whether the level of that support has changed from the days of WESTHEMGRU.

We can, however, conclude that NAVSO did not receive an influx of new billets when it was stood up; in fact, our data show that fewer resources went to it than to its predecessor commands.

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10. We do not include the FOL or Civic Action detachment; their duties were not part of the prior commands' mission set.

## Comparison with other Navy component commanders

In this section, we compare COMUSNAVSO's staff to the staffs of his two closest analogs: COMUSNAVCENT and CINCUSNAVEUR. All three are Navy component commanders, but in very different theaters and with different levels and types of responsibilities.

We reviewed COMUSNAVSO's responsibilities in the last section. Primarily, COMUSNAVSO serves as NCC to USCINCSO and as the senior Navy representative to Puerto Rico. COMUSNAVSO exercises OPCON of Navy forces as CTF-40; he is not designated a numbered fleet commander. NAVSO is a young and small command with fewer responsibilities in a relatively low-threat theater. On the other hand, NAVSO's area of responsibility constitutes a formidable area: 32 nations and 14 dependencies in Latin America and the Caribbean.

NAVCENT is also a relatively young command, but one that has been forged from war and buttressed with continuously high threat levels. Beside being NCC to CINCCENT, COMUSNAVCENT is double-hatted as Commander, U.S. Fifth Fleet. He also becomes the joint force maritime component commander in time of hostilities. In the Service chain, the Naval Support Activity, Bahrain, reports to COMUSNAVCENT. The NAVCENT staff is split between Bahrain and Tampa, the home of U.S. Central Command.

CINCUSNAVEUR also serves in several hats. Besides being the NCC to USCINCEUR, CINCUSNAVEUR is dual-hatted as the NATO commander CINCSOUTH. He has a separate staff in Naples to support the NATO function. CINCUSNAVEUR has significant Title 10 responsibilities in this established theater with more numerous bases. These are exercised through his subordinate, Commander, Navy Region Europe. COMUSNAVSO, in contrast, has no responsibility for the major bases in the region; those bases remain under the control of CINCLANTFLT.

Commander, U.S. Sixth Fleet reports to CINCUSNAVEUR, but CINCUSNAVEUR's direct operational responsibilities lie in the parts of the AOR outside the Mediterranean: primarily the Baltic region and Africa.



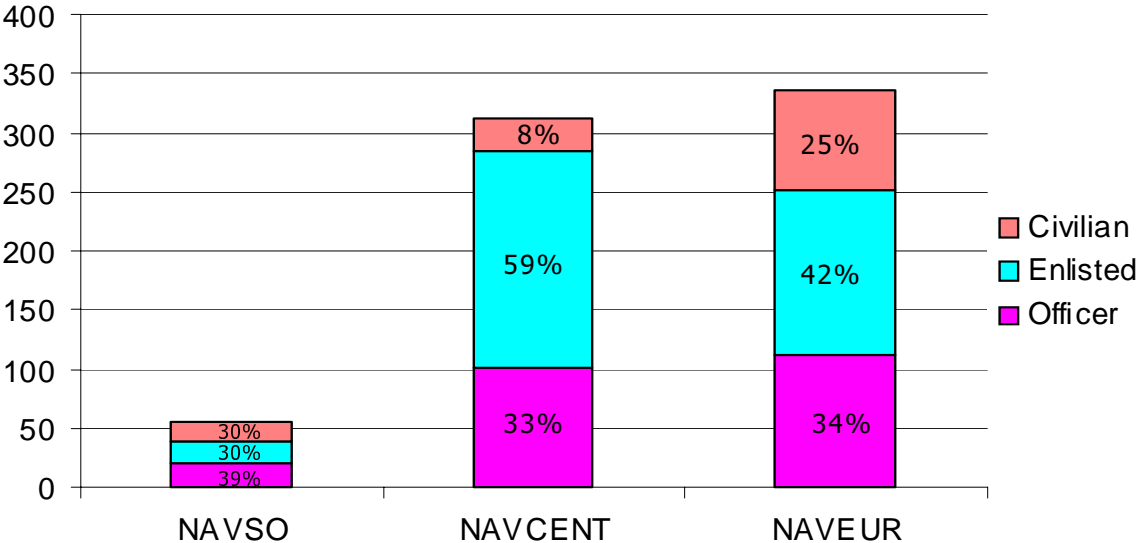
## Staff sizes

In this section, we use the two different sources of data to compare the staff sizes of the three NCCs. In both sets of data, we use the following counting rules:

- For NAVSO, we included personnel from headquarters in San Juan and Miami but excluded the FOL, San Juan and Civic Action detachments, and CTF-43.
- We counted personnel at Tampa for NAVCENT, as well as those in Bahrain.
- For NAVEUR, we included only personnel in London. We don't have data on liaison personnel at CINCEUR headquarters comparable to those for the other NCCs, and we don't count personnel in Naples.

Figure 1 uses Navy manning data to show the composition of the Navy personnel on the staffs. These data show that NAVEUR has the most Navy personnel assigned.

Figure 1. NCC Navy personnel: March 2001

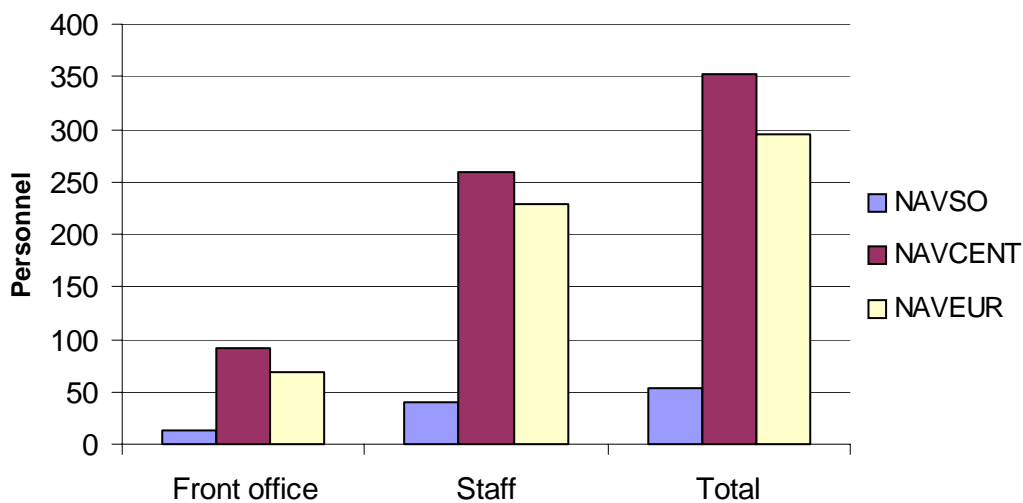


NAVSO's staff is the most evenly divided among officers, enlisted, and civilians. Note that NAVSO's percentage of enlisted personnel is quite low (30 percent) as compared to the percentages at NAVCENT (59 percent) and NAVEUR (42 percent). NAVCENT's percentage of civilian personnel (8 percent) is much lower than that of the other two commands. This anomaly is not surprising given the location of NAVCENT headquarters in Bahrain. Remember also that the number here undercounts the overall level of civilians at the command; it doesn't include contractors or civilians who are not officially part of the headquarters UIC, such as science advisor or NIMA representative.

In the next two comparisons, we use phone directory data, which include staff code. We know that the NAVEUR data in figures 2 and 3 undercount the staff's size; about 70 additional Navy enlisted personnel were assigned to the headquarters UIC than were listed in the NAVEUR phone chart. However, we still believe these data are useful in providing an idea of how the staffs are organized.

In figure 2, we separate the front office from the rest of the staff.

Figure 2. Navy component command staffs<sup>a</sup>

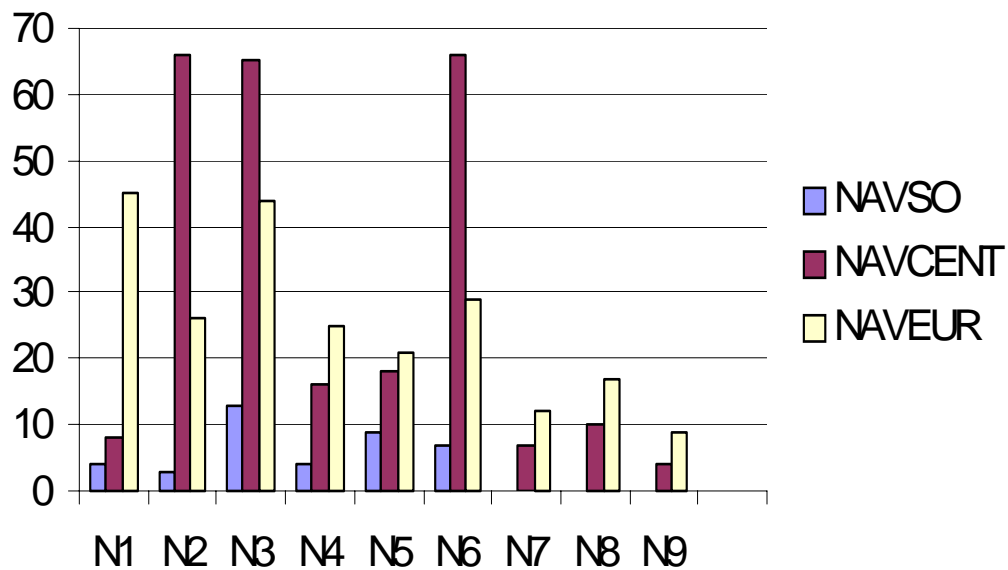


a. NAVEUR data incomplete.

Note that the total number of NAVSO personnel (front office and staff) is less than the number in the front office alone at each of the other two NCCs. Overall, NAVSO staff is about 15 to 20 percent the size of the other components.

To draw connections between staffing levels and command missions, we broke the phone directory data into the various N-codes. This breakdown--shown in figure 3--reaffirms that each command is unique.

Figure 3. Staff functional breakdown<sup>a</sup>



a. NAVEUR data incomplete.

Given that strike operations and force protection are key mission requirements in the CENTCOM AOR, it is not surprising that NAVCENT is staff-heavy in the N2, N3, and N6 departments. NAVEUR, in contrast, with its administrative focus, is heavy in the N1, N4, and N8 departments.

Note that NAVSO has no N7, N8, or N9 personnel. The largest staff section is the N3, as might be expected with an “operationally focused” staff. The next section will explore why this section may require beefing up; there we discuss the demands of travel in a large AOR and its effect on operational staffing at headquarters.

