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Joint Intermediate Force Capabilities Office (JIFCO)

Gray Zone Competition:
Campaigning below the Level of Armed
Conflict

March 5, 2024





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Panelists



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IFC Overview



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IFC Challenges & Experimentation with Allies & Partners



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Col Paul Meagher, USMC

Staff Judge Advocate
Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC)
Legal implications of IFC use in Gray Zone competition

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What are "Intermediate Force Capabilities"?

Intermediate Force Capabilities (IFC) include everything between presence and lethality

Intermediate Force: The application of force to deliver effects below lethal intent, when the presence and threat of force is insufficient, and the application of lethal force is unsuitable or undesirable, in order to temporarily impair, disrupt, delay, or neutralize targets across all domains.
-2023 Joint Concept for Competing

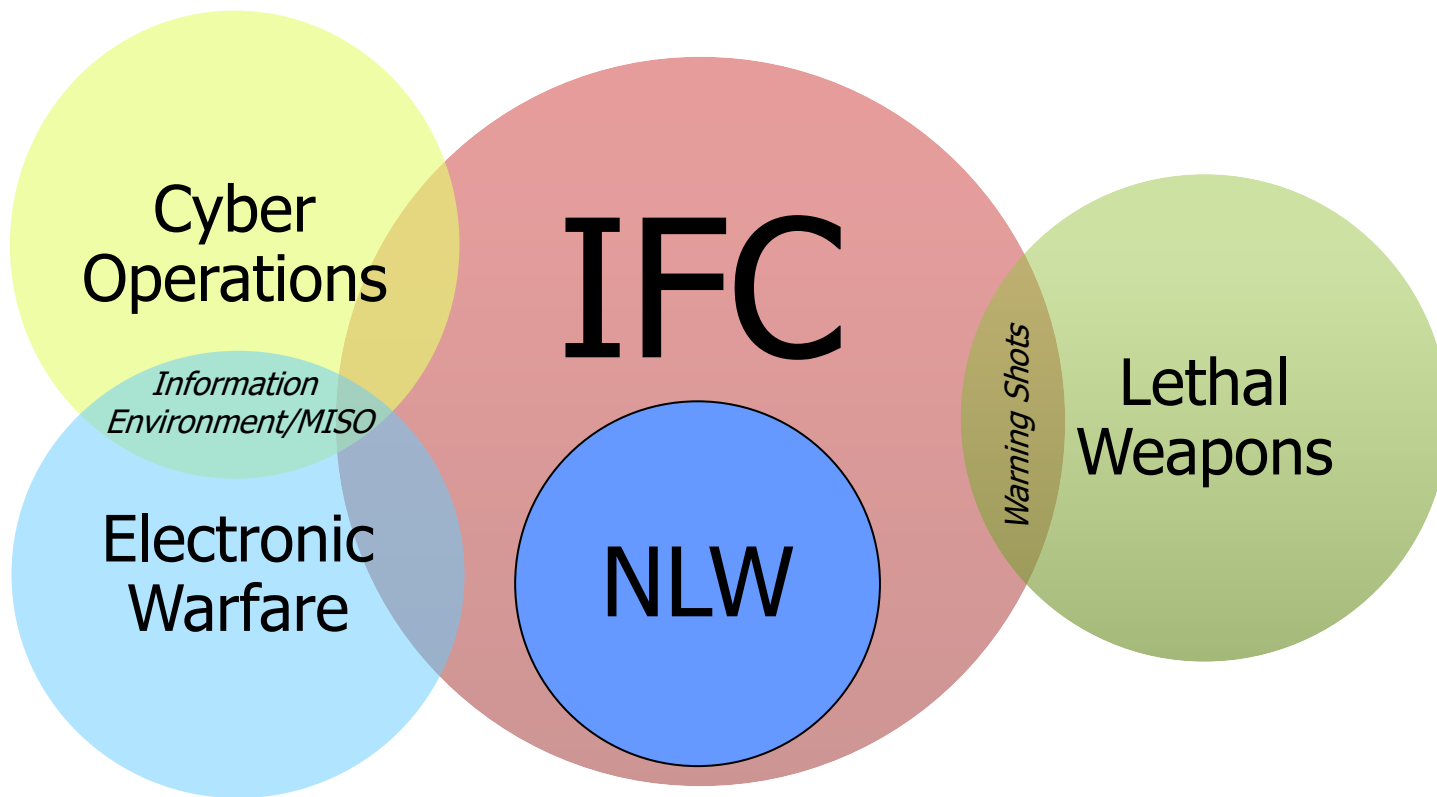
Benefits of IFCs

- ✓ Enable partners and allies with low-risk tools
- ✓ Impose opportunity costs on adversaries without escalation
- ✓ Maintain credibility in Information Space across the competition continuum
- ✓ Expand decision time and space for leadership at all levels
- ✓ Allow warfighters to determine intent at range
- ✓ Facilitate Logistics Operations in a contested environment
- ✓ Enable decisive Recon/Counter Recon Ops below the level of armed conflict



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IFCs Bridge the Gap Between Presence & Lethal Intent



IFCs ***include*** a vast array of existing capabilities that are already being employed to proactively engage while **campaigning below the level of armed conflict**.
Investment in NLW provides a critical enhancement to the IFC toolbox.

