The United States approaches the end of the 20th century with the preeminent military force in the world. This primacy is based in large measure on hardware and capability. No other nation can field such combat power for any type of military operation. Yet combat power alone does not guarantee success. The thread that binds combat power together to create this preeminent force is joint doctrine—the fundamental principles that guide the employment of forces from two or more services.

Major General David A. Sawyer, USAF, is the director of operational planning and interoperability (J-7), Joint Staff.

By DAVID A. SAWYER

The Joint Doctrine Development System

EDITOR'S Note

Joint doctrine has made significant progress since the Goldwater-Nichols Act made the Chairman responsible for its development. Today, the joint doctrine development process is regarded as the most advanced in the world. It has become the thread that binds together the combat power of the services to yield an authentic joint effort. This achievement is attributable to the exercise of institutional responsibility for joint doctrine by the Joint Staff and the Joint Warfighting Center. Both organizations, working in concert with the combatant commands and services under the joint doctrine master plan, are dedicated to the continuing refinement of joint publications.

As we change the way we fight, joint doctrine will remain the foundation that fundamentally shapes the way we think about and train for joint military operations.

—John M. Shalikashvili

USS San Jacinto, USNS San Diego and USS George Washington in the western Mediterranean.
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more services in coordinated action to
ward a common objective.
It is not pretentious to claim that
our current joint doctrine hierarchy is the most advanced in the world. With
the collapse of the Soviet system and
its Warsaw Pact forces, no other mili-
tary expends as much effort in the doc-
trine development process. The profes-
sionals who developed the system
understood that correctly applying
technology and disparate forces through effective joint employment
concepts is a force multiplier. But com-
prehensive joint doctrine development has not always been a given. The sys-
tem that produces it has grown over
ten years from a haphazard and loosely
coordinated process to a formal and
sound one. This article contrasts for-
er and present methods of develop-
ment, recalls legislative and organiza-
tional revisions that led to today’s
system, and shows how it meets its
goals through the current joint publi-
cation system.

Doctrinal Voids
Congress directed a profound re-
organization of the defense establish-
ment in the Goldwater-Nichols Act. A
key element of that law tasked the
Chairman with “developing doctrine
for the joint employment of the
Armed Forces.” This was
a significant change be-
cause no single individ-
ual or organization had been previously respon-
sible for joint doctrine. Joint pubs, then known as JCS pubs, were cre-
ated in relative isolation under guidelines that
formerly governed joint
Staff actions. There was
no standard process for
initiating, coordinating,
approving, or revising
joint doctrine. More-
over, there was no re-
quirement for con-
gruency between joint and service
document, nor was the difference be-
tween joint and service doctrine clear.
Significantly, no mechanism incorpo-
rated the expertise, knowledge, re-
quirements, etc., of unified and speci-
fied commanders in the doctrine they
were expected to use. In addition, the
system had no means of either identi-
fying conceptual voids or addressing
them. Doctrine was published
without being formally evalu-
ated, so that its validity
might not ever be tested ex-
cept in actual combat—obvi-
sely an unacceptable risk.
Specific issues that are today
recognized as critical in combat perfor-
mance (such as intelligence, logis-
tics, airspace control, space operations, etc.)
were not addressed in joint doctrine.

Before Goldwater-Nichols there
had been an earlier attempt to bring
rigor to joint doctrine development
and address some key doctrinal voids
in warfighting. That effort, known as
the joint doctrine pilot program, was
initiated in 1983. It was implemented
by the Chairman and designed to capi-
talize on the experience of CINC’s by
designating them to develop key doc-
trine publications and coordinate
them with the other CINC’s and all
the services. Four projects were proposed
and the developing CINC’s assigned,
with topics such as theater air defense
and strategic air support to maritime
operations. However, by the time
Goldwater-Nichols was enacted some
three years later only one project had
been approved.

As a result of that law and DOD
directives, the Chairman was autho-
rized to develop and approve joint
document. Toward that end, doctrine
was coordinated with the services and
combatant commands to ensure that
those organizations that would imple-
ment it participated in development.
The Chairman created the Directorate
for Operational Plans and Interoper-
ability (J-7), Joint Staff, with a division
dedicated to act as a joint doctrine
caretaker. In addition, the Joint Doc-
trine Center was also established under
J-7 at MacDill Air Force Base and later
moved to the Tidewater area of Vir-
ginia. Its mission was to “assist in im-
proving the combat effectiveness of
joint U.S. military forces and unified
and specified commands through the
analysis, development, and assessment
of joint and combined doctrine and
tactics, techniques, and procedures.”
The Joint Doctrine Center is now a di-
vision of the Joint Warfighting Center
at Fort Monroe to support the unified
commands, services, Joint Staff, and
defense agencies.

With organizational structures in
place, a joint doctrine master plan was
instituted to ensure an effective devel-
opment process, identify major doctri-
nal voids, initiate projects to fill them,
and reorganize the joint pub hierarchy.
The process was included in Joint Pub
1-01, Joint Publication System Joint Doc-
trine and Joint Tactics, Techniques, and
Procedures Development Program, which
appeared in April 1988. It outlined
principles, guidelines, and a concep-
tual framework to initiate, validate, de-
velop, coordinate, evaluate, approve,
and maintain joint doctrine as well as
joint tactics, techniques, and proce-
dures (JTPP) and joint technical publi-
cations. Joint Pub 1-01 established the
process as policy in one authoritative
source, readily available to all person-
nel and organizations in the system.
Each joint pub produced under the
new system formed a part of overall
joint doctrine.

The joint doctrine development
process established new definitions,
procedures, and structures—
all aimed at producing doctrine that
maximized military capabilities by

Providing cover for amphibious assault, Cobra Gold ’85.

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Sawyer
matching concepts to technology, forces, and national goals. The system produced doctrine as authoritative guidance but was not intended to restrict the authority of joint force commanders when organizing forces and executing missions in a manner deemed most appropriate to maintaining unity of effort. Joint Pub 1-01 sets forth the purpose of joint doctrine and JTTP. Doctrine guides the employment of joint forces, provides national positions for combined doctrine (operating with allies), establishes a foundation for joint training, provides a basis for developing instructional material for the professional military education system, and informs other government agencies concerned with the employment of joint forces.

**Key Positions**

The revised development process created the joint doctrine working party (JDWP) which is chaired by the chief, Joint Doctrine Division (J-7), as a forum for systematically addressing joint doctrine and JTTP. Its members include representatives from the combatant commands, services, Joint Staff, and selected service schools and senior colleges. JDWP meets every six months and provides a venue for candid consideration of important joint doctrine and JTTP issues and a means for experienced warfighters to contribute expertise to the development of joint doctrine and JTTP.

Key positions established in JointPub 1-01 include lead agent, primary review authority, Joint Staff doctrine sponsor, coordinating review authority, and technical review authority—each providing important input to publication development. Lead agents may be combatant commands, services, or Joint Staff directorates, but regardless they develop, coordinate, review, and maintain the pubs for which they are responsible. Lead agents designate primary review authorities who are responsible for actually developing and maintaining appointed documents. The Joint Staff doctrine sponsors assist lead agents and primary review authorities for the Joint Staff and processing final documents for approval. All combatant commands and services as well as the Joint Staff appoint coordinating review authorities, who coordinate with and help primary review authorities develop, evaluate, and maintain publications. In addition, technical review authorities may be designated to provide expertise if deemed necessary.

The process follows a regulated flow designed to allow maximum input from interested parties within the system. The joint doctrine publication process begins with project proposals that may be submitted by combatant commands, services, or directorates of the Joint Staff and generally are considered at semiannual JDWP meetings. Once accepted, J-7 validates these requirements with the combatant commands and services and then initiates program directives that outline the scope, references, and milestones of the projects. Then the directives are formally coordinated by the Joint Staff together with the combatant commands and services. On approval, they are distributed and the lead agents select primary review authorities to develop the publications.

The primary review authorities develop and staff two drafts with the combatant commands, services, and Joint Staff. The lead agents make every effort to resolve outstanding issues prior to forwarding revised final drafts to the doctrine sponsors on the Joint Staff for final coordination and approval. Lead agents also research and recommend all changes, cancellations, and consolidations of other publications that are affected by promulgation of new documents. This final step ensures integration across the entire system as doctrinal changes force revision to other pubs.

The full cycle results in publications that are fully coordinated and consistent with existing joint doctrine. Recognizing that concepts are important to warfighting performance, the Chairman concluded that doctrine pubs must be accessible, understandable, and user friendly. The legacy of dusty tomes that were only consulted by desperate action officers seeking technical guidance on obscure points contrasts dramatically with pubs today.

With greater dissemination of publications, an intensive education effort within the professional military education system, and initiation of the joint doctrine awareness action plan (which includes this JFQ Forum), joint doctrine is spreading its influence more than in the past. The awareness action plan will take advantage of various media to bring doctrine to users. In-
Keeping Ahead of Change

The purpose of developing authoritative doctrine is to share knowledge among warfighters.

Thinking warfighters are more effective at every level. More important, warfighters who understand the relationship of warfighting concepts are better prepared when faced with new situations.

The purpose of developing and disseminating authoritative doctrine under a well-regulated system is not to issue rigid fighting instructions but rather to share knowledge among warfighters. This knowledge then is internalized for use in decisionmaking regardless of the uniqueness of the situation, rank of the individuals involved, or level of the decision. Moreover, this shared body of knowledge enables those who must implement decisions to use their understanding of the general principles on which they are based to achieve specific goals.

Keeping Ahead of Change

America's ability to employ forces jointly has increased dramatically over the last ten years. Part of the reason for this preeminence is the overall effect of changes prompted by the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Besides reorganizing the chain of command, this law resulted in an improved system for proposing, developing, and maintaining joint doctrine. Consequently, many more members of the Armed Forces contribute to the process, thus strengthening the final products. Specific voids are filled. Throughout the process a single philosophy served as the cornerstone for development: military performance depends as much on concepts for employment as on technology and forces.

The joint publication system has begun to utilize the Internet as well as other technology to promulgate doctrine. For example, JFQ can now be accessed on the World Wide Web through the joint doctrine home page (http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine). This typifies the attempts to keep doctrine ahead of changes. Critical issues develop daily, requiring the system to react and adapt.

Effective employment concepts must complement weapons, force size and composition, training, capabilities, and tactics to produce victory. These concepts, generally known as doctrine, are so pervasive that they are frequently taken for granted. Looking back at campaigns, the casual observer usually sees only results and thinks little about how concepts shaped battlefield events. The influence of conceptual thought on warfare is most apparent when it is absent. One example from World War II, taken from the Joint Vision 2010 draft “Concept for Future Joint Operations,” illustrates this point.

By the beginning of the war, both the French and the Germans possessed similar armor, aircraft, and communications technologies. Yet their “concepts” for combining and employing these capabilities were remarkably different. Not only were the French inclined to use the tank as an infantry support weapon, but they also did not recognize the value of a rapid response, highly mobile armored reserve. They spread their tanks along the “impenetrable” Maginot Line, relying on the Ardennes Forest, and the border with Belgium to deny the Germans entry into France.

The Germans combined strategic and operational art with an innovative tactical employment concept that integrated aircraft, armor, formations, and communications. This allowed them to draw the Allies’ attention to the Netherlands, bypass the Maginot Line through the Ardennes, and break out of the forest into France with “blitzkrieg” warfare that caused France to fall within days.

Examining historical events through a doctrinal lens is useful but is not the total answer to effective doctrine development. As good as doctrine is, it could be better. Furthermore, we must not fall into the trap of thinking we have found the 100 percent solution. As JV 2010 observes: Joint doctrine is a critical ingredient for success because the way in which leaders think and organize their forces will be as important as the technology...to conduct future joint operations. Future joint doctrine must articulate the process required for successful joint planning but must be flexible enough...to guide our forces in joint and multinational operations...

We will discover new ways to change the development process for joint doctrine. Thus, we must integrate "top-down" doctrine throughout the development cycle, while continuing to ensure that joint doctrine fully incorporates the strengths that each service brings to joint warfare.

Our Armed Forces remain preeminent. Many factors contribute to their standing, including technology, military capabilities, and people. Joint doctrine has been the catalyst in bringing these factors together, transporting joint force employment to new heights—and unquestionably making the whole greater than the sum of its parts. [R]