## Travel demands

Because of NAVSO’s small staff and large AOR, we examined the nature and effect of travel demands on the NAVSO staff. The available data captured the travels of headquarters, CTF-43, and Miami personnel; a total of 65 people work at those locations. We examined 5 months’ worth of travel data, from October 2000 to February 2001. Given the overlap of Christmas and other holidays, this 5-month period may not be representative of the overall pattern of NAVSO’s travel.

Travel for this period totaled 1,517 travel days. From this we calculated that from 10 to 15 people were on travel on an average day. This information meant that 15 to 23 percent of the NAVSO staff were on travel on any given day. This percentage is likely to be higher for the operational staff. The data we were provided do not identify who traveled, so we are unable to quantify this effect further.

Based on the available data, we believe that most of NAVSO’s travels were for exercises, meetings, and conferences.<sup>11</sup> Travel within the United States (CONUS) constituted 54 percent of all travel. Trips to Miami, Washington, San Diego, Mayport, and Norfolk dominated the CONUS travels. Trips to Colombia, El Salvador, Argentina and Chile made up the bulk of travel outside the United States (OCONUS).<sup>12</sup> It appears that much of the OCONUS travel was associated with planning for UNITAS and Operational Naval Committee meetings with Latin American navies, as well as trips to the FOL. The high travel rate may also be traced to the simple vastness of NAVSO’s AOR, with its 32

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11. Travels for training and medical reasons were not significant.

12. Columbia was by far the most frequent destination of this group of countries.

countries, 14 dependencies, and 12 million square miles. Also adding to travel time is the need to go through Miami to get to most OCONUS destinations.

Because the travel data could not account for who was on travel and for what purpose, we were unable to analyze the exact nature of travel demands on NAVSO's operations.

We can state, however, that travel requirements reduce the availability of an already small staff. The ability of that staff to remain operationally focused is further diluted by the ever-present distraction of Vieques. Members of the main headquarters staff, from the commander to the JAG to the PAO, must often turn to this urgent and important matter, and have little backup to attend to the important yet less urgent matters that constitute the future of the command.<sup>13</sup>

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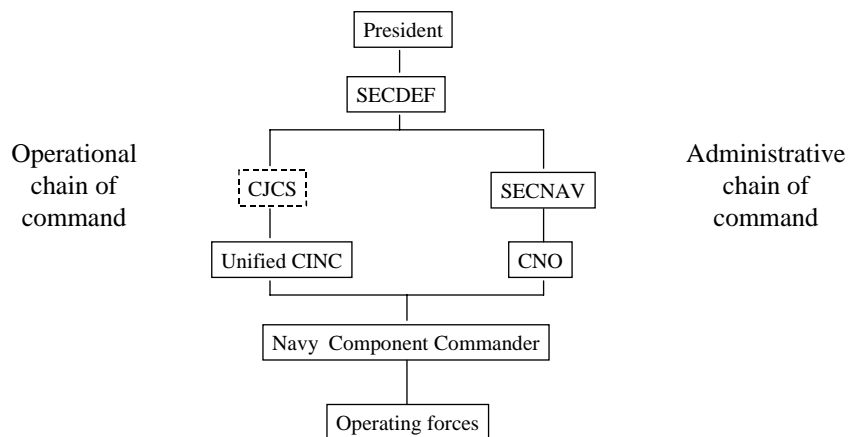
13. Thanks to CAPT Lawrence Tant for this insight.



## Organizational relationships

Like all CINC Service component commanders, COMUSNAVSO has a dual reporting chain, illustrated in figure 4. Service component commanders report operationally to their unified CINC, who exercises *combatant command (COCOM)* over them. This authority, created by Goldwater-Nichols in 1986, refers to the “command authority over assigned forces exercised only by commands of unified or specified combatant commands [8].” Administratively, the component command is under the *administrative control (ADCON)* of the Military Department. Figure 4 illustrates the two branches of the reporting chain for Navy components.

Figure 4. Dual branches of reporting chain



The reporting chain for COMUSNAVSO, however, is not quite so neat.

## COMUSNAVSO's reporting chain

With the stand-up of COMUSNAVSO as the Navy component commander to USCINCSO in February 2000, a unique and unprecedented dual reporting chain was created. It was envisioned that:

COMUSNAVSO will be focused on operations, and specifically not burdened with service training and maintenance functions [4].

NAVSO's operational chain of command is clear cut. As the Navy component command to a unified CINC, its functions are fully delineated by *UNAAF* and Title 10 of the U.S. Code of Law. Operationally, COMUSNAVSO reports to USCINCSO, who in turn reports to the National Command Authorities (Secretary of Defense and President of the United States) via the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). This is the equivalent of any other Navy component command.

However, the administrative, or Service, chain of command established for COMUSNAVSO is not as clearly delineated. Early memoranda, message traffic, and "personal for" messages between CNO, CINCLANTFLT, and USCINCSO show an evolution of thought as to how COMUSNAVO would report administratively:

COMUSNAVSO will **report to CINCLANTFLT** for administrative purposes [9].

COMUSNAVO will **coordinate with** CINCLANTFLT staff, which will retain PPBS, personnel, and major comptroller functions [10].

COMUSNAVSO will be **ADCON to CNO through CINCLANTFLT...** [5]

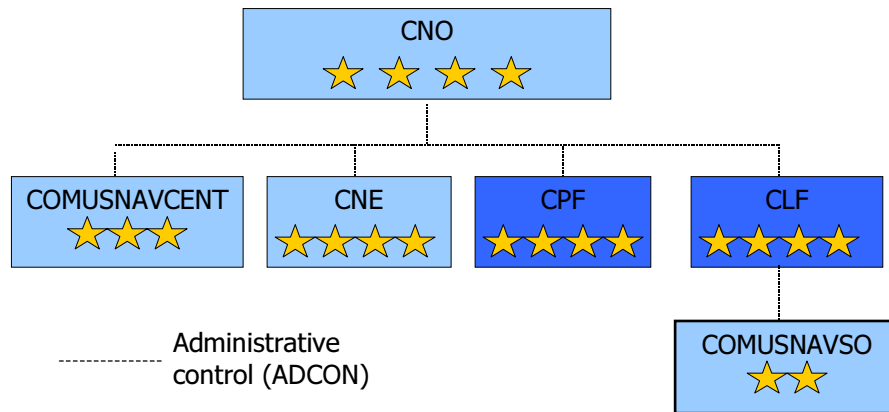
Administratively, COMUSNAVSO **reports to CNO via CINCLANTFLT** [7]

There is a significant difference between "ADCON through," "report to," and "coordinate with," and these semantic differences continue to shape the unique relationship between COMUSNAVSO and CINCLANTFLT.



The Service reporting relationship of the Navy's component commands to the geographic CINCs is illustrated in figure 5. Note that COMUSNAVSO is the only Navy component commander who does not report directly to the CNO for administrative control.

Figure 5. Navy component commanders' administrative chain of control



## Reachback to CINCLANTFLT

NAVSO is defined as a major headquarters activity (MHA) by DOD Directive 5100.73, *Major Department of Defense Headquarters Activities*. This directive is aimed at limiting the size and number of such activities within DOD, as well as placing a strict ceiling upon the number of personnel at these commands. Increases in end strength must be strictly justified and are tightly controlled. MHAs include all unified CINCs, all Service component commands, and all type commands.

Thus, manning of this new component command had to be strictly limited. To help accomplish this goal, COMUSNAVSO was designed with an unusual relationship to CINCLANTFLT—the former Navy component commander to USCINCSO. The new command was to be operationally focused and not “burdened” with administrative functions as stated above. Some of these functions were retained at CINCLANTFLT headquarters in Norfolk, Virginia.

The Alignment of Functions message describes what came to be known as *reachback functions* that CINCLANTFLT would perform for COMUSNAVSO:

COMUSNAVSO will reachback to CINCLANTFLT in the execution of functions associated with requirements, assessment, and PPBS. COMUSNAVSO will support USCINCSO by articulating naval capabilities requirements for the USCINCSO AOR to CINCLANTFLT. Specifically, COMUSNAVSO will submit issues for Integrated Priority List (IPL) submissions and participate in prioritization; review requirements documents...and respond directly to USCINCSO; and participate in assessments (JWCA) and analysis of service program and budget decisions (POM, PDM, PBD) as tasked by CINCLANTFLT N8. CINCLANTFLT N02F and N1, staffed for its role as a major claimant in the Department of the Navy's PPBS, will support COMUSNAVSO, specifically handling personnel and comptroller functions [7].

Thus, COMUSNAVSO was specifically relieved of independent N1 (Personnel), N02F (Comptroller), and N8 (Requirements) functions. The command was directed to "reachback" to CLF for the fulfillment of these requirements.

## **N1 and Comptroller functions**

Now let's take a look at each of these areas individually. As stated,

CINCLANTFLT N1 and N02F (Comptroller), staffed for its role as a major claimant in the DON PPBS, will support COMUSNAVSO, specifically handling personnel and comptroller functions [7].

How does this work? And what are some of the challenges faced in making this work?

### **N1**

COMUSNAVSO is a major headquarters activity as are all other Navy component commands (NCCs). We noted that this designation comes with strict limits on staff size. Unlike other NCCs, however, COMUSNAVSO is *not* a direct report to the CNO in the administrative/Service chain of command.

NAVSO manning issues are handled through the N1 shop at CINCLANTFLT. At its creation in February 2000, the staff of COMUSNAVSO was cobbled together from COMWESTHEMGRU and USCOMSOLANT staffs, as well as receiving reachback support from staff within CINCLANTFLT. No formal manning review was conducted, and manning issues remain to be sorted out. As of this writing, the CLF Manpower Assessment Team (CMAT) will be conducting a Shore Manpower Requirements Determination (SMRD) in FY-02. This visit, which will use the command's Mission, Functions, and Tasks Statement (MFT) to analyze manning requirements, is viewed as an opportunity for some serious review, but also highlights a pressing issue for COMUSNAVSO, as follows.

In order for an SMRD to be conducted, an approved MFT must be in place. As of this writing, COMUSNAVSO does not have an approved MFT. The very simple question, "Who approves the MFT?" really sums up the quandary the command is in: Should USCINCSO, as the unified CINC and the operational commander, approve the MFT? After all, it will be this CINC's battle plan that COMUSNAVSO will be tasked to carry out. Or should the MFT be approved by CINCLANTFLT, the manpower and resource provider? After all, COMUSNAVSO owns no forces and has no resources with which to carry out USCINCSO's operational requirements. Perhaps both USCINCSO and CINCLANTFLT should approve the MFT? And if so, what mechanism exists to allow the coordinated approval that would be required? Who is overseeing this process, and who is responsible for seeing that the MFT accurately reflects both the operational and administrative realities governing it? These questions illuminate the unique nature of NAVSO's organizational relationships.

Other Navy component commands may have similar quandaries since they too have dual reporting chains. But COMUSNAVSO's situation is complicated by its relationship with CINCLANTFLT, and its apparent lack of an equal voice with the other Navy component commanders at OPNAV.

### **Comptroller**

As stated earlier, all comptroller (N02F) functions are retained at CINCLANTFLT. Due to the size of the command (small in relation to

that of other players in the budget process), and the influence that CINCLANTFLT can exert in the process, many believe that COMUSNAVSO is well served by this arrangement. However, there is universal agreement that budget submissions should be driven by requirements, and that without an N8 present at COMUSNAVSO, this normally requirements-driven process can become muddled. COMUSNAVSO needs a dedicated N8 to determine his requirements, and to then liaise directly with the USSOUTHCOM J8 in presenting these requirements to the comptroller at CINCLANTFLT for inclusion in CINCLANTFLT's budget. As described below, without the N8, this isn't occurring.

## N8 functions

The Alignment of Functions message, as described above, states:

COMUSNAVSO will reachback to CINCLANTFLT in the execution of functions associated with requirements, assessment, and PPBS [7].

Additionally, COMUSNAVSO will:

- Support USCINCSO by articulating naval capabilities requirements for the AOR *to CINCLANTFLT*
- Submit issues for Integrated Priority Lists (IPL) submissions and *participate in prioritization*
- Review requirements documents (MNS/ORDS) and *respond directly* to USCINCSO
- Participate in assessments (JWCA) and analysis of service program and budget decisions (POM) *as tasked by CINCLANTFLT N8* [7].

With the emphasis added in the above list, you can see that COMUSNAVSO is essentially following two masters. All component commanders do this. But COMUSNAVSO is the only component whose administrative master is another Navy component commander, who competes for the same resources in the Navy at large.

In describing the functions of CINC service component commanders, *UNAAF* states that they will:

- Develop program and budget requests that comply with CINC guidance on warfighting requirements and priorities
- Inform CINC of program and budget decisions that might affect operational and contingency planning [8].

These functions, required of all component commanders, are essentially N8 tasks. How can COMUSNAVSO be a true component command without someone at the command tracking the N8 requirements process?

The Integrated Priority List (IPL) is a unified CINC document for determining requirements. Prior to the stand-up of COMUSNAVSO, CINCLANTFLT, as USCINCSO's Navy Component Commander, submitted input to USCINCSO's IPL via the Component Commander Issue Paper (CCIP). The CCIP is the Navy document that delineates and recommends inclusion of items for the CINC's IPL. Under the current arrangement, NAVSO should formulate its own CCIP and forward it to CLF N8 for review, who in turn would forward the CCIP to USSOUTHCOM for inclusion in USCINCSO's IPL.

This approach requires someone at NAVSO to understand fully the requirements-determination process. There is virtually universal agreement that to make this system work, a functioning N8 office must be located at NAVSO. Ideally, the shop would include both a senior Navy officer and a civilian for continuity. Without such presence, the requirements process becomes reactionary, and is driven by paperwork deadlines rather than true requirements.

Also needed is increased communication between NAVSO, the CINCLANTFLT N8 shop, and USSOUTHCOM. Awkward arrangements can be made to work through simple measures such as info-ing the other parties on all e-mail and message traffic. Other ideas for increased efficiency include physically locating NAVSO's future N8 officer at USSOUTHCOM, or perhaps dual-hatting the existent NAVSO Liaison Officer at USSOUTHCOM (an O-6 naval officer) as the N8. It is generally recognized that the N8 should be an O-6 so that

the command can be represented in meetings at the appropriate level.

## Reachback summarized

Reachback to CINCLANTFLT for N1, N8, and comptroller functions was designed to relieve the fledgling COMUSNAVSO of an administrative burden. The command was to be focused solely on operational matters, reporting to USCINCSO as his Navy component commander. In practice, however, the burden may be falling on the minimally manned NAVSO staff in another way.

The unique reporting relationship of COMUSNAVSO in the administrative chain—"through" (or "via") CINCLANTFLT---complicates command relationships and introduces ambiguity into reachback. Is CINCLANTFLT simply providing support to an independent command, or is it providing services to a subordinate in the Navy chain? What does it mean to report "through" someone else? This relationship is particularly awkward because CINCLANTFLT is also a Navy component commander, with competing resource demands. Also, CINCLANTFLT's former role as component commander to USCINCSO carries with it some baggage. It makes it more difficult for COMUSNAVSO to be viewed as the real, legitimate, single point of contact for the U.S. Navy in the SOUTHCOM AOR.

We have shown that the N1 and comptroller functions are perhaps appropriately retained by CINCLANTFLT at this time. However, alternatives to the current N8 process need to be examined, with an emphasis on increased communication and oversight. We will suggest an alternative way of framing the reachback relationship later in this paper.

## Information technology

The analysis of COMUSNAVSO's current staffing levels suggests that the command is understaffed. The purpose of this section is to identify opportunities where the staff could make the most of information technology (IT), thereby alleviating some of the pressures created by the lack of staff.

We first wish to identify ways to utilize already existing IT. But finding ways to do so without investing additional resources, especially of staff time and attention, is difficult. We consider options that would require modest investments in technology and/or staff.<sup>14</sup>

An alternative response to the demand for IT services is to task the N6 department to provide additional services with its current staff and funding. This option poses significant challenges. COMUSNAVSO's N6 department is working at capacity to meet the command's *basic* IT needs. Table 3 lists the services provided by the N6 staff of six. Like many of their colleagues at NAVSO, N6 staff members come into work after regular business hours to provide needed IT support to their customers. It is not clear how the existing N6 department can be tasked to further support the command.

Maintaining the command's IT infrastructure and services requires the current staff's full effort. Placing greater demands for IT services on the N6 department may impede its ability to maintain this basic level of IT support.

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14. A detailed analysis of COMUSNAVSO's IT requirements can be found in [1]. That paper goes beyond the modest IT investments discussed here to delineate a range of fixes for NAVSO's IT shortfalls.

Table 3. IT services provided by COMUSNAVSO's N6 department

Available IT services	Reported status
Unclassified & classified e-mail	Available
User support <i>after</i> business hours	<b><i>Under-supported</i></b>
LAN administration	Available
INMARSAT coordination	Available
Message traffic processing	<b><i>Under-supported</i></b>
User support during business hours	Available
Radio support (maintenance & crypto loading)	<b><i>Under-supported</i></b>
IANTN POC	Available
Unclassified & classified telephone services	Available
Support for exercises	Available
Unclassified and classified (Secret) VTC	Being updated
GCCS Suite	Being updated
San Juan Detachment - Unclassified e-mail	Available
San Juan Detachment - User support	<b><i>Under-supported</i></b>
FOL - Classified & unclassified e-mail	Available
FOL - Bandwidth	<b><i>Minimal</i></b>
FOL - Message traffic processing	<b><i>Under-supported</i></b>

## Potential options requiring modest resources

Despite resource limitations, there may be opportunities where COMUSNAVSO could invest modest resources in IT services and realize substantial benefits.

### Video teleconferencing (VTC)

COMUSNAVSO does not have access to SCI-level VTC services at his headquarters. A modest investment could yield greater access to information and decision-making processes, as well as reduce the need for staff travel. Without an SCI-level VTC suite, COMUSNAVSO cannot fully participate in the decision-making process or readily access information distributed during VTC sessions.



Providing access to an SCI-level VTC suite would benefit several command responsibilities:

- COMUSNAVSO would be better informed about operations in the AOR and better able to participate in decisions that affect these operations.
- COMUSNAVSO would be better equipped to participate in VTC sessions with USCINCSO and others on SCI-level issues. By doing so, COMUSNAVSO would be better able to represent his interests and function as USCINCSO's Navy component commander.
- COMUSNAVSO's N2 department may be better informed about the region's intelligence picture.

Providing SCI-level VTC capability would likely require:

- The purchase of additional equipment to ensure the security of the VTC transmission
- N6 staff time and training to implement the service.

## Calendar software

Several staff members noted the difficulty of coordinating the command's events with the leave and travel schedules of its staff members. These staff members often invest considerable time coordinating command events (e.g., exercises), travel, and leave. The command's internal administration function would likely benefit from a command calendar and personnel tracker.

A variety of commercially available software packages could satisfy this need. For the command to realize the greatest benefits, the software would have to:

- Integrate with the internet and palm pilots
- Operate on the existing NAVSO LAN
- Track events and personnel.

To implement a command wide calendar, NAVSO will have to:

- Adopt policies and practices to ensure that staff members regularly update the system
- Develop a method of presenting and disseminating the calendar information to the users.

## Tasking tracker

Several staff members noted the challenge of tracking the command's tasking. Distinguishing completed tasks from those that are outstanding proves difficult and requires staff time. The command's administration would benefit from a centralized tasking tracker system that would collect the status of all the activities in NAVSO and make the tracking data available to the staff. Such a system should operate on the LAN and would require:

- Additional N6 staff time to implement
- Standardization of users' Outlook folders
- Staff training on how to use the system.

Such a system would also provide NAVSO with a tool it could use to measure its activities.

## Document and project library

Several staff members described a need for a single location where the command could store and retrieve electronic information, including documents it prepares and those it collects from outside the command. Staff members currently store such documents on their personal computers or in user folders where others are unable to access them. This practice limits the utility of the information.

A searchable repository for these documents would benefit the command by increasing access to the information and reducing the time it takes staff members to complete their tasks. Such a system would help when staff members turn over and would also give the staff visibility into projects belonging to staff members who are out of the office, on leave, or on travel.

To develop an electronic repository for documents and data, NAVSO needs to:

- Purchase and install the supporting hardware and software
- Select a folder and file organization scheme
- Develop new staff processes.

In addition to these investments, COMUSNAVSO would have to select a file and folder organization scheme that would accommodate the users' needs. To take full advantage of an electronic data library, the NAVSO staff would have to adopt new processes, to include consistently posting documents to the library and using descriptive file names so that others would have an idea of what the file contained.

We have traced the history of Navy componentcy in the SOUTHCOM AOR, delineated NAVSO's responsibilities, analyzed the command's staffing level, described organizational difficulties, and suggested improvements in IT to enable the small staff to perform more efficiently. The next section surveys alternative organizational models for the command.



## Alternative models

As we have noted, COMUSNAVSO's organizational relationships are problematic and ambiguous. In this section, we outline six alternative models that the Navy component to U.S. Southern Command could follow. In the Recommendations section that follows this one, we'll discuss a seventh, recommended alternative.

The six discussed here are:

- Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea
- Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. Fifth Fleet
- Free-standing, fully functioning NCC
- Navy component to Americas Command
- Navy component to subunified Southern Command
- CINCLANTFLT/Commander Western Hemisphere Group.

We describe each of these in turn, then look at the factors that may affect any decision to change the current structure.

### Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea

For the subunified command in Korea, the Navy component commander is a one-star who sits in Korea. In peacetime, he functions as the NCC; however, in time of contingency, his status changes. Commander, U.S. Seventh Fleet, takes over as Commander Combined (and U.S.) Naval Forces Korea. The one-star becomes his deputy, stays ashore, and focuses on liaison with Korean forces.

This model has the benefit of providing clear lines of authority in time of war. A specific command (COMSEVENTHFLT) is designated as the Navy warfighter and plans and trains for that mission. The

peacetime COMUSNAVFORKOREA can focus on relations with the host country, an important responsibility in both peace and wartime.

However, this model doesn't fit well into the vast SOUTHCOM AOR, which isn't home to a major theater war (MTW). There is no single major contingency and no designated warfighter in this theater. If USCINCSO were to pre-designate a Navy warfighter, it would likely be Commander, U.S. Second Fleet. He, however, is focused on his training responsibilities to CINCLANTFLT. If a contingency erupted in the SOUTHCOM AOR, a Navy component would still be needed to look after the rest of the theater. Having that NCC be junior to the warfighter would be problematic; the CINC Service component commanders are typically the senior officers of each Service assigned to a combatant command.

## **Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. Fifth Fleet**

This model double-hats the CINC Service component commander as the numbered fleet commander in time of peace. In time of war, however, Commander, U.S. Third Fleet is designated to become Commander Fifth Fleet and COMUSNAVCENT retains his component responsibilities and is co-located with USCINCCENT. Again, this arrangement exists for a theater with an MTW. It designates and delineates responsibilities in time of war. This case is somewhat more analogous to the situation in USSOUTHCOM. In both cases, we are dealing with a theater containing numerous states and possible contingencies.

We are not certain what advantages are conferred with numbered fleethood, other than increased status within the Navy. COMUSNAVSO exercises OPCON through CTF-40, not a numbered fleet, but his responsibilities are not very different. Numbered fleethood may be a matter of force size. For instance, it may be tied to OPCON of a carrier battle group.

## Free-standing Navy component commander to USCINCSO

In this model, COMUSNAVSO would report directly to CNO in the administrative chain of command. He would be on a par with the Navy component commanders to other geographic CINCs. His relationship with CINCLANTFLT would be the same as that of other NCCs who receive forces from CINCLANTFLT.

For COMUSNAVSO to be seen as equal to the other NCCs and treated accordingly in the OPNAV arena, a third star may be needed. One of the reasons given for maintaining the current system, with COMUSNAVSO reporting through CINCLANTFLT, is that CINCLANTFLT with his four stars can represent COMUSNAVSO better than he can himself as the sole two-star of the NCCs.

Under this model, COMUSNAVSO would need a fully functioning staff that would handle all operational and administrative responsibilities. There would no longer be reachback to CINCLANTFLT.

## Navy component commander to CINC Americas

This model would require change to the Unified Command Plan as recommended in the 1997 report of the National Defense Panel [11].<sup>15</sup> Under this scheme, Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) would lose all its geography, and Canada and Mexico would be assigned to a new unified command that would cover the entire Western Hemisphere. USJFCOM would become a purely functional command. Before 11 September 2001, USCINCSO was the logical candidate to assume the position of CINCAMERICAS, with COMUSNAVSO as his Navy component commander. One variation of this proposal assigned homeland defense to a subunified command, subordinate to CINCAMERICAS.

If such a change did occur, COMUSNAVSO would likely gain in rank and staff commensurate with his increase in responsibilities. However, these assignments look less likely as we go to press. Instead, any

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15. Decisions are close on the latest revision to the UCP; whatever emerges will likely strongly influence the future of COMUSNAVSO.

Americas command would likely focus on homeland defense, with a subunified command for the SOUTHCOM AOR, as described in the next model.

## **Navy component commander to subunified Southern Command**

This model would also involve change to the UCP. In the wake of the terrorist attacks on the United States, focus has turned to homeland defense. If a hemispheric Americas command is established, it may center on homeland defense, and have U.S. Southern Command, perhaps headed by a three-star officer, report as a subunified command to the new CINC.

If this change occurs, COMUSNAVSO could become the Navy component commander to the subunified command. In this case, two-star status would not be problematic. NAVSO's relationship within the Navy would need rethinking. He would likely report ADCON to the Navy component to the hemispheric command.

## **Return to CINCLANTFLT/COMWESTHEMGRU**

A final alternative would revert to the arrangement that existed before the stand-up of COMUSNAVSO in February 2000. This model gains in likelihood should Naval Station Roosevelt Roads be recommended for closure in the next round of base closings.

This model would suffer from the lack of focus on USCINCSO that resulted in the decision to stand up a COMUSNAVSO in the first place. It would represent a turning away by the Navy from the SOUTHCOM AOR and USCINCSO. Given the current boundaries of the AOR and the water that it now includes, such a step would seem counter-productive and short-sighted.



## Factors influencing change

In contemplating a change in command relationships for the Navy component commander to USCINCSO, many factors are likely to weigh in. We discuss the most prominent of these.

### Fiscal factors

As a Service component commander, COMUSNAVSO falls under Congressional restrictions on major headquarters activities. Without relief from these restrictions or offsets from other MHAs, any alternative requiring significant increases in personnel is unlikely to take place. The generally uncertain fiscal climate following the terrorist attacks of September 11 casts a further pall on the likelihood of major increases.

### Puerto Rican politics

NAVSO was stood up, in part, to deal with the poor relations between the Navy and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Since then the situation has worsened. It appears unlikely that the Navy will stay in Vieques, and now even the continued existence of the Naval Station Roosevelt Roads, which is home to NAVSO, is in doubt. If NSRR closes and NAVSO must find a new home, its very existence may come into play. Some will find a ready answer in a return to the situation in force before the stand-up of NAVSO.

### Perceived importance of theater/operational tempo

Much of NAVSO's future will ride on geopolitical developments, in both this theater and elsewhere, and the Navy's response to them. If the war on terrorism assumes increasing prominence, other DoD commitments are likely to wane, especially in the near term, as it is difficult for the Services to expand rapidly, especially in platforms and trained personnel. The war on drugs, which is one of the major reasons for Navy forces in the SOUTHCOM AOR, may be one of the first casualties.

Alternatively, if the current Administration returns to its original emphasis on the importance of our neighbors to the South,

additional resources to engagement in the region may follow. In this case, increased prominence for COMUSNAVSO would be a natural consequence.

## **Other Services**

How the other Services support the theater may also affect the Navy's decisions. We have mentioned the loss of Army presence in the theater following the shutdown of U.S. Army facilities in Panama. This shift left a vacuum that may give Navy forces a higher profile. Alternatively, the Army may decide to put a three-star in the theater commensurate with the Service component commanders of the Air Force and the Marine Corps. If this happens, the Navy may decide to follow suit.

## **UCP issues and Navy adjustments**

We have described possible changes to the UCP that would affect USSOUTHCOM. If an Americas Command is created, the Navy would have to decide whom to nominate as COMUSNAVAMERICAS. Recent discussions following the terrorist attacks have suggested an even more radical possibility: the end of regional CINCs to enable the Services to fight the worldwide threat of terrorism more effectively. Although change of this magnitude seems unlikely, it would clearly affect the very existence of USSOUTHCOM and NAVSO.

The foregoing discussion points out some of the uncertainties affecting COMUSNAVSO's future at levels beyond the Navy's influence. In the next section, we suggest a new approach to organization that the Navy can decide to take, and include some other near-term recommendations to help COMUSNAVSO do its job.

## Recommendations

### Make COMUSNAVSO an echelon-2 command with clarified relationship to CINCLANTFLT

We recommend an amended relationship for COMUSNAVSO in the Navy chain of command. We believe that this recommendation will help COMUSNAVSO and the Navy support USCINCSO through a clearer organizational structure that will make visible the unique needs of the SOUTHCOM AOR.

We suggest that COMUSNAVSO become a true echelon-2 command, reporting directly to the CNO like the Navy component commanders to the other geographic CINCs. This change would align COMUSNAVSO with the other components.

This change would not, however, require that COMUSNAVSO duplicate services currently being performed for COMUSNAVSO at CINCLANTFLT. Using words from the last section, we suggest that COMUSNAVSO become a free-standing, but not fully functioning, component command. CINCLANTFLT staff would continue to perform certain functions for COMUSNAVSO. To make the relationship between COMUSNAVSO and CINCLANTFLT clearer, we envision a supporting-supported relationship like those found in the joint world. We now discuss this kind of relationship as set down in doctrine, turning again to *UNAAF* for the specifics.

#### Supporting-supported relationship

*UNAAF* describes “Support” as follows:

Support is a command authority. A support relationship is established by a superior commander between subordinate commanders when one organization should aid, protect, complement, or sustain another force....The support

command relationship is, by design, a somewhat vague, but very flexible relationship [8, p. III-10].

In this case, a support relationship would be established by the CNO, directing CINCLANTFLT to support COMUSNAVSO through reach-back with N1, Comptroller, and N8 functions. The relationship could be established through an establishing directive, as described in *UNAAF*:

An establishing directive is normally issued to specify the purpose of the support relationship, the effect desired, and the scope of the action to be taken. It should also include:

The forces and other resources allocated to the supporting effort.

The time, place, level, and duration of the supporting effort.

The relative priority of the supporting effort.

The authority, if any, of the supporting commander to modify the supporting effort in the event of exceptional opportunity or an emergency.

The degree of authority granted to the supported commander of the supporting effort [8, p. III-10].

In this new arrangement, CINCLANTFLT would support COMUSNAVSO by direction of a common superior rather than of its own volition. This relationship is cleaner and clearer than the current relationship, wherein COMUSNAVSO not only receives reachback from CINCLANTFLT but also reports to the CNO through CINCLANTFLT.

### **Give COMUSNAVSO adequate status to represent his AOR**

If COMUSNAVSO is to represent the needs of his AOR as effectively as the Navy component commanders to the other geographic CINCs, he needs to have a similar status within the Navy hierarchy. We see two ways of providing him with that status.

The first is to make COMUSNAVSO a three-star command. Freeing up a three-star billet may be difficult, so another possibility is to give

COMUSNAVSO another hat: Commander, U.S. Fourth Fleet. In fact, such an arrangement was part of the original vision for COMUSNAVSO as set forth by then CINCLANTFLT Admiral J. Paul Reason.

If COMUSNAVSO does not receive a third star or a Fourth Fleet designation, it remains crucial that he be included with his peers when they meet as NCCs or as numbered fleets, as he fulfills both of these functions in his AOR.

## **Align relationship with Commander, Fleet Forces Command**

In August 2001 the CNO created a new command, Fleet Forces Command, and designated CINCLANTFLT as its commander. CFFC is responsible for “coordinating, establishing, and implementing integrated requirements... [2]”

It is important that the CFFC receive input from all the NCCs when he puts together the fleet’s integrated requirements. Reference [2] shows only the three four-star NCCs in its diagrams of the requirements and budget process. Aligning this relationship, so that COMUSNAVSO’s requirements are incorporated along with those of all the other NCCs, is crucial.<sup>16</sup> The process should be separate from the reachback support provided to COMUSNAVSO by CINCLANTFLT

## **Address critical staff shortages**

### **Build up the N3 department**

Our analysis of staffing and travel has shown the drain posed on the operations staff by the travel demands of a vast theater with numerous partner nations. The N3 staff is stretched thin, especially at the more senior levels. Often an O-6 is required to deal with other nations’ navies, as well as other parts of the U.S. military. Given that there is

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16. COMUSNAVCENT is also missing from the diagrams outlining the process.

only one O-6 in the N3/5, this means hard duty for that one person and frequent gaps in O-6 availability at headquarters.

Another area of severe shortage is the Operational Command Center (OCC). As of summer 2001, the 24/7 OCC watch was maintained by a total of six people, all civilians. Such staffing is insufficient to cover all of the hours. It allows no down time and no time for training or development of the staff. These conditions are likely to lead to staff turnover, which further exacerbates the difficulties of staffing this required capability.

### **Provide COMUSNAVSO with an N8**

In the course of our interviews, we heard universal agreement that COMUSNAVSO needs an N8. The requirement is modest, perhaps a staff of two: an O-6 and a civilian for continuity. This staff would still need to coordinate closely with CINCLANTFLT, because the staff would not have all the resources it needs to meet the requirements of the arcane world of programming and assessments.

## **Improve communications with CINCLANTFLT**

The relationship among COMUSNAVSO, USCINCSO, and CINCLANTFLT for N8 matters has suffered from poor communications, due in part to the unusual relationship between COMUSNAVSO and CINCLANTFLT. This situation has been exacerbated by the lack of N8 staff organic to COMUSNAVSO.

We recommend that COMUSNAVSO establish a liaison officer billet in Norfolk to coordinate reachback support. This liaison should not be confined to N8 matters, but should function across all areas of reachback. Liaison should take place with the N1, N8, and Comptroller. Consideration should also be given to extending the liaison duties to other parts of the CINCLANTFLT organization that need it.<sup>17</sup> For example, staff in the CINCLANTFLT N3 are closely involved with the FOL and with providing forces to UNITAS. Having someone on scene

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17. On-scene liaison with CFFC may also be needed, and could be made part of this billet's job description.

in Norfolk to ask and answer questions and provide information both ways may be of value across the organization.

## **Work to retain Puerto Rico detachments**

Regardless of whether the Navy leaves Vieques or stays, staff will still be needed for liaison with Puerto Rico. If the Navy does leave, transition issues regarding environmental cleanup, transfer of property, and other issues will remain and require sustained attention by knowledgeable people. In addition, the Navy will continue to need liaison with the Government of Puerto Rico in regard to Naval Station Roosevelt Roads.

We recognize that billets are scarce, and that some will see no value in retaining the San Juan and Civic Action detachments if the Navy is forced to leave Vieques. We believe there is a clear need for continuing liaison regardless, and urge COMUSNAVSO to fight to retain those billets.





## Appendix: Evolution of Navy competency in Latin America

The United States Navy has been involved in the Latin American/Caribbean region since the Navy's earliest beginnings. The Continental Navy's first fleet action and the first Marine landing was made in the Bahamas in 1776. Since the early part of the 19th century the Navy has been organized to provide a continuous regional presence.<sup>18</sup>

### Navy activity in Latin America and its command arrangements before 1947

#### Nineteenth century

The 19th century presence was generally organized around distant squadrons operating in three areas: the Caribbean/Gulf of Mexico, the South Atlantic, and the Pacific. Command and control was generally simple, with squadron commanders providing mostly administrative direction for widely scattered squadron ships. Squadron commanders themselves reported directly to the Cabinet-level Secretary of the Navy, who in turn reported directly to the President. This command and control arrangement was not unique and applied to all deployed naval forces. Crises were addressed in several ways: by formation of a special expeditionary force as was done for the 1859 punitive expedition to Paraguay; through the use of existing regional command structures as was done during the Mexican War of 1846-48 when the Home and Pacific Squadrons simply expanded; or by a combination of the two, as was done during the Spanish-American War.<sup>19</sup>

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18. For 19th and 20th century U.S. Navy background, see [12].

## Twentieth century

While regionally focused, 19th-century Navy administrative and operational command and control arrangements were parallel to those of the Navy in general and mirrored arrangements elsewhere. Twentieth century Navy regional deployments reflect a much more complex arrangement both organizationally and in terms of command and control. Three organizational relationships between World War I and the end of World War II reflect some of this complexity.

### **Pacific Fleet operations in the South Atlantic, 1917-18.**

As part of U.S. response to entry into World War I, the Pacific Fleet scouting force was deployed to Brazil. Commanded by Admiral William Caperton, Commander, Pacific Fleet, this force conducted patrol operations in conjunction with Brazilian, British, and French Forces. Operationally independent, under Caperton, the force reported to the Chief of Naval Operations. Caperton retained his title as Commander, Pacific Fleet.

### **Special Service Squadron operations, 1920-40.**

In 1920, the Navy Department established a Special Service Squadron to respond to needs for

- A unified command structure and organization in the Caribbean area
- An independent Navy means to evaluate requirements for ship presence
- A desire to reduce the requirement for regional ship presence.

As envisioned, this squadron, based in Panama, would schedule routine presence operations and evaluate the need for crisis response as necessary. In practice, its scheduling and operations came under intense State Department scrutiny. For most of its existence it responded to direct instruction from Washington.<sup>20</sup>

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19. Despite their names, the Home and North Atlantic squadrons largely operated in Latin American waters.

### **World War II operations, 1939-45.**

Navy regional operations during World War II were subject to various administrative, operational, and command and control arrangements.<sup>21</sup> In the Atlantic, the South Atlantic Force/Fourth Fleet reported operationally to the Commander, Atlantic Fleet. In the Southeast Pacific the Commander, Southeast Pacific Area operationally reported to COMINCH/CNO. Sea Frontier Commands (Caribbean, Gulf, and Western) also reported operationally to COMINCH/CNO. The Panama Sea Frontier Command was under the operational control of the joint Caribbean Defense Command that had theater command responsibilities for defense of the Panama Canal. Administratively, each of these regional commands was assigned forces (including very large numbers of patrol aircraft). After May 1943, Tenth Fleet (COMINCH) operationally controlled all antisubmarine activity.

## **Post-1947 CINCs, Navy commands, and Navy components**

### **The Post World War II period of Navy componency**

With the exception of assignment of the Panama Sea Frontier as a component of the wartime joint Caribbean Defense Command and the binational multi-service arrangement with Brazil, all the wartime arrangements were single service (Navy) in character. Operationally or administratively, commands ultimately reported to COMINCH/CNO. During the post-war period, command arrangements related to the Latin American region became more complex.<sup>22</sup>

With the establishment of the unified command plan and its regional CINCs in 1947, the Navy provided Navy component commanders. For

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20. The Special Service Squadron was normally a relatively small force of about five ships. It did, however, grow during crisis. For example, a total of 53 ships were assigned during operations off Nicaragua in 1927.

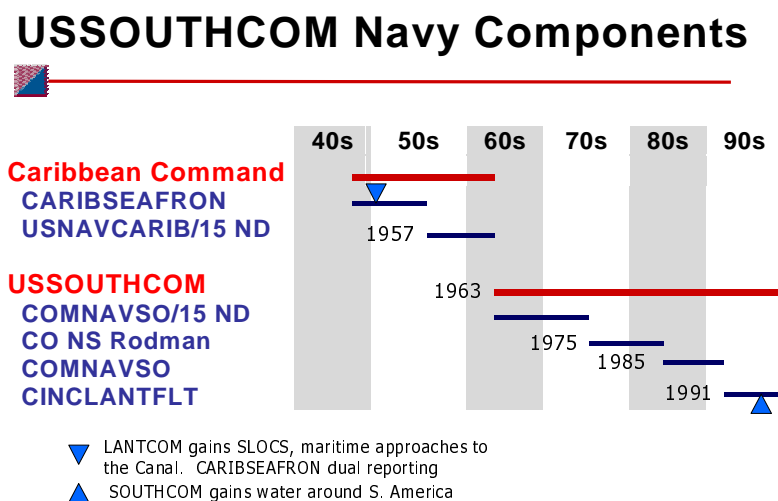
21. Organizational arrangements changed repeatedly. We outline only the major wartime arrangements.

22. The narrative draws on [13].

the Southern Command, a Navy command has performed functions as naval component to CARIBCOM/USOUTHCOM since 1947.<sup>23</sup>

Navy component assignments are shown in figure 6.

Figure 6. USSOUTHCOM Navy Components



### Componency under the “Outline Command Plan”

Both the Atlantic Fleet and the Caribbean Command (CARIBCOM) were included in the 1946 “Outline Command Plan.” The Outline Command Plan established theater commanders responsible to the JCS and in effect was the first Unified Command Plan. Actual command arrangements affecting the Latin American region—the stand-up of CINCLANTFLT and CINCCARIB—were effected in November 1947. The joint Caribbean Command was tasked to defend the U.S. through its area, defend the sea and air lines of communications (SLOCS/ALOCS), secure the Panama Canal, and support CINCLANTFLT. CNO coordinated between CINCCARIB and CINCLANTFLT.

23. Caribbean Command became Southern Command in 1963.

As part of this arrangement, the Navy assigned the Caribbean Sea Frontier (COMCARIBSEAFRON) as CARIBCOM's naval component. The Panama Sea Frontier was disestablished and became a subordinate sector of COMCARIBSEAFRON. Naval forces assigned to CARIBCOM consisted of a submarine squadron at Panama and maritime patrol forces. Inasmuch as CARIBCOM provided only strategic direction, operational control of these forces remained within the Navy command and structure.

Since CARIBCOM's area of responsibility extended only so far as the Panama Canal approaches and the Caribbean, LANTCOM retained responsibility for all other Atlantic Latin American waters. CINCPAC retained responsibility for Pacific waters not associated with defense of the Panama Canal until 1972, when they were transferred to LANTCOM.

### LANTCOM gains all the Latin American water areas

The 1947 UCP arrangement did not last long. As discussed, CINCCARIB had responsibilities for both SLOC protection in the Caribbean and the maritime approaches to the Panama Canal. In 1950, CINCLANT was assigned these missions as well as responsibility for coordination with British, Dutch, and Venezuelan authorities in protecting oil fields and facilities. COMCARIBSEAFRON now reported to both CINCs, depending on the mission. A 1956 UCP revision further altered these responsibilities. All responsibilities for defending the United States through the Caribbean, as well as responsibilities for Caribbean bases, were transferred to CINCLANT. The driving factor behind these changes was a belief that the command and control arrangements affecting the SLOCs to Europe should be under one CINC.<sup>24</sup> CINCCARIB became a land-focused CINC responsible for U.S. interests in the landmass of Central and South America. COMCARIBSEAFRON's primary responsibilities now were with CINCLANT/CINCLANTFLT. In effect, CARIBCOM did not require a naval component because it had no maritime responsibilities.

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24. Most resupply for Europe flowed through the Caribbean SLOCs.

## USSOUTHCOM established; naval components come and go

The land-oriented CARIBCOM was redesignated U.S. Southern Command during the UCP revision of 1963. Commander, 15th Naval District, located in Panama, was designated USSOUTHCOM's naval component, using the designation Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command (COMUSNAVSO). Water areas in the Caribbean/Gulf of Mexico and contiguous to the Latin American landmass remained under the cognizance of CINCLANT with CINCLANTFLT as his naval component. The 1971 and 1975 UCP reviews recommended disestablishment of USSOUTHCOM. President Nixon deferred action in 1971 in order to assess political implications, and the issue died. The 1971 UCP revision did reduce USSOUTHCOM's contingency responsibilities to planning for defense of the Panama Canal and disaster relief and evacuation operations. During the 1975 UCP review, President Ford, while declining to disestablish the command, directed that USSOUTHCOM's size and grade structure be reduced "to the utmost." In effecting this directive, USSOUTHCOM lost its service components. What component responsibilities there were, devolved to U.S. Naval Station Panama. This arrangement lasted until 1985.

## USCOMSOLANT redux and other Navy regional players

Two years after the 1956 UCP revision that firmly made all Latin American waters his responsibility, USCINCLANT's naval component, CINCLANTFLT, re-established the South Atlantic Force.<sup>25</sup> There were several driving forces: CNO Admiral Arleigh Burke strongly supported a program of interaction with African navies (SOLANT Amity), Burke also strongly supported upgrading ASW

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25. The Navy initially retained the South Atlantic Force (COMSOLANT) reporting to the Atlantic Fleet at the end of World War II. (COMSOLANT was an additional hat of Commander, Fourth Fleet.) The driving force for retaining the organizational structure was the Atlantic Fleet Commander, Admiral Jonas Ingram, who had commanded Fourth Fleet during the war. Ingram initiated an ambitious program of regional ship visits that fizzled due to lack of operational assets as the fleet drew down. Commander, U.S. South Atlantic Force—a rear admiral and staff—was then disestablished, probably late in 1946.

capabilities of Latin American navies, and CINCLANTFLT needed a regional command to effect interaction. The result was the stand-up of COMSOLANT at Trinidad in 1958.<sup>26</sup> In 1960, COMSOLANT took on responsibilities for planning and directing the annual UNITAS deployment to Latin America.<sup>27</sup> In this hat he operated as a combined Task Force Commander-CTF 138. He also had responsibilities to LANTFLT for ASW planning.

Another Navy player was the CNO and Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV). CNO and OPNAV became the Navy institutional standard-bearers for a series of exchanges and initiatives with Latin American navies under the overall umbrella of CNO's participation as a member of the Inter-American Naval Conference. This conference and subsidiary specialized conferences, along with the CNO-sponsored Inter-American Naval Telecommunications Network, created a considerable amount of staff interactions.<sup>28</sup> In practice, until 1990, the CNO issued invitations to the annual UNITAS exercise as the "sponsor" and host. CNO Admiral James Watkins was particularly active in Latin American affairs. His vision incorporated Latin American support as part of the operational manifestation of the 1980s' Maritime Strategy.

OPNAV, CINCLANTFLT as LANTCOMs naval component, and USCOMSOLANT as the Atlantic Fleet's on-scene operational commander were all considerable, and often independent, regional Navy players. They would remain so until UCP reorganization assigned the water area around South America and in the Caribbean/Gulf of Mexico to USSOUTHCOM. As we will see, their roles changed following this UCP change.

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26. The command relocated to Puerto Rico in 1966.

27. For UNITAS details, see [14].

28. OPNAV also represented the U.S. Navy on the Inter-American Defense Board, the Joint Brazilian-U.S. Defense Commission, and the Joint Mexican-U.S. Defense Commission.

## COMUSNAVSO reborn

Around 1984, the Navy upgraded Naval Station Panama to major command status. It did this in recognition that the command was being increasingly tasked with duties supporting USSOUTHCOM and implementation of the Panama Canal Treaty. In 1985, the Navy re-established a Naval Forces Southern Command. This organization of about 25 billets was headed by a rear admiral (lower half) at Fort Amador, Panama. Its responsibilities were to be USSOUTHCOM's naval component. It also assumed responsibilities as the naval component of JTF Panama responsible for canal defense. Unlike the previous iterations of NAVSO, it acquired operational forces. Special Boat Unit 26 was assigned in 1987; Naval Special Warfare Unit Eight, in 1988; and Mine Division 127, in 1990. These forces, located in Panama, were primarily intended for defense of the canal, but interacted with regional navies. NAVSOUTH was particularly engaged in supporting CINC objectives in Central America through exercises and engagement. Blue-water interaction and OPCON of blue-water assets remained with CINCLANTFLT—LANTCOM's naval component.

## End of the Cold War: new realities and a new Navy component commander

The Cold War ended, coincidentally, with the successful accomplishment of USSOUTHCOM's first combat operation—Operation Just Cause in Panama. At about the same time, ideological conflicts in Central America, which had riveted USSOUTHCOM's attention for a decade or more, ended with negotiated peace in El Salvador and democratic elections in Nicaragua. The remaining major direct threat to U.S. interests was the flow of narcotics from producing Andean countries.

The end of the Cold War and changes in regional conditions and U.S. priorities had a profound impact on USCINCSOUTH, his relationships with other CINCs, and on Navy regional organization supporting the CINCs. In 1990 USCINCSO, General Maxwell Thurman, surprised Navy personnel planners by informing them that he saw no reason for the Navy component one-star flag billet in Panama. This, in turn, led OPNAV to address reorganization of Navy component



for SOUTHCOM. After considering a number of alternatives, CNO recommended the Commander-in-Chief U.S Atlantic Fleet as component commander.<sup>29</sup> On 1 February 1991, CINCLANTFLT assumed responsibilities as Southern Command's naval component commander. A detachment (CINCLANTFLT det South) was maintained in Panama to assist CINCLANTFLT's staff in carrying out responsibilities as Navy component commander to SOUTHCOM.<sup>30</sup>

### The 1995 Unified Command Plan review

The 1995 Unified Command Plan review is seminal to the development of Southern Command. We have seen how it lost control of Caribbean waters during the 1950 UCP review. During intervening UCP reviews strong, and conflicting, efforts had been made both to reduce it to the status of a sub-unified command and to bolster it by assigning waters and additional territorial responsibilities.<sup>31</sup> The net result was continuation of a basically land-oriented unified command.

The 1995 UCP review changed this. The Chairman's terms of reference required that the review address the question: Should each geographic CINC be responsible for both major land and adjoining waters in order to ensure total air, land, and sea capability? Southern Command argued strongly that acquisition of waters adjoining South America, Central America, and the Caribbean would improve unity of command, enhance military-to-military interaction, align U.S. military organization with other U.S agencies and regional organization, and improve counterdrug operations. The U.S. Atlantic Command, supported by the Navy, argued against the reorganization, citing risks to joint training credibility and asserting that it would have little effect

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29. Other commands considered were COMSECONDFLT, Commander Fleet Air Caribbean, USCOMSOLANT, a cruiser-destroyer group, and CO Naval Station Panama Canal.

30. The detachment included a Naval Operations Center.

31. The 1975 review even led to elimination of USSOUTHCOM component staffs, a move that was reversed a decade later.

on counterdrug operations. The Southern Command argument carried the day.<sup>32</sup>

In December 1995 the President signed change 28 to the UCP. Effective 1 January 1996, the waters in a “box” around South America and the west coast of Central America, as well as the 12-n.mi. Caribbean coastal waters from the Venezuela/Guyana border north to the Mexico/Belize border, were reassigned from USACOM to USSOUTHCOM. In a second phase effective 1 June 1997 the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico, including waters south of 28 degrees north and west of 58 degrees east, including island nations and European possessions, were transferred to USSOUTHCOM.

### Establishment of the Western Hemisphere Group<sup>33</sup>

Changes in the Unified Command Plan were not the only events of the mid-1990s to affect naval componentcy. Drawdown of naval forces following the Cold War, coupled with continuing worldwide presence requirements (including deployment of ships and aircraft dedicated to counterdrug operations in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, and eastern Pacific) strained Atlantic Fleet resources.<sup>34</sup> Counterdrug deployments were conducted by “pulsing” ships for short (4- to 6-week) deployments between 6-month battle group deployments to the Mediterranean and/or Persian Gulf. Counterdrug operations (and unscheduled operations in response to the 1993-94 Haiti crisis) caused a situation where the “fleet had been run hard.”<sup>35</sup>

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32. The arguments are laid out in [15]. The Commander of U.S. Atlantic Command at the time, General John Sheehan, argued that his opposition also stemmed from a belief that U.S. command structure far exceeded what was required for combat capability. See [16].

33. For a comprehensive oral history of the establishment of WESTHEMGRU see [17].

34. The Navy’s total number of surface warships (battleships, cruisers, destroyers, and frigates) dropped from 212 in 1989 to 128 in 1995: a 40-percent reduction. Total ship assets dropped from 592 to 392.

35. See interview with Roger Whiteway in [17].

Reduced ship numbers and continuing, even increased, deployments were addressed by fleet-wide reorganization of operational assets in 1995.<sup>36</sup> As part of this reorganization, the Atlantic Fleet created an entirely new entity in the Navy chain of command--the Western Hemisphere Group--on 1 September 1995. This new organization was assigned 16 ships (Aegis cruisers, destroyers, and frigates) with a primary mission of conducting the counterdrug, UNITAS, presence, and contingency missions in the Latin American region. Upon establishment, the Western Hemisphere Group comprised about 25 percent of the surface combatant forces assigned to the Atlantic Fleet.<sup>37</sup>

The Western Hemisphere Group (WESTHEMGRU) was established in order to:

- Reduce operational expenditures
- Reduce operational instability and personnel tempo for ships assigned to Surface Force Atlantic Fleet
- Improve efficiency of Atlantic Fleet operations, including creation of a force that would be able to institutionalize counterdrug and other missions
- Make a statement about the political importance of the region.<sup>38</sup>

These reorganization goals were met, in part, through the following measures: homeporting WESTHEMGRU ships in Mayport, Florida, and Pascagoula, Mississippi, to be nearer their major operating areas; training the group's ships to mission (WESTHEMGRU ships received

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36. The reorganization, affecting both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets, included reorganizing surface combatants into core battle groups and changes in the inter-deployment training cycle (including closure of the Fleet Training Center at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba).

37. According to Roger Whiteway, analysis conducted by CINCLANTFLT prior to reorganization indicated that 25 percent of the surface combatant force had been deploying to the Latin American region under the "surge deployment" method [17].

38. Reasons for establishment of WESTHEMGRU derived from interview with Admiral William J. Flanagan in [17] and [18-19].

only operations-directed vice battle group training); regularizing and lengthening the counterdrug deployments; and savings on selected ship, sensor, and weapons upgrades.<sup>39</sup>

Western Hemisphere Group was not created in response to near-simultaneous Unified Command Plan changes. Decisions were largely driven by Navy priorities related to responsibilities for organizing, training, and equipping forces and not by unified CINC priorities. WESTHEMGRU would, however, quickly assume attributes of componency.

### The Western Hemisphere Group becomes a “functional” naval component commander

Establishment of the Western Hemisphere Group in 1995 resolved where Atlantic Fleet (but not Pacific Fleet) surface combatant ships would come for routine Latin American regional operations. It did not resolve Navy regional command relationships. Four major commands remained directly involved in Navy Latin American operations:

- CINCLANTFLT remained the Navy component commander for both U.S. Southern Command and for U.S. Atlantic Command.
- COMWESTHEMGRU was given Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) responsibilities for 13-16 surface combatant ships focused on providing support for counterdrug operations and UNITAS.
- USCOMSOLANT, in Puerto Rico and reporting directly to CINCLANTFLT, retained primary responsibility for planning

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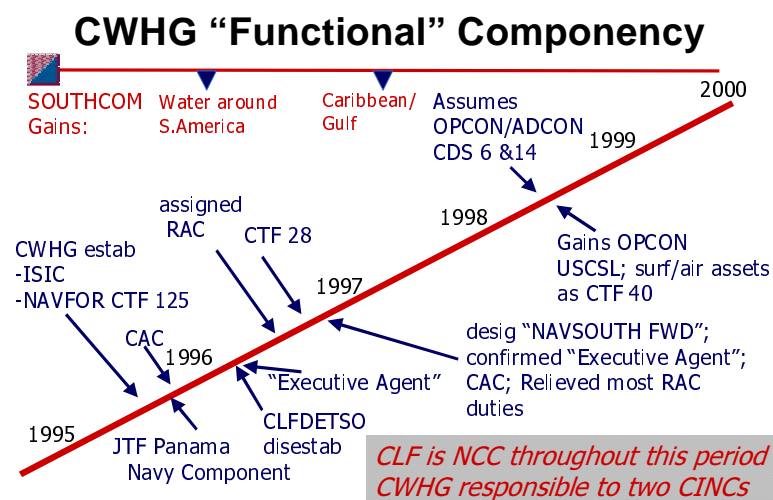
39. Ships were deployed for 4 months on counter-drug operations (operating 80-85 percent of the time underway). UNITAS deployments remained about 5 months in length, also at a fairly high operating tempo [20 and 17, p.6].

and conducting the JCS-directed UNITAS exercise with Latin American navies.<sup>40</sup>

- COMSECONDFLT was responsible for Naval service-specific training, joint training, contingency operations (as CJTF 120), and operational control and scheduling of Atlantic Fleet ships operating in regional waters.

Over the next 3 years, Navy componentcy issues and command arrangements involving these commands were addressed in a variety of ways. The Western Hemisphere Group is at the center of these issues and arrangements. Figure 7 shows a timeline of COMWESTHEMGRU’s evolution. We next discuss these developments in sequence.

Figure 7. COMWESTHEMGRU “Functional” Componentcy



40. USCOMSOLANT was also responsible for planning and conduct of the West African Training Cruise. He also retained operational and planning responsibilities under the TF 84 organization.

## Contingency Naval Force and “Administrative Naval Component”

From a “componency” standpoint, COMWESTHEMGRU’s history is one of assuming ever increasing responsibilities in support of regional CINCs. COMWESTHEMGRU’s formal tasking when it was established was both Navy and joint in character. Tasking in support of Navy missions consisted of:

- Commander and Immediate Superior in Command (ISIC) for the 16 ships assigned. In this “hat,” COMWESTHEMGRU reported (OPCON and ADCON) to Commander Naval Surface Force Atlantic and was responsible for training and readiness of assigned ships that were to be prepared for “operational missions focused on counterdrug requirements, bilateral exercises, UNITAS, and Caribbean contingency operations.”
- Center for Excellence for Joint Littoral Warfare and Doctrine Development [19].

Tasking in support of unified CINC missions (in this case USACOM, who was then responsible for water areas of the region) was:

- Naval force component commander (CTF 125) for Commander, Joint Task Force 120 (COMSECONDFLT) when Task Force 125 activated. In this tasking, WESTHEMGRU was to be prepared to conduct operations in support of joint or fleet tasking.

Assignment as ISIC and as SECONDFLT Naval force component commander (CJTF 125) was embodied in ALLANTFLT 19/95, which announced a reorganization of the Atlantic Fleet [21].

Before the end of 1995, COMWESTHEMGRU received two other formal taskings, both related to support for USSOUTHCOM:

- Caribbean Area Coordinator (CAC), and
- Naval Force Component Commander for CJTF Panama.

Caribbean Area Coordinator duties were transferred with the disestablishment of Commander Fleet Air Forces Caribbean (COMFAIRCARIB). Duties included: oversight of the Caribbean Basin,

Caribbean port visits, Area Representative for the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, oversight of the Vieques Memorandum of Understanding, and emergency preparedness and civil disturbance responsibilities in the Caribbean. This assignment supported USACOM until USSOUTHCOM assumed responsibility for waters [22].

Naval force component commander for CJTF Panama was assigned in November 1995. It gave WESTHEMGRU responsibilities for defense of the Panama Canal under CJTF Panama and concomitant planning and exercise responsibilities. It directly supported U.S. Southern Command. More comprehensively, WESTHEMGRU assumed planning and operational duties performed by CINCLANTFLT Detachment South, planning and executing Navy participation in USSOUTHCOM naval exercises. CINCLANTFLT Detachment South was disestablished 1 April 1996, transitioning to a small liaison cell.

In addition, CINCLANTFLT and COMWESTHEMGRU had apparently discussed and agreed upon two other missions/tasks. Both involved the component relationship between CINCLANTFLT and USSOUTHCOM. These, as briefed in November 1995, were:

- Manager of all counterdrug functions for CINCLANTFLT
- Executive agent” for dealing with USCINCSOUTH. “Executive Agency,” while an always evolving concept, involved WESTHEMGRU becoming *the* point of contact for Southern Command in Navy matters.<sup>41</sup>

COMWESTHEMGRU then had been delegated, and assumed, attributes of Navy component from its establishment. By the end of 1995 most of these had been formally assigned. These Navy component functions were largely limited to planning and coordination. WESTHEMGRU’s operational and administrative control extended only to WESTHEMGRU ships conducting training.

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41. See [19]. Executive Agency would be formally assigned in February 1996. Its meaning was never formally defined.

## Routine operational control is added to the mix

As discussed above, water areas around South America and the west coast of Central America transferred to USSOUTHCOM on 1 January 1996. Organizationally, for much of the year nothing changed. In October 1996 COMSECONDFLT created Task Force 28, consisting of independent deployers operating in both the Caribbean Sea and Eastern Pacific [23].<sup>42</sup> COMWESTHEMGRU was assigned as CTF 28. This arrangement assigned WESTHEMGRU OPCON of these Second Fleet deployers. OPCON was irrespective of which CINC's (USSOUTHCOM or USACOM) waters the ships were operating in.<sup>43</sup> This arrangement had two advantages: it enabled COMSECONDFLT to manage OPCON of units operating in the USSOUTHCOM AOR and it provided WESTHEMGRU with a way to bridge the gap between its Service role and the commands' "functional" componenty mandate.

ALLANTFLT 015/96, entitled "Realignment of Navy Functions in Caribbean and LATAM Area," reaffirmed previous assignments of functions to WESTHEMGRU [24]. It also made a number of key adjustments. This message:

- Confirmed COMWESTHEMGRU as JTF Panama Naval Component.
- Confirmed COMWESTHEMGRU as NAVFOR for CJTF 120 if activated.
- Confirmed COMWESTHEMGRU as CTF 28.
- Relieved COMWESTHEMGRU of routine shore establishment management administrative assignments coincident to Regional Area Coordinator (RAC) duties. Commander Naval base Jacksonville was assigned duties as Caribbean RAC.

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42. Many of these ships were WESTHEMGRU ships on counterdrug deployments.

43. Recall that the waters of the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico did not transfer from USACOM to USSOUTHCOM until 1 June 1997.



- Confirmed COMWESTHEMGRU as Caribbean Area Coordinator. Confirmed assignment of RAC/CAC duties related to competency (e.g., serving as area representative to Puerto Rico, coordinating ship visits, providing civil and disaster assistance, overseeing Vieques MOU).<sup>44</sup>
- Confirmed COMWESTHEMGRU as CINCLANTFLT “Executive Agent for Navy Component Issues.” For the first time these duties were enumerated.<sup>45</sup>

The delegated responsibilities, and re-delegated functions, provided a solid base for COMWESTHEMGRU focus on support for USSOUTHCOM. For the first time, Executive Agent and Caribbean Area Coordinator duties were enumerated. Responsibilities with specific operational content included exercising OPCON of assigned forces, coordinating Panama Canal Transits, conducting operations, providing logistics, planning and coordinating theater engagement, and planning and executing regional maritime defense. COMWESTHEMGRU had moved well away from administrative support of CINCLANTFLT’s naval component responsibilities. He had achieved near parity as a “functional” operational Navy component commander.

This functional competency was recognized. ALLLANTFLT 015/ 96 designated COMWESTHEMGRU:

- “NAVSOUTH (Forward) for USSOUTHCOM [24].”

Coincident to this designation, WESTHEMGRU was directed to report OPCON to CINCLANTFLT. (Previously, it had reported through COMNAVSURFLANT). This change in reporting facilitated COMWESTHEMGRU’s Executive Agent role by permitting direct reporting, supported the idea of “one-stop shopping” for routine

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44. COMWESTHEMGRU had acquired Regional Coordination functions in July 1996 with promulgation of revised fleet regulations. The command was not staffed to manage many of these numerous and technical requirements.

45. COMWESTHEMGRU was also confirmed as “CINCLANTFLT’s subject matter expert for the SOUTHCOM AOR.”

naval matters, and facilitated reporting as CJTF Panama by eliminating COMNAVSURFLANT from the chain. Reporting arrangements under the CJTF 125 and CTF 28 roles were not changed.

Additional “operational” adjustments in 1998 further solidified COMWESTHEMGRU’s “functional competency.” Both occurred on 1 August 1998.

- ALLANTFLT 013/98 revised CINCLANTFLT Operation Order 2000 to clarify command arrangements. USCOMSOLANT (CTF 138), who heretofore had been reporting directly to CINCLANTFLT, was realigned to report OPCON to COMWESTHEMGRU [25].<sup>46</sup>
- COMWESTHEMGRU was given OPCON of assigned surface and air assets operating in the SOUTHCOM AOR. There were some exceptions: Surface and air mine countermeasures and Second Fleet units in the AOR for training were excluded. CTF 42/144 retained OPCON of submarines, and Second Naval Construction Brigade retained OPCON of all Naval Construction Battalion assets [27].<sup>47</sup>

By the end of the summer of 1998, COMWESTHEMGRU appears to have been exercising almost all Southern Command Navy component functions. For routine support, the command was, in all but name, the Navy component commander. Reporting to CINCLANTFLT, COMWESTHEMGRU now planned engagement and exercises, reviewed plans, monitored events, conducted training, directed deployments, and exercised OPCON over deploying units supporting Southern Command. COMWESTHEMGRU did not perform those

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46. CINCLANTFLT considered designating USCOMSOLANT as a “proto Fourth Fleet,” with WESTHEMGRU in a supporting role. This proposal was rejected because funding was not available to provide COMSOLANT adequate command and control facilities. C4I facilities existed at WESTHEMGRU headquarters and this drove the decision [26].

47. At about the same time a Surface Force Atlantic reorganization assigned Commander Destroyer Squadrons 6 and 14 OPCON and ADCON to COMWESTHEMGRU.

Service component commander functions related to planning, programming, and budgeting and other Service-unique functions.<sup>48</sup>

## Establishment of Naval Forces South

While retaining Navy componentcy, CINCLANTFLT sought to improve Navy support to USCINCSOUTH by assigning an in-theater, full-time flag officer and staff that would have no focus other than regional operations and engagement. In December 1997, he approved a plan that would raise USCOMSOLANT to two-star rank and have him assigned as CINCLANTFLT's "executive agent." Under this scheme, COMWESTHEMGRU would report to USCOMSOLANT as deputy (he would report to COMNAVSURFLANT for ISIC matters). This proposal, which would have reversed most of the arrangements of ALLANTFLT 015/96, was never implemented [28].<sup>49</sup>

By early 1999 the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations was also exploring options to provide a dedicated, full-time Navy component commander to USSOUTHCOM. OPNAV concerns centered on a desire to have a full time Navy advisor to the unified commander and a full-time "senior" Navy officer representing Service interests in Puerto Rico [3].<sup>50</sup>

OPNAV recognized that significant Navy facilities related to both Service training and operations in support of Southern Command were located in Puerto Rico. Preserving access to these facilities was impor-

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48. Service component commander functions are listed in [8].

49. Objections related to C4I infrastructure funding apparently defeated the recommendation.

50. Options presented to CNO included retaining the USCOMSOLANT flag billet, relocating it in Mayport, and retaining the flag officer as an operational deploying commander. The option approved by the CNO included assigning operational responsibilities to deputy COMWESTHEMGRU and shifting ISIC responsibilities to Commander Destroyer Squadrons 6 and 14. These were modified before presentation to USCINCSO after discussions between OPNAV and CINCLANTFLT staffs.

tant. Since the disestablishment of COMFAIRCARIB in 1995, no full-time Navy flag officer had been present on the island. OPNAV, using the model of Commander Naval Forces Marianas in the Pacific, intended to again provide full-time flag liaison to the Government of Puerto Rico for civil-military matters. OPNAV also believed that, if possible, the Navy flag officer should have central coordinating authority for joint matters [3].

It should be noted that OPNAV interest in establishment of COMUSNAVSO in Puerto Rico pre-dated the 19 April 1999 death of security guard David Sanes Rodriguez in a bombing accident at Vieques. This incident set in train a series of events limiting access to the inner range at the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Range on Vieques. Events following the the bombing accident did, however, affect the focus, structure, and organization of the new command.<sup>51</sup>

In May 1999, CNO presented USCINCSO was presented with a proposal that would:

- Re-designate USCOMSOLANT as COMUSNAVSO
- Upgrade the billet to two stars
- Assign COMUSNAVSO as Commander Task Force 40
- Assign COMUSNAVSO additional duty as “USSOUTHCOM Representative to Puerto Rico” responsible for liaison with the Commonwealth<sup>52</sup>
- Assign COMUSNAVSO as USCINCSO’s Navy Component Commander.
- Redesignate COMWESTHEMGRU as COMNAVSURFGRU Two, a one-star billet reporting operationally and administra-

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51. It also appears to have speeded up decision making related to establishment of COMUSNAVSO. Managing the relationship with the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico subsequently entailed a major effort by the command.

52. Similar to COMNAVMARIANIAS’ additional duties as USCINCPAC Representative Guam.

tively to CINCLANTFLT and under a dual hat operationally to COMUSNAVSO [4].

USCINCSO concurred with all recommendations except the “USSOUTHCOM Representative Puerto Rico” designation. COMUSNAVSO was established on 17 February 2000 as a major headquarters staff [5].<sup>53</sup>

## Summary

Since the beginning of the nation, the Navy has organized and provided forces in the part of the world that today is U.S. Southern Command’s area of responsibility. During the Cold War, the Navy provided component commanders for the two regional CINCs—CINCLANT/CINCUSACOM and CINCCARIB/USCINCSO.

Until the mid-1990s, priority went to support for CINCLANT/CINCUSACOM. This CINC was responsible for the maritime area. From a Navy perspective, the need for unity of command of maritime regions was an article of faith. World War II experience had proved that the Caribbean/Gulf of Mexico region was the primary sea line of communications to support Europe. Supplies and petroleum for NATO would pass through the region in the event of war with the Warsaw Pact.<sup>54</sup>

The end of the Cold War changed the equation. The major potential maritime threat was not to the sea lines to Europe; it was from drugs transiting sea and air lines of communications from South America.

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53. Stand-up of the command had been postponed from 10 December 1999.

54. Naval forces were heavily committed to regional deployment. As an example, an amphibious ready group was maintained on station in the Caribbean from the mid-1950s until at least 1979. This deployment under LANTCOM OPCON held equal status with amphibious force deployments to the Mediterranean. Major combat deployments occurred in connection with the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), intervention in the Dominican Republic (1965), and the invasion of Grenada (1983). Major force deployments supported SOUTHCOM objectives in Central America during the 1980s.

Unity of command was still necessary, but now the threat and the major SLOC were different. The UCP change of 1995 recognized this shift by assigning the maritime areas around South America and in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico to USSOUTHCOM.

The Navy's response included an experiment with what we have termed functional componency, where CINCLANTFLT retained the responsibility of Navy component commander to USCINCSO, but delegated most of the functions to COMWESTHEMGRU. This appears to have been workable, but cumbersome in areas. COMWESTHEMGRU was located outside the region and retained a focus on ISIC duties that could detract from component duties. Changes in the concept of Fleet Commander responsibilities (especially a focus on Title 10 Service responsibilities to train, equip and organize), Navy flag requirements related to bases in Puerto Rico, and a recognition that USSOUTHCOM could be better served led to establishment of COMUSNAVSO.

The functions exercised by COMWESTHEMGRU were both administrative and operational. CINCLANTFLT, as the actual Navy component commander, retained functions related to program requirements and the POM process. It also retained some functions related to Service responsibilities for internal administration. Designation of COMUSNAVSO as USCINCSO's Navy component commander shares some of the same attributes as the COMWESTHEMGRU arrangement. Although a "full-time" Navy component commander, COMUSNAVSO does not have claimant (N-8) responsibilities. Like WESTHEMGRU, COMUSNAVSO is "operationally focused," with reachback to CINCLANTFLT for some functions [6-7].

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