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# CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF INSTRUCTION



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J-7  
DISTRIBUTION: A, B, C

CJCSI 5120.02E  
6 November 2020

## JOINT DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

References: See Enclosure C.

1. Purpose. This instruction establishes policy to assist the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) (referred to as the Chairman, based on the context of use, for the remainder of the document) in developing joint doctrine for the employment of the Armed Forces of the United States in accordance with (IAW) Title 10, United States Code, Section 153 of reference a.
2. Superseded/Cancellation. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 5120.02D, "Joint Doctrine Development System," 5 January 2015, is hereby superseded.
3. Applicability. This instruction applies to the joint doctrine development community (JDDC). See Enclosure B.
4. Policy. This instruction establishes the role of joint doctrine and explains the responsibilities of the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands (CCMDs), Services, National Guard Bureau (NGB), Combat Support Agencies (CSAs), and other members of the JDDC for joint doctrine development.
5. Definitions. See Glossary.
6. Responsibilities. See Enclosure B.
7. Summary of Changes. Adds United States Cyber Command, United States Space Command, and United States Space Force, and identifies them and the NGB as JDDC voting members. Clarifies classification responsibilities during development and review. Changes signature authority from Director, Joint Staff, to Director, Joint Force Development (DJ-7).

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8. Releasability. UNRESTRICTED. This directive is approved for public release; distribution is unlimited on NIPRNET. DoD components (to include CCMDs), other Federal agencies, and the public may obtain copies of this directive through the Internet from the CJCS Directives Electronic Library at <<http://www.jcs.mil/library>>. JS activities may also obtain access via the SIPR directives Electronic Library websites.

9. Effective Date. This INSTRUCTION is effective upon signature.

For the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff:



ANDREW P. POPPAS, LTG, USA  
Director, Joint Staff

Enclosures:

- A - General
- B - Responsibilities
- C - References
- GL - Glossary

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## ENCLOSURE A

### GENERAL

#### 1. Joint Doctrine Fundamentals

a. Joint doctrine consists of fundamental principles that guide the employment of the Armed Forces of the United States in unified action to achieve unity of effort. Additionally, joint doctrine:

(1) Provides official advice, and requires judgment in application.

(2) Enhances the strategic, operational, and tactical effectiveness of the joint force by providing a common approach to operations among CCMDs, subordinate unified commands, joint task forces (JTFs), the Services, the NGB, and DoD agencies.

(3) Provides considerations for joint force commanders (JFCs) to coordinate with other entities to achieve unified action. It also includes a basis for interorganizational cooperation during joint and multinational operations by providing information to mission partners, including U.S. Government departments and agencies, international and nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector on the organization, capabilities, operating philosophies, and employment considerations of the Armed Forces of the United States.

(4) Advocates for what is most effective based on extant capabilities.

(5) Informs multinational joint doctrine (see reference b), terminology (see references b and c), and symbology (see reference d). Approved joint doctrine, terminology, and symbology provide the initial U.S. national position for multinational doctrine, terminology, and symbology development. Service doctrine may serve as the initial U.S. position only when single-Service issues are involved and no applicable joint doctrine, terminology, or symbology exist.

(6) Provides the foundation for joint culture and the basis for joint training.

(7) Provides instructional material for joint professional military education.

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(8) Provides a basis for the development of joint concepts, organizational constructs, models, and simulations.

(9) Incorporates joint lessons learned and validated observations.

b. Joint doctrine is written for those who:

(1) Provide strategic- and operational-level guidance and direction to joint forces.

(2) Employ joint forces.

(3) Support, or are supported by, joint forces.

(4) Prepare forces for employment by combatant commanders, subordinate unified commanders, and JTF commanders.

(5) Train and educate personnel who will conduct joint operations.

(6) Require an understanding of the organization, capabilities, operating approaches, and employment considerations of joint forces.

c. Joint doctrine is approved by the Chairman or the DJ-7 and referred to as joint publications (JPs). JPs are developed in coordination among the JDCC, as listed in Figure B-1.

d. Multi-Service publications provide guidance for the operations of two or more Services. They are approved by the relevant Service chiefs (or their designees) and the Commandant, United States Coast Guard. These publications identify the participating Services and must be consistent with joint doctrine.

e. Joint doctrine is based on extant capabilities. It incorporates time-tested constructs such as operational art, elements of operational design for successful military action, and principles of joint operations, as well as contemporary lessons learned that identify U.S. opportunities to exploit adversary vulnerabilities. The use of joint doctrine standardizes terminology, training, symbology, relationships, responsibilities, and processes within the Armed Forces of the United States. This enables JFCs and their staffs to focus efforts on solving the strategic, operational, and tactical problems that confront them.

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f. Joint doctrine is official advice and should be followed, unless the commander determines exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise. It represents best practices and a basis to plan and conduct joint operations but does not replace or alter a commander's authority and is not a substitute for good judgment. When current doctrine no longer adequately addresses ongoing operations, commanders must identify required changes with justification, IAW reference b.

g. Joint doctrine is descriptive enough to guide operations, while flexible and versatile enough to accommodate a wide variety of situations. It focuses on how to think, not what to think, about operations. Joint doctrine fosters initiative and creativity and enables commanders the freedom to adapt to varying and evolving situations.

h. The JDDC will consider Service, multi-Service, and multinational doctrine when developing joint doctrine. Service and multi-Service doctrine must be consistent with joint doctrine, while multinational doctrine ratified by the United States should not conflict with U.S. joint doctrine. Joint doctrine takes precedence over Service and multi-Service doctrine. If JPs conflict with Service publications, JPs will take precedence unless the Chairman provides other guidance.

i. Joint doctrine should not include detail that is more appropriate in regulations and instructions; Service doctrine; standard operating procedures; Service and multi-Service tactics, techniques, and procedures; plans; or other publications.

j. Only approved joint doctrine will be used as the basis for U.S. national contributions to multinational doctrine development. When the multinational doctrine under development is tactical, and joint doctrine cannot provide a basis, Service or multi-Service doctrine may be considered. When U.S. forces participate in multinational operations, they should follow multinational doctrine and procedures ratified by the United States. Commanders will exercise judgment and may follow non-ratified multinational doctrine and procedures consistent with U.S. law, policy, and joint doctrine.

## 2. Joint Doctrine: The Relationship to Policy, Strategy, Training, Education, Lessons Learned, Concepts, and Multinational Doctrine

a. Doctrine and Policy. Policy directs and assigns tasks and forces, prescribes desired capabilities, and provides guidance to ensure the Armed Forces of the United States are prepared to perform their assigned roles. Policy

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informs joint doctrine, and joint doctrine makes policy and strategy more effective by providing a unified description of the principles of applying U.S. military power. Policy can create new roles and requirements for new capabilities, potentially requiring new doctrine. Joint doctrine enhances the operational effectiveness of the joint force by providing standardized terminology and symbology. Reference e is the capstone publication that provides doctrine for unified action by the Armed Forces of the United States. It bridges policy and doctrine by describing command relationships and authorities that military commanders use and other operational matters derived from reference a.

(1) New capabilities may require new policy. Policy makers and doctrine developers should develop and issue harmonized policy and doctrine. Gaps in doctrine, or policy, or both, are not always readily apparent. Generally, gaps that can only be addressed by using prescriptive words such as “will,” “shall,” and “must” are primarily policy issues.

(2) Policy and doctrine terms serve different purposes. Terminology to support the employment of forces (doctrinal terms) may not be optimal for policy development. Except for the guidance established by reference e, terminology developed for DOD policy is not limited by the constraints imposed on doctrine terminology. Higher-level guidance may provide the basis for doctrine, which must reflect the intent of law, regulation, and policy, even if it does not use identical terms or definitions.

b. Doctrine and Strategy. Joint doctrine provides guidance in the application of military power to help execute strategy. Joint doctrine provides guidance for unified action in the employment of U.S. military power and is closely linked to national security strategy, national defense strategy, and national military strategy. Strategy describes how the instruments of national power may be employed to achieve theater, national, and multinational objectives. Joint doctrine establishes a link between the ends (objectives) and the means (resources) by providing the ways (methods) for joint forces to achieve strategic and operational military objectives in support of national strategic objectives. Joint doctrine also informs senior civilian leaders responsible for the development of national security strategy of the core competencies, capabilities, and limitations of military forces. Joint doctrine also provides other government departments, agencies, and nongovernmental organizations an opportunity to better understand the roles, capabilities, and operating procedures used by the Armed Forces of the United States.

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## c. Doctrine and Training

(1) Joint doctrine provides the foundation for joint training IAW reference h. This baseline assists commanders and their staffs in developing standards for joint training, exercises, and operations.

(2) Reference i is a menu (or library) of joint tasks in a common language. It is the basic language used to develop a joint mission-essential task list. Universal joint tasks are based on extant capabilities and have a foundation in joint doctrine or validated joint concepts. Joint doctrine describes how a joint task is performed.

(3) While joint doctrine is the basis for joint training, experience gained over numerous training events and analysis of training and exercise programs can influence the revision or development of JPs. Best practices adopted from operational experience, and refined, standardized, and validated during training and exercises, should continuously influence the joint doctrine development process.

d. Doctrine and Education. Joint education and leader development are essential elements of shaping the joint force. Joint education is based on joint doctrine IAW references j and k. It develops the habits essential to the military professional's expertise in the art and science of warfare. Joint education should promote a career-long, doctrinally based, educational framework for the joint force.

e. Doctrine and Lessons Learned. The Joint Lessons Learned Program provides policy and procedures for the joint force to collect observations, analyze them, and then provide the analysis to the JDDC to improve the joint force's ability to plan, execute, and assess joint operations IAW reference l. Since joint operations provide the truest test of current joint doctrine, it is important to closely observe joint operations to identify and assess doctrinal strengths and weaknesses.

f. Doctrine and Concepts. Joint doctrine provides fundamental principles and guidance; describes operations with extant capabilities; and is subject to policy, treaty, and legal constraints. By comparison, concepts are unproven ideas that should be rigorously tested. In general terms, a concept contains a notion or statement that expresses how something might be done. Concepts should be developed with an understanding of existing doctrine and capabilities. Joint concepts examine military problems by describing how the joint force, using military art and science, may conduct joint operations,

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functions, and activities in response to a range of future challenges IAW references m and n. As concepts gain institutional acceptance and requisite capabilities are developed, validated elements of the concepts may be incorporated into joint doctrine.

g. Multinational Joint Doctrine, Terminology, and Symbology. The United States works with allies to develop multinational joint doctrine, terminology, and symbology. Prime examples are the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Allied Joint Operations Doctrine Working Group, Military Committee Terminology Board, and Joint Symbology Panel efforts, which use processes similar to joint doctrine development processes. In this role, the Chairman exercises the U.S. responsibility to ensure coordination of these efforts and resolution of cases where it impacts joint doctrine, terminology, and symbology (see references o, p, q, and r).

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