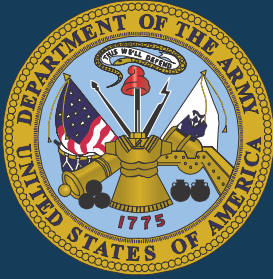


Joint Publication 1 Volume 1



Joint Warfighting



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c. Unified action in the Armed Forces of the United States starts with national strategic direction. For US military operations, unity of command is accomplished by establishing a joint force and assigning a mission to the designated JFC, establishing command relationships, assigning and/or attaching appropriate forces to the joint force, and empowering the JFC with sufficient authority over the forces to accomplish the assigned mission.

2. Levels of Warfare

a. **General.** The three levels of warfare—strategic, operational, and tactical—link tactical actions to the achievement of national objectives (see Figure III-2). There are no finite limits or boundaries between these levels, but they help JFCs plan and synchronize campaigns and operations, allocate resources, and assign tasks. The strategic, operational, or tactical purpose of employment depends on the nature of the mission.

b. **Strategic Level.** Strategy is an idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve strategic objectives. The strategic level of warfare integrates policy decisions into the development and promulgation of global, national, and theater strategies. At the strategic level, a nation often determines the national (or multinational, in an alliance or coalition) guidance that addresses strategic objectives and develops and uses national resources to achieve them. The President, aided by the NSC, establishes policy and national strategic objectives. The day-to-day work of the

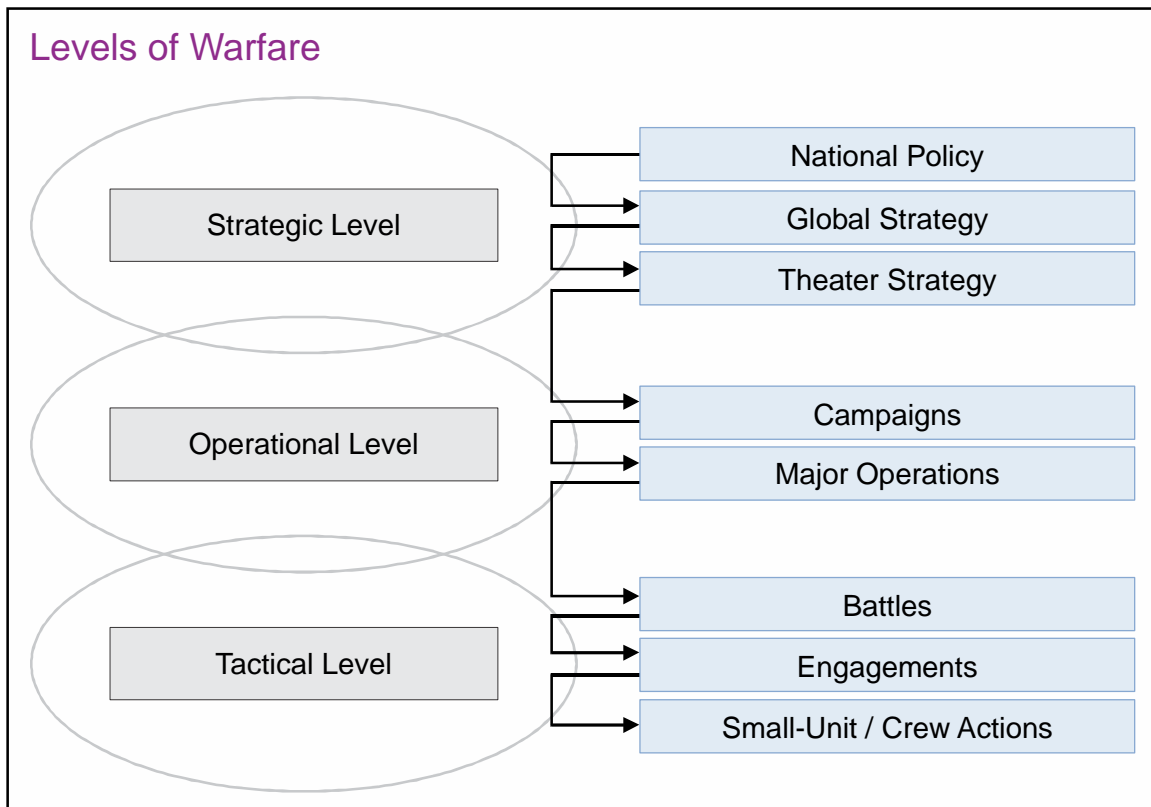


Figure III-2. Levels of Warfare

NSC is accomplished by the NSC staff, the President's principal staff for national security issues. SecDef translates guidance into strategic objectives that facilitate identification of the theater strategic planning requirements by CCDRs with designated AORs. CCDRs conduct strategic discussions with the President and SecDef, communicating through the CJCS when warranted. The CJCS assists the President and SecDef with strategic direction and is responsible for strategic and contingency planning. As the global integrator, the CJCS "sets the globe" through the execution of worldwide joint force planning, decision making, force management, development and design processes, and by advising the President and SecDef on ongoing operations and the allocation of forces between CCMDs.

For more information on global integration, see Chapter 1, "Global Integration," and CJCSI 3050.01, (U) Implementing Global Integration.

c. **Operational Level.** The operational level of warfare is generally the realm of CCDRs and their subordinate components. The focus of this level is the application of operational art. CCDRs link strategy and tactics through **campaigns** (e.g., CCPs, FCPs, and RCPs) to lay out strategic objectives desired for each type of plan, which may never be precisely defined, but work to constantly pursue and support national, multinational, or global strategic interests. Additionally, in specific to large-scale combat of long duration and scope, there may be a campaign plan that consists of a series of operations, each of which will have specific objectives.

(1) **Campaigns.** A campaign is a **series of related operations aimed at achieving strategic and operational objectives within a given time and space.** Campaigns operationalize strategy and provide the connective tissue between the strategic and operational levels. Campaigning spans the competition continuum. Campaigns may be global, regional, or functional. When necessary, the joint force executes war plans as a comprehensive campaigning effort. Whereas operations are directly designed and planned by commanders, campaigns are ultimately a design of national policy and strategy, which guide campaign plans. In turn, campaigns synchronize operations by providing objectives aligned with strategic objectives. Campaign assessment provides a continual feedback loop that informs policy and strategic refinement, which then results in a refined campaign plan. *For more information on campaigns and campaign planning, see JP 5-0, Joint Planning.*

(2) **Operations.** An operation is a **sequence of tactical actions with a common purpose or unifying theme to achieve an objective.** Operations span the competition continuum and are all-domain and multifunctional. Operations may also be transregional. An operation may entail combat operations, stabilization activities, operations in the information environment, or the employment of capabilities in competition to achieve an objective. A major operation is a series of tactical actions such as battles, engagements, and strikes, conducted by military forces and coordinated in time and place, to achieve strategic or operational objectives.

For more information on operations, see JP 3-0, Joint Operations.

d. **Tactical Level.** The tactical level of warfare is where battles and engagements are planned and executed to achieve military objectives assigned to JFCs and subordinate units. Activities at this level focus on creating combat power and achieving full spectrum superiority to achieve combat objectives. An engagement can include a wide variety of activities between opposing forces normally occurring within a small amount of time and space. A battle consists of a set of related engagements and normally affects the course of an operation or a campaign. Forces at the tactical level generally employ various tactics to achieve their military objectives.

e. The traditional framework separating the levels of warfare, as shown in Figure II-2, helps JFCs visualize a logical arrangement of missions, allocate resources, and assign tasks to the appropriate command. Campaigns then provide the framework within which the joint force accomplishes the mission at the respective levels of warfare. However, in practice, the actual execution is more complicated than Figure II-2 suggests. With today's constant media coverage, expanding social media participation, and easy access to the Internet by our enemies, a tactical-level plan and resulting action can have severe operational- or strategic-level implications. For example, an action by a single individual at the tactical level could potentially cause significant disruption to operational- and strategic-level planning. Conversely, activities at all levels can be positively influenced by pervasive media coverage that must be incorporated in plans at all levels. In this sense, all three levels overlap during execution. Commanders and their staffs at all levels must anticipate how their plans, operations, and actions may impact the other levels.

3. Joint Operations and Campaigns

a. Joint commands campaign across the competition continuum. A joint operation is a general term that describes military actions conducted by joint commands and those Service forces employed in specified command relationships with each other and are normally subordinate to campaigning efforts. Joint operations include combat when necessary to achieve objectives at all levels of warfare.

b. The capability of the Armed Forces of the United States to operate as a cohesive joint force is a key advantage in any operational environment. Integrating Service components' forces under a single JFC maximizes the effectiveness and efficiency of the joint force. Success depends on well-integrated command headquarters, supporting commands, and forces that operate cohesively. A JFC, with the appropriate command authority can tailor both assigned and attached forces as necessary to accomplish the mission.

c. Joint operations are conducted under the authority that US law provides to CCDRs, not Military Department (MILDEP) Secretaries. CCDRs and subordinate commanders use assigned and attached Service forces to understand and shape the operational environment, compete against or deter adversaries, or coerce or force enemies to change their course of action. When combat is required, JFCs conduct crisis response, limited contingency operations, tactical and major operations, and campaigns. In accordance with Title 10, USC, Section 165, MILDEP Secretaries are responsible for the administrative and logistic support of Service forces and joint organizations, as designated by SecDef.

