

Which Way Joint Doctrine?

By EDWARD C. FERRITER

While the Armed Forces must be prepared for a range of operations, they will henceforth have less time to prepare for individual missions. During the 1980s a large number of forces were forward deployed. As we downsize, more and more forces will return to stateside bases. In the future the military will rely on critical mobility assets for regional conflicts. But unfortunately, as forward presence draws down, combatant commanders (CINCs) have less time to organize these "responsive" forces for combat. It is doctrine, particularly joint doctrine, that provides the vehicle with which to shape forces into a single fighting team.

The individual services view doctrine from various perspectives. The term *doctrine* may be considered new to some, but the concept is not. The Navy has always projected seapower with a solid foundation of principles, traditions, and practice, although it has not previously formalized much of this thought in written doctrine. The Navy is now developing overarching doctrine which can best be characterized as "a common body of operational thought." Doctrine gives commanders standards for a common, effective approach to warfare.

It is likely that the military of the future will be a joint warfighting team. Both manpower and resource constraints, coupled with limited types and numbers of weapons, not to mention congressional direction, have made a joint approach mandatory. We cannot afford duplication of effort, nor can we afford *not* to have enough capability to accomplish the mission. This means that complementary systems, weapons, and

munitions must be developed. The issue is not whether we will fight jointly, but whether we have doctrine to make joint warfare successful. Does joint doctrine support the synergism of capabilities that makes for success in combat? The present joint doctrine system needs help to make this a reality.

Joint doctrine does not currently get enough attention. Development takes too long, is too cumbersome, and is parochial. Joint tactics, techniques, and procedures (JTTP) are rarely *joint*. They are usually less tactical in nature and more of a broad restatement of policy and guidance or lists of individual platform capabilities. Service and even multi-service TTP, on the other hand, normally do achieve tactical relevance.

Significant steps are being taken to improve this situation, however, with each service now focusing on doctrinal issues. The Navy and Marine Corps stood up the Naval Doctrine Command in Norfolk in 1993. The Air Force Doctrine Center was formed at Langley Air Force Base near Norfolk in 1994. Both collaborate closely with the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, also located in Norfolk, and the Marine Corps Combat Development Center at Quantico. Each of these activities has a section devoted to joint matters, and their proximity constitutes what is known as the "Tidewater connection." Moreover, the Joint Warfighting Center (JWFC) was established in Norfolk and combines the efforts of the Joint Doctrine Center and the Joint Warfare Center.

JWFC has tremendous promise but also faces potential pitfalls. The center must support the operational needs of warfighters. If JWFC gets mired in the bureaucracy that has characterized joint doctrine in the past it will fail. The center will focus on sophisticated modeling and simulation to support joint training,

particularly at the JTF level. But advanced simulation technology needs to address the tactical level as well. JWFC or another agency must emphasize this lower level of doctrine and JTTP.

The Joint Training Analysis and Simulation Center established at U.S. Atlantic Command is another positive step. Designed to integrate the training, modeling, and wargaming systems of the individual services, this center will impact on doctrine development through concept evaluation. For example, complementary forces combined under various battle scenarios can be tested before going to the field. Joint doctrine can be evaluated in joint computer guided exercises, but again the JTTP level must not be left out.

There are several key tangible steps that can improve the joint approach to warfighting.

First, there must be continued initiatives in the area of joint doctrine. Joint doctrine is not easy or fun. Military professionals may prefer to drive tanks, ships, and planes, but joint doctrine provides the basis for the teamwork needed to win with those tanks, ships, and planes. Quality people with career potential will be needed to take on tough doctrinal problems.

Second, efforts to streamline doctrine development must be renewed. A responsive system would instill confidence and strengthen resolve to make it work. The process is agonizingly slow and an average of three years to develop a joint publication is unacceptable. With concentrated effort a joint pub can be completed in 12 months. But when a joint document cannot reach final approval within 18 months, it reflects fundamental flaws in the proposed concept and should be revamped or canceled.

Third, the issue of parochialism must be addressed. Service perspectives are essential, but parochialism

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cannot be allowed. Joint doctrine must quickly identify common ground that is found in service doctrine. Then that commonality must underpin JTTP which are derived from doctrine.

Fourth, joint pubs should be written by joint organizations. The biggest shortcoming in the current development of joint doctrine is the "lead agent" concept. When a publication is proposed, one service is assigned as lead agent and then produces the first draft of the doctrine. Even with the best of intentions, the first draft invariably favors the lead agent's perspective. A better idea is to have a joint command, such as JWFC or ACOM, bring together subject matter experts from the individual services and other doctrine centers to develop an initial draft. Several activities produce service, multi-service, and joint documents

in this way. Written from a joint perspective, the draft identifies common ground and provides a basis for agreement on joint doctrine.

Fifth, combat forces must be provided with JTTP that link joint capabilities. Some of the work done by the Army in the combat arms approach to battlefield warfare could serve as a model for team synergy. The Army fights using a *combined arms team* in the simultaneous application of forces—combat, combat support, and combat service support. JWFC should be the focal point of JTTP integration and concentrate exclusively on combat issues for both JTFs and the tactical level.

Finally, obstacles to new ways of looking at joint issues must be removed. It may be time, for example, to form a joint command at unit (battalion, ship, squadron) level. Jointness normally occurs at command and control (headquarters)

level. The services form, fund, and operate forces at unit level. A test program under a joint command at unit level, however, may provide a vehicle to test new and sometimes unpredictable approaches to jointness. This concept will make many uncomfortable. Loss of control by the services, budget difficulties, and the perception that the unit would become a loose cannon highlight problems with the concept. But for a relatively small cost, the payoffs could be high.

The goal of joint doctrine is to combine the strengths of all the services to achieve success in combat. The world has changed. The Armed Forces operate in a very different geopolitical and operational environment than they did five years ago and changes will continue to occur. The foundation of a more effective joint doctrine system will allow the military to be ready for whatever missions the future holds. **JFQ**

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