

# Joint Education

## White Paper

16 July 2012



*“A military force has no constant formation, water has no constant shape: the ability to gain victory by changing and adapting according to the opponent is called genius.”*

*—Sun Tzu*

*“No man ever reached to excellence in any one art or profession without having passed through the slow and painful process of study and preparation.”*

*—Horace*

*“I am convinced that learning and leadership are at the core of our profession. Military service must continue to be our Nation’s preeminent leadership experience. We will continue to reform and leverage the Professional Military Education enterprise to advance our profession. It is more important than ever to get the most from the potential and performance of every Service member.”*

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Martin E. Dempsey", is positioned above the typed name and title.

MARTIN E. DEMPSEY  
General, U.S. Army  
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

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## ***Introduction***

As we reflect on the conduct of Joint operations since the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, the lessons of the last decade of war, and on the future it is clear that joint education is essential to the development of our military capabilities. Today's Joint Force is a highly experienced, battle-tested body of men and women, with a decade of practical, focused warfighting knowledge. Our colleges and schools have not had so many seasoned combat leaders in their classrooms for at least two decades. Our education efforts provide a force multiplier in our effort to develop and advance the shared values, standards, and attributes that define our Profession of Arms.<sup>1</sup> However, much is changing in the security environment as well as the experiences of our leaders that will challenge us to deliver high quality Joint education as never before. The explosion of information technologies that provides global and regional actors nearly instant access to information means that the United States no longer enjoys clear operational and technological advantages in the competition to "observe, orient, decide and act"<sup>2</sup> more effectively than adversaries. We must learn and properly place in context the key lessons of the last decade of war and in doing so, we will prepare our leaders for what is ahead – not just what is behind us. This is why we must review our joint education objectives and institutions to ensure that we are developing agile and adaptive leaders with the requisite values, strategic vision and critical thinking skills necessary to keep pace with the changing strategic environment. If we get this right, and get it right *now*, we will excel well beyond 2020.

## ***The Value Proposition***

Our military has traditionally relied on education in times of uncertainty to develop understanding of the future security environment, lead adaptation and ensure readiness to face future, unknown challenges. During the years between World War I and the outbreak of World War II, when we also faced change and resource challenges, strategic thinking at the Service Colleges laid the foundations for innovative capability development that proved essential for victory in both the European and Pacific theaters.<sup>3</sup> We are at a similar warfare inflection point; one that eclipses the introduction of nuclear weapons, the introduction of the air domain and the airplane, and the transition from battleship to aircraft carrier. Warfare is changing in all domains, and we have also added new domains. The introduction of the cyber domain, for example, may be an even greater change than those of the past as it eludes national control, political boundaries, legal authorities, and attribution. We are in an era where we cannot even define "militarily" much more beyond the status of those in uniform. More importantly, we are in an era of austerity where budget cuts and economic uncertainties will impose serious challenges on how we allocate resources. Our ability to

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<sup>1</sup> See my White Paper "America's Military – A Profession of Arms" (Available at [www.jcs.mil](http://www.jcs.mil)).

<sup>2</sup> Boyd's OODA Loop.

<sup>3</sup> Examples include the Rainbow plans at the Naval and Army War Colleges; the "Industrial Web" theory created at the Air Corps Tactical School that was the blueprint for WWII air campaigns; and the creation of the Tentative Landing Operations Manual by the faculty and students of Marine Corps Schools in 1933 that came to fruition in the amphibious operations in the Pacific theater.

define and inculcate our value proposition across the Joint enterprise will be critical in achieving the proper balance between competing operational and joint education requirements.

## ***Education Outcomes***

Ensuring relevancy in our delivery of Joint education requires us to fundamentally understand the experiences and perspectives of our students and the changes that have occurred in 25-plus years of post Goldwater-Nichols joint education, joint operations, and joint experience. The enduring purpose of Professional Military Education (PME) is to develop leaders by conveying a broad body of professional knowledge and developing the habits of mind essential to our profession. Our joint education institutions will continue to be measured in part by the performance of leaders serving in areas where critical thinking skills are essential. Beyond providing critical thinking skills, our education programs must also ensure that our leaders have:

- the ability to understand the security environment and the contributions of all elements of national power;
- the ability to deal with surprise and uncertainty;
- the ability to anticipate and recognize change and lead transitions; and
- the ability to operate on intent through trust, empowerment, and understanding.

Other attributes for leader development will evolve and will need to be aligned with future operations envisioned by *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations 2020* and incorporated into our curriculums to ensure that gaps are identified and eliminated.

Our maturing understanding of the requirement to conduct operations at the speed of the anticipated security environment across multiple domains reinforces the need to expand the practice of mission command throughout the force. To fully realize the potential of mission command, our joint education efforts must effectively instill the cognitive capability to understand, receive, and clearly express intent, to take decisive initiative within intent, accept prudent risk, and build trust within the force.<sup>4</sup>

## ***Intent***

The last decade has further demonstrated that our enlisted force requires education and not “just training.” Recognizing that officers and enlisted personnel have different functions, responsibilities, authorities and levels of organizational accountability, Joint Force 2020 must develop the talents and abilities of leaders at every echelon to maximize their individual potential, build effective units, and to optimize their contribution to the joint fight.

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<sup>4</sup> See my White Paper “Mission Command” (3 April 2012) (Available at [www.jcs.mil](http://www.jcs.mil)).

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We must assist every service member in becoming a life-long learner, always hungry for new knowledge and deeper understanding. Learning opportunities must occur in every aspect of service and should not be restricted to episodic attendance in formal schools. Every member of the force should seek to be a scholar of the Profession of Arms in their own right and a teacher to those coming along behind. Time in the duty day set aside for individual learning, balanced with unit duties, is a clear commitment to the imperative for life-long learning.

The quality of professors and teachers has been and will remain an enduring and essential component in our institutional commitment to joint education. Simply put, we need the right folks teaching. The best and brightest minds in our rising generation should be shaped by the best and brightest minds from both our military and civilian institutions. Within the military, instructor duty should be seen both by individuals and by the organization as an essential element of a successful career. We should also continue to recruit the best and brightest from civilian academia and the interagency to expand our educational expertise.

The members of our profession have been raised in an interconnected, “e-savvy” world where the sharing of information is automatic and nearly instantaneous. This generation absorbs and diffuses information rapidly and in different ways than preceding ones. Coupled with their high levels of operational experience is the desire to actively participate in their own education as life-long learners. Collaborative, context-based problem-solving events will have great appeal and consequently greater effect in achieving educational outcomes. Joint educational approaches must adapt to stay relevant to how students learn best, while balancing “tried and true methods” with new techniques.

As we continue to develop our future leaders, I expressly desire that joint education:

- Lead the way in the renewal of our commitment to the Profession of Arms with leadership as its foundation;
- Prepare the leaders of Joint Force 2020 to be adaptive, innovative, critical thinking leaders capable of operating in complex and unstructured environments.
- Provide the foundation for leaders to be able to understand the security environment, change, and transitions;
- Provide the foundation to design and execute campaigns at the operational level in pursuit of strategic objectives;
- Establish and sustain mission command throughout the force;
- Enable jointness through the integration of diverse service cultures and approaches;
- Maintain our competitive learning advantage through:
  - Mastery of fundamentals of the art and science of war;
  - Intellectual curiosity, coupled with openness to new ideas;

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- Operational adaptability (to include critical thinking, prudent risk acceptance and rapid adjustment fueled by continuous assessment)—fundamentally, the ability to deal with the unexpected by making sound choices based on measured risk;
  - The ability to properly balance the art of command with the science of control, to include the ability to create trust relationships with seniors, subordinates and partners;
  - Skills in negotiations, culture and language;
  - An understanding of intelligence – both its capabilities and limitations;
  - The ability to process information into knowledge, then share that knowledge, and act on it.
- Attract and maintain civilian and military faculty members who are among the very best and brightest of their contemporaries.
  - Expand access and opportunity to populations outside of conventional classrooms, pursuing legislative authorities as needed.

***Endstate***

The desired endstate of the review is to define and achieve the specified and implied education tasks needed to lead and support the development of Joint Force 2020. This is our opportunity to harness the power of joint education to develop leaders who can meet the challenges of an uncertain, complex, and increasingly competitive and dangerous world. We must, and will, seize it.