



# CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF INSTRUCTION

J-7  
DISTRIBUTION: A, B, C

CJCSI 5120.02D  
5 January 2015

## JOINT DOCTRINE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

References: See Enclosure C.

1. Purpose. This instruction establishes joint doctrine development policy to assist the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in implementing his responsibility to develop doctrine for the joint employment of the Armed Forces in accordance with (IAW) title 10, U.S.C., chapter 5, section 153 of reference a.
2. Superseded/Cancellation. CJCSI 5120.02C, "Joint Doctrine Development System," 13 January 2012, is hereby superseded.
3. Applicability. This instruction applies to the joint doctrine development community (see Enclosure B).
4. Policy. This instruction establishes the role of joint doctrine and explains the responsibilities of the Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, Services, and combat support agencies for joint doctrine development.
5. Definitions. See Glossary.
6. Responsibilities. See Enclosure B.
7. Summary of Changes. Removes or transfers appropriate detail to reference b. Clarifies guidance to develop and ratify allied and multinational joint doctrine.
8. Releasability. UNRESTRICTED. This instruction is approved for public release; distribution is unlimited on NIPRNET. DoD Components (to include the Combatant Commands), other Federal agencies, and the public, may obtain copies of this directive through the Internet from the CJCS Directives Electronic Library at [http://www.dtic.mil/cjcs\\_directives](http://www.dtic.mil/cjcs_directives) JS activities may also obtain access via the SIPR directives Electronic Library websites.

## ENCLOSURE A

### GENERAL

#### 1. Joint Doctrine in Perspective

a. Joint doctrine consists of fundamental principles that guide the employment of U.S. military forces in coordinated action toward a common objective and may include tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP). Additionally, joint doctrine:

- (1) Enhances the operational effectiveness of the joint force.
- (2) Provides considerations for joint force commanders (JFCs) when coordinating with other entities to attain unified action.
- (3) Is authoritative guidance, but requires judgment in application.
- (4) Represents what is advocated as most effective (i.e., what works best).
- (5) Informs allied and multinational joint doctrine. U.S. joint doctrine provides the initial national position for multinational doctrine development. When necessary, Service doctrine will serve as the national position only when single-Service issues are involved in multinational joint doctrine and when no applicable U.S. joint doctrine exists.
- (6) Provides a basis for inter-organizational coordination during joint operations.
- (7) Provides the foundation for building a joint culture and a basis for joint training.
- (8) Provides instructional material for joint professional military education.
- (9) Is a basis for the development of joint models and simulations.
- (10) Provides information for U.S. Government departments and agencies, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations and the private sector on the organization, capabilities, operating philosophies, and employment considerations of U.S. joint forces.
- (11) Enhances organizational effectiveness by providing a common reference point among commands and Services.

b. Joint doctrine is written for those who:

(1) Provide strategic direction to joint forces (the Chairman and Combatant Commanders [CCDRs]).

(2) Employ joint forces (CCDRs, subordinate unified commanders, or joint task force [JTF] commanders).

(3) Support or are supported by joint forces (Combatant Commands, subordinate unified commands, JTFs, Service component commands, the Services, combat support agencies [CSAs]), and the National Guard.

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

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

c. Only those doctrine publications approved by the Chairman or the Director of the Joint Staff will be referred to as joint publications (JPs). JPs are developed in coordination with the Services, CCMDs, CSAs, and the Joint Staff. Documents involving the operations of two or more Services that are approved by the relevant Service Chiefs (or their designated agent) will be referred to as “multi- Service” and will identify the participating Services (e.g., Army and Air Force doctrine; Army and Marine Corps doctrine; Army, Navy, and Air Force procedures). These documents are not JPs, but must be consistent with approved JPs.

d. Joint doctrine is based on extant capabilities, i.e., current force structures and materiel. It incorporates time-tested principles (e.g., the principles of war, operational art, and elements of operational design for successful military action) as well as contemporary lessons learned that exploit U.S. advantages against adversary vulnerabilities. Use of joint doctrine standardizes terminology, training, relationships, responsibilities, and processes among all U.S. Forces to free JFCs and their staffs to focus their efforts on solving the strategic, operational, and tactical problems confronting them.

e. Joint doctrine is authoritative guidance and will be followed except when, in the judgment of the JFC, exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise. Joint doctrine does not replace or alter a commander’s authority and is not a substitute for good judgment. When the nature of conflict changes and current doctrine no longer adequately addresses on-going operations, commanders must identify change requirements IAW reference b and should include lessons learned and joint concept development.

f. Joint doctrine is not dogmatic; the focus is on how to think, not what to think about operations. Its purpose is to aid thinking, not to replace it. Joint doctrine must be definitive enough to guide operations, while flexible and versatile enough to accommodate a wide variety of situations. Joint doctrine should foster initiative, creativity, and conditions that allow commanders the freedom to adapt to varying and evolving circumstances.

g. When developing joint doctrine Service, multi-Service, and multinational doctrine will be considered. All U.S. doctrine must be consistent with joint doctrine; joint doctrine takes precedence over Service doctrine and multi-Service doctrine. If conflicts arise between the contents of a JP and Service publications, the JP will take precedence for the activities of joint forces unless the Chairman provides other guidance.

h. Joint doctrine should not include: detail that is more appropriate in regulations and instructions; Service doctrine; standard operating procedures; Service and multi-Service TTP; plans; or other publications.

i. Joint doctrine provides the basis for U.S. national contributions to multinational doctrine development. Every effort will be made to ensure any proposed doctrine is not introduced directly into Allied joint publications (AJPs) without having been introduced and established in joint doctrine. When U.S. Forces participate in multinational operations, they should follow multinational doctrine and procedures ratified by the United States. In situations where multinational doctrine and procedures have not been ratified by the United States, commanders will exercise judgment and, where applicable, may follow the multinational command's doctrine and procedures that are consistent with U.S. law, policy, and joint doctrine.

## 2. Influence of Joint Doctrine

a. Doctrine and Policy. Policy directs and assigns tasks, prescribes desired capabilities, and provides guidance for ensuring the Armed Forces of the United States are prepared to perform their assigned roles. Implicitly, policy can create new roles and requirements for new capabilities. Joint doctrine enhances the operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces by providing authoritative guidance and standardized terminology on topics relevant to the employment of military forces. Reference c is the capstone publication that provides doctrine for unified action by the Armed Forces of the United States. It provides a bridge between policy and doctrine by describing authorized command relationships and authority that military commanders use and other operational matters derived from reference a.

(1) Although joint doctrine is neither policy nor strategy, it serves to make U.S. policy and strategy effective in the application of U.S. military power.

(2) Policy generally drives doctrine. On occasions where an extant capability will require the creation of policy, policy makers and doctrine developers should work collaboratively to issue harmonized policy and doctrine. It is not always clear when a gap is identified whether the gap exists in doctrine, policy, or both. As a general rule, if the need can only be addressed by using prescriptive words such as “will,” “shall,” and “must,” then the gap is in policy.

(3) Terminology developed within policy and doctrine serves different purposes. The terminology required to support the employment of forces (doctrinal terms) may not be optimal for policy developers, whose purpose may be to illuminate resource or requirement documents. Terminology developed for DoD policy is not limited by the constraints imposed on doctrine terminology. Policy definitions may provide the basis for the doctrinal terms. Doctrinal terms cannot be in conflict with the law, regulation, or policy.

b. Doctrine and Strategy. Joint doctrine provides guidance for unified action in the employment of U.S. military power and is closely linked to national military strategy. Joint doctrine establishes a link between the ends (what must be accomplished) and the means (capabilities) by providing the ways (how) for joint forces to accomplish 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 as to the core competencies, capabilities, and limitations of military forces. Joint doctrine also provides other government departments and agencies and nongovernmental organizations an opportunity to better understand the roles, capabilities, and operating procedures used by the Armed Forces of the United States.

c. Joint Doctrine and Operation Planning. Joint doctrine provides fundamental guidance on how operations are best conducted to accomplish the mission. Using joint doctrine during deliberate and crisis action planning facilitates the planning and execution of joint operations. It provides a basis to analyze the mission, its objectives and tasks, develop the commander’s intent, courses of action, and planning guidance.

d. Doctrine and Training

(1) Joint doctrine is the documentation of established fundamentals of joint operations and provides guidance on how best to employ national military power to attain strategic ends. It therefore logically provides the foundation for joint training and to that end, reference d mandates that joint training will be accomplished IAW joint doctrine. This baseline assists commanders and their staffs in developing standards for joint training, exercises, and operations.

(2) Reference e 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 and potential joint capabilities, and have a foundation in joint doctrine or validated joint concepts. Joint doctrine identifies how a joint task is performed.

(3) While joint doctrine is the basis for joint training, experiences gained over numerous training events and analysis of training and exercise programs can influence the revision or development of joint doctrine publications, especially those portions containing TTP. Best practices adopted from operational experience and refined and standardized during training should continuously influence the doctrine development process.

(4) When experimentation is introduced into joint training activities or exercises, JFCs will clearly identify the experiment portion of the event and inform the forces undergoing training, umpires, evaluators, and other observers that doctrinal deviations are solely for experimentation purposes and may not indicate that promulgated JPs are dated or that changes to doctrine and procedures are required or have been realized.

e. Joint Doctrine and Military Education. Education is a key aspect of the joint force development process. Military education (references f and g) is based on joint doctrine and should reflect the deliberate, iterative, and continuous nature of joint force development. Joint education should promote a career-long, doctrinally-based educational framework for the joint force.

f. Doctrine and Lessons Learned. The Joint Lessons Learned Program entails collecting observations, analyzing them, and taking the necessary steps to refine current doctrine to improve the capabilities of the joint force. Joint operations provide the truest test of current joint doctrine. Therefore, it is important to closely observe joint operations to identify and assess the strengths and weaknesses of joint doctrine. From this analysis revisions and improvements in future joint force capabilities will evolve.

g. Doctrine and Concepts. There is a close and complementary relationship between concepts and doctrine. Fundamentally, concepts support joint force development where development of capabilities is required to meet national strategic goals, whereas joint doctrine considers extant capabilities for joint force employment. Joint doctrine is authoritative, describes operations with extant capabilities, and is subject to policy, treaty, and legal constraints. By comparison, concepts are not authoritative, and 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. In references h, i, and j, joint concepts examine military problems by describing how the joint force, using military art and science, may conduct joint operations, functions, and activities in response to a range of future challenges. Joint concepts are written using a “problem-solution” method. The identification and refinement of a joint military problem, a proposed operational solution, and the capabilities required to implement the proposed solution are essential components for guiding and evaluating the concept as it progresses toward validation and approval. As concepts gain institutional acceptance and requisite capabilities are developed, validated elements of the concepts may be incorporated in doctrine. Concepts proceed from an understanding of existing doctrine and capabilities. They must propose a clear alternative to existing doctrine or augmentation of existing capabilities and include evidence of significant operational value relative to the challenges under consideration.

(1) Once approved and signed by the Chairman, joint concepts provide guidance for future force development. Joint concepts propose new approaches to address compelling challenges—current or envisioned—for which existing approaches and capabilities are insufficient or nonexistent, thereby requiring a reexamination of how we operate and apply the joint force, and may also provide a venue to explore solutions to problems and emerging missions for which no doctrine exists. They enable consideration of alternatives to methods described in approved doctrine, based either on lessons learned or on emerging capabilities whose military application has not yet been exploited. Futuristic concepts typically focus on new ways and means with which the joint force can meet expected future operational challenges using advanced technologies and capabilities, many of which are not yet developed. This requires concept developers to project the nature of the operational environment 8 to 20 years in the future and describe new approaches and advanced capabilities required to operate successfully in that environment. However, this process of forecasting the future and evaluating concepts may uncover ideas that could improve how joint forces operate today and could have an immediate impact on established doctrine. When this occurs, these concepts will be validated by operational JFCs before their introduction into joint doctrine.

(2) Validated concepts may impact favorably on present doctrine, training, and education. The results of experimentation are not sufficient to require doctrinal change. The concept must clearly demonstrate value-added to current joint doctrine and represent an extant capability. In other words, joint doctrine is an authoritative baseline against which concepts and experimentation results will be compared to assess their transformational value. Current Combatant Command operation plans provide situation-specific application of current doctrine, which can be useful in evaluating a developing concept. Concepts typically are not copied directly into joint doctrine, but their central themes and essential constructs may be incorporated in a number of ways.

(3) Concepts form the basis of recommended changes to doctrine and are submitted IAW reference i.

h. Multinational Joint Doctrine. The United States actively participates in the development of multinational joint doctrine. A prime example is the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) allied joint doctrine (AJD), where a robust joint doctrine development process similar to the U.S. system exists. In this role, the United States exercises the Chairman's responsibility to ensure the interface of U.S. joint doctrine with multinational doctrine in cases where the latter impacts the former (see references k, l, and m).