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Utility of IFCs Across Spectrum of Conflict

The "Gray Zone" dominates any conceptual Spectrum of Warfare and is ideally suited for Intermediate Force Capabilities



Continuum of Operations

IFCs are a ***strategic risk mitigation investment*** that provide warfighters tools to seize the initiative while campaigning below the level of armed conflict.



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IFCs in Information Space



IFCs are a ***strategic risk mitigation investment*** that provide our warfighters the tools to campaign below the level of armed conflict while **controlling the narrative** and without losing credibility in **Information Space**.

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Critical Enabler of Integrated Deterrence

“Mutually-beneficial **Alliances and partnerships** are an enduring strength for the United States, and are critical to achieving our objectives”
-**2022 NDS Fact Sheet**

- The NDS is centered on deterrence; diplomatic and economic deterrence play much larger roles than in the past; military power has been recast
- The future is all about limited access, contested access, stand-in forces; without access, deterrence is ineffective
- Interactions with the human terrain/domain require IFC because we must go where we are not welcome
- Deterrence requires managing human terrain as its own domain; winning the battles of access and informational narratives requires scalable military power that manages and controls escalation

“The NATO SAS-151 series of wargames has shown conclusively that IFC provide an important capability set to **seize the initiative** and **manage escalation** during conflict below the threshold of interstate war”

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Why "Intermediate Force Capabilities"?

- IFC allow the Joint Force, allies, and partners to counter gray zone activities and conduct campaign actions
- IFC create physical stand-off and generate time for assessment



CCG malign activity in the East China Sea

- Proof is in the 2021 NATO Maritime Wargame. The scenario used for the game involved threats to a NATO Naval Task Group in a confined and contested waterway

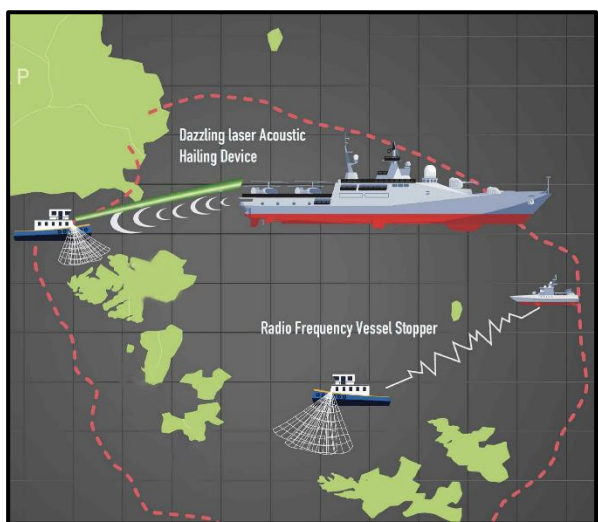
IFCs **de-escalate** tactical flashpoints, **prevent miscalculation**, and **avoid strategic crises**



Maritime Security/Coastal Defense Vignette

MALIGN ACTIVITIES IN THE PACIFIC OCEAN:

- Adversaries are taking part in illegal fishing practices while also imposing friction by encroaching on other nation's exclusionary economic zones.
- Adversary forces may employ SOF, violent extremist organizations (VEOs), coast guard, and/or civilian fishing vessels to conduct reconnaissance, disrupt military operations and activities, and when possible, provoke violent responses for transmission via social media.



INTERMEDIATE FORCE CAPABILITIES (IFCs):

- **Dazzling Lasers and Acoustic Hailing Devices** from afloat and ashore provide time and space to determine intent.
- **Active Denial System** counter-personnel capability employed to disrupt potential SOF, VEOs, and fishing vessels from conducting hostile and illegal activities.
- **Directed Energy High Powered Microwave Vessel Stopper** affect the operational performance of outboard motors.

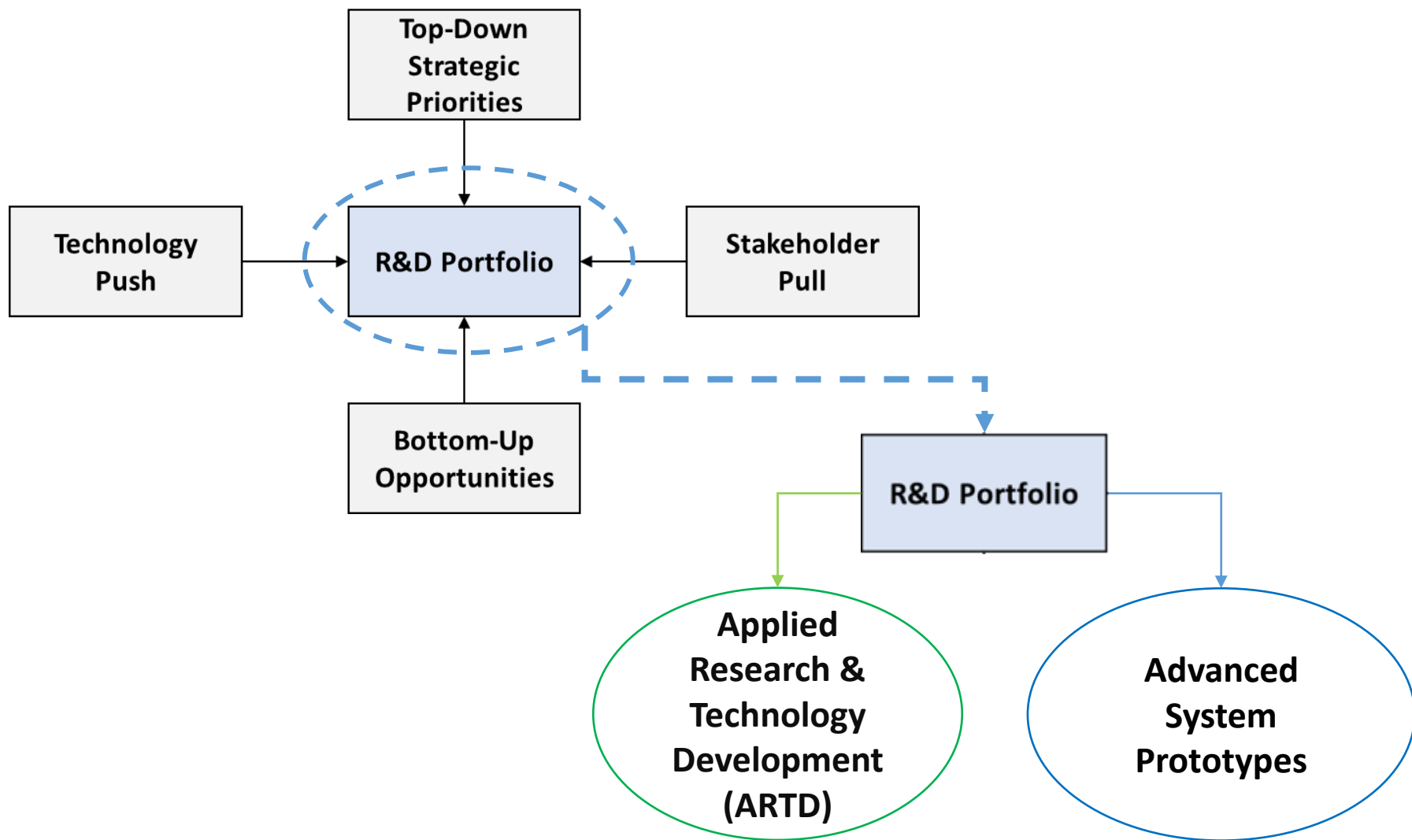
OPERATIONAL IMPACT:

- Expand decision time/space by boosting versatility to avoid, mitigate, or withstand adversary actions.
- Increase opportunity costs to adversaries.
- Enable proactive operations while reducing risk in information space.





Research & Development Drivers





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Applied Research & Technology Development

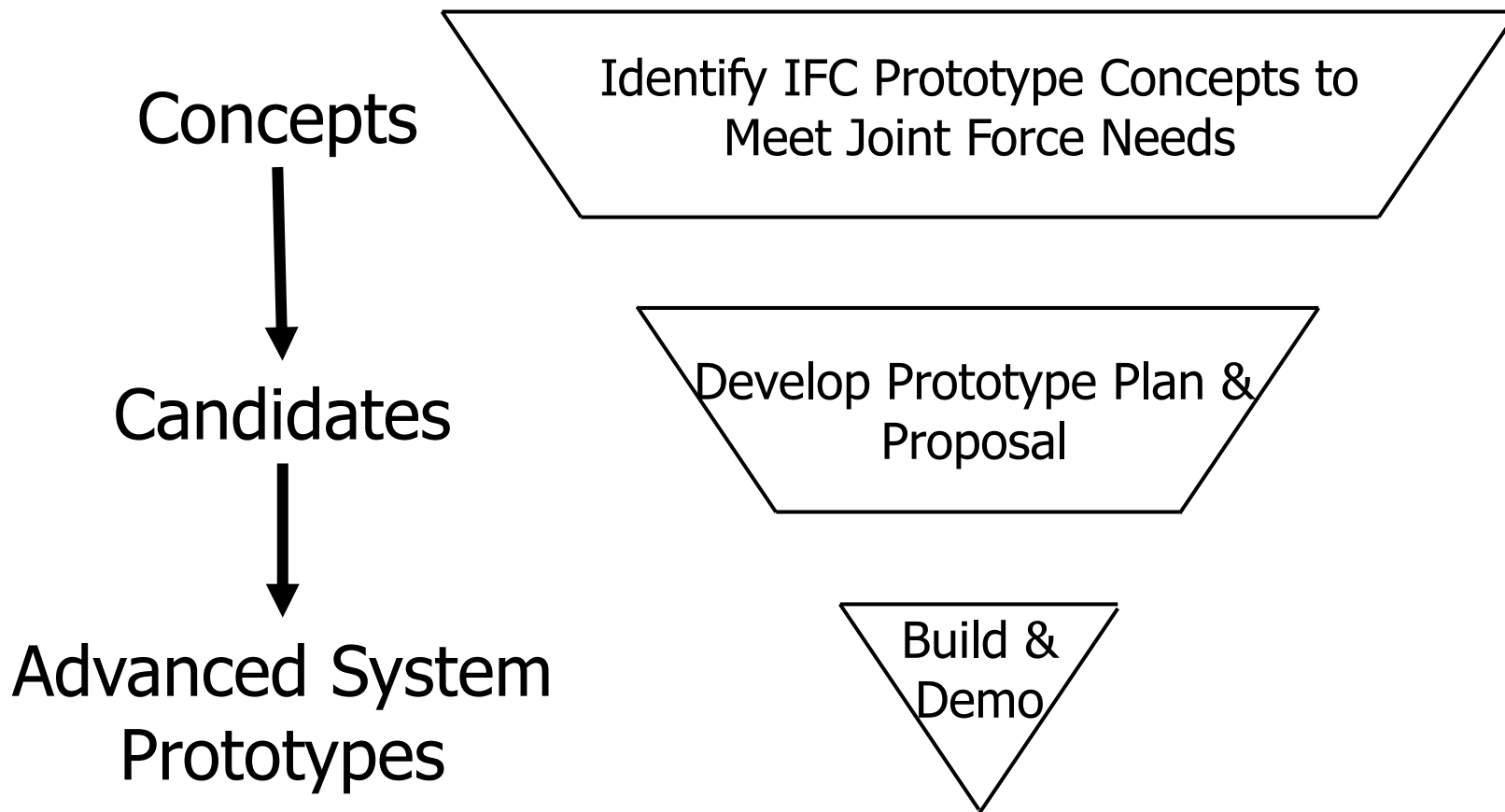


- Requirements-informed and science and technology objective-aligned applied research and technology development projects focused on building the IFC knowledge and technology base.
- Leverage technology opportunities and taking advantage of novel or emerging technologies.
- Execute enabling research and studies to identify potential prototype concepts to advance.
- Reduce risk by....

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Advanced Prototyping





NLW-IFC Technologies

Current

40mm Munitions Stingball Grenade 12 Gauge Munitions



Tethered TASER



Stun Grenades



Acoustic Hailers



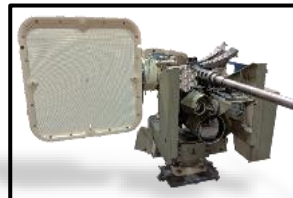
Dazzling Lasers



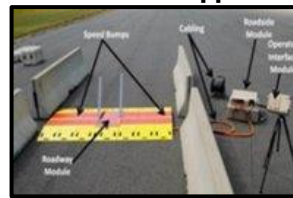
Short/Long Range

Near Term Prototypes

Escalation of Force CROWS IFC Kit



Pre-Emplaced Electrical Vehicle Stopper



Directed Energy Vehicle Stopper



Directed Energy Vessel Stopper



Future

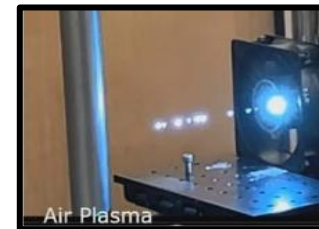
Reactive Field Pre-Emplaced Vehicle Stopper



Millimeter Wave Active Denial System (Solid-State)



Laser-Induced Plasma



Audio / Physical / Thermal Effects at Extended Range



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Legal Implications of IFCs



- Use of Force under International Law & US policy
- Law of War – Core Principles
 - Weapon Reviews for LOW Compliance
 - IFC / “Non”-Lethal / “Less-than”-Lethal
 - Non-Kinetic Weapons & Effects
- Authorities - Rules of Engagement & Policy
 - Standing Rules of Engagement & Self-Defense
 - “Hostile Acts” & “Hostile Intent”
- “Armed Attack”
 - US Policy? International Consensus?
 - Treaty implications

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