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Joint Terminology At the Heart of Doctrine

By GEORGE H. HOCK, JR.

Recently, the largest component of the joint force, the U.S. Army, confirmed its new chief of staff, General Martin Dempsey. General Dempsey, speaking 2 days after his nomination, outlined issues that he thinks are important for the Army going forward—one of which is “getting the words right.” Dempsey, who previously commanded U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, emphasized that the Service is making changes to its core doctrine, and for that reason he is serious about getting the definitions right. Words matter. He went on to stress why doctrinal language is so important by quoting Mark Twain: “The difference between the almost-right word and the right word is really a large matter—it’s the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning.” Current joint terminology efforts are consistent with its Service counterparts’ commitment to ensuring concise, clear language.

It is Department of Defense (DