MULTI-FUNCTIONAL BRIGADE–STRIKE:

ENHANCING CORPS-LEVEL FIRES & INTELLIGENCE INTEGRATION

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THREE-PART SERIES

Part III looks forward, addressing future applications, capability gaps, and recommendations for leaders, practioners, and policymakers tasked with ensuring the relevance and effectivness of strike formations.

PART III

For MFB-Strike to fulfill its potential, the Army must invest in network resilience, PED codification, and doctrinal interoperability. The 75th Field Artillery Brigade's experience at WFX 25-04 highlighted the need for robust command and signal capabilities, redundancy in services, and seamless integration across coalition partners. These lessons carry Army-wide implications for training, doctrine, and force design.

FORCE FIELD ARTILLERY HEADQUARTERS – COMMAND & SIGNAL CAPABILITIES

Network Management

75th FAB utilized a network architecture which leveraged fiber capabilities which facilitated a high-speed communications infrastructure. With the increased users from the integration of the additional MFB-Strike elements, the unit converted a SIPR access case (i.e. network switches) into an additional Mission Partner Environment (MPE) access case due to a lesser demand for SIPR versus the MPE.

The current MTOE allows 75th FAB to operate three enclaves. In large-scale combat operations, a heavier reliance on SIPR and a coalition enclave to fulfill intelligence and targeting requirements would create the need for additional user access cases to meet demands.

This operation replicated ideal conditions for integrating the additional MFB-Strike assets, but it wasn't able to replicate the tactical assets (lower tactical internet) required to fully exercise the MCP. Future learning demands would need to replicate this ability to perform command and control on lower tactical internet capabilities to maintain agility and survivability in large-scale combat operations.

Of note, a real-world storm at Fort Cavazos caused a power outage to the IIIAC MCP, which resulted in the loss of multiple services to include chat, voice conference, and the Virtual Joint Operations Center (VJOC), a collaborative tool to facilitate drawing tools on graphics for briefings. The outage prompted a conversation of alternate locations where key

services could be hosted and the IIIAC commander and key staff could maneuver to maintain command and control. Of note, 75th FAB has one of the smallest signal support elements. The brigade has both a smaller brigade S-6 section, and a signal company compared to most brigade combat teams. For the FFAHQ to host additional services and replicate the Corps' services as a redundant option, MFB-Strike would need more robust servers/hardware as well as additional Soldiers to maintain them. Implied would be the hardware requirement to be mobile to maintain agility for the FFAHQ's survivability.

Maven Smart System (MSS) Software

MFB-Strike leveraged Maven Smart System (MSS) as a planning tool and to maintain the common operational picture (COP).

The MFB-Strike's Fires Lethal Element was able to parallel plan with the IIIAC targeting section due to the collaborative nature that MSS provides.

MFB-Strike integrated the Deliberate Targeting Workbench as a data source into a planning map to visualize where the target sets were assessed to be across the battlefield. The real-time, live-data capability of MSS contributed to the efficiency of the future and current operations cells. This enabled the MFB-Strike planners to position batteries by joint ATO day to best service targets assigned to the headquarters. By using MSS, MFB-Strike increased shared understanding across the Corps by developing a knowledge management structure that delineated targets and PAAs for firing batteries by each ATO day which could be refined and seamlessly transitioned from future to current operations.

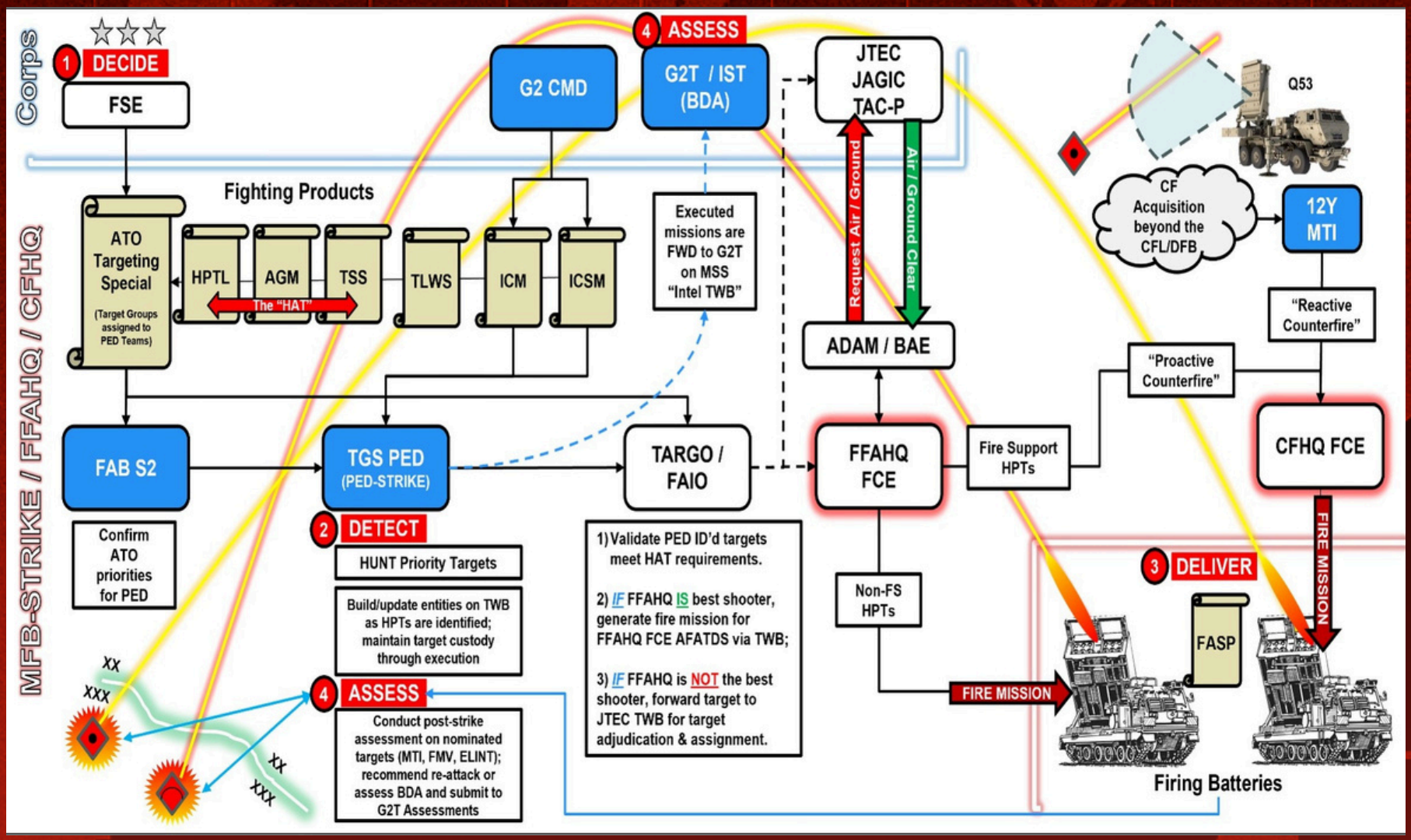

FIGURE 3. MFB-STRIKE TARGETING CONCEPT (IMAGE PROVIDED BY AUTHORS)

CONCLUSION

WFX 25-04 proved to be a valuable opportunity for the 75th FAB to test the MFB-Strike concept. The augmenting capabilities provided to the FAB from across IIIAC enhanced its abilities to serve as an FFAHQ. These capabilities enabled the FAB's contributions to the Corps' targeting efforts and added a measure of autonomy in its ability to sense and strike.

The Army's method for approaching multinational interoperability provides a valuable framework to describe how MFB-Strike needs to combine its multiple capabilities under a single headquarters to succeed. To truly achieve integration instead of merely multi-disciplinary compatibility or, at worst, deconfliction of assets, MFB-Strike requires human, procedural, and technical interoperability mechanisms.

Relationships between the individual capabilities, their ending headquarters, and team building across the MFB-Strike enterprise lends itself to the trust required to provide autonomous targeting contributions not mired by the friction of a lack of familiarity. Procedural understanding of each component's contributions to the targeting process through both education and iterative execution builds proficiency and provides opportunities to refine standard operating procedures. Finally, technical solutions to include communications equipment and the means to improve compatibility with multinational partners provide the digital backbone that capitalizes on the interpersonal and procedural foundations that enable successful targeting.

MFB-Strike's performance during WFX 25-04 enabled equities across all warfighting functions to learn. Future operations and experimentation could help inform the Army to cement best practices of the organization and refine interpersonal, procedural, and technical solution improvements.

END OF SERIES

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COL STEPHEN WALKER currently serves as the G3 for the III Armored Corps. He recently served as the Brigade Commander for the 75th Field Artillery Brigade. During his command of the 75th FAB, he participated in multiple Warfighter exercises and "Division in the Dirt" NTC rotations as part of the brigade's role serving as the IIIAC's Force Field Artillery Headquarters.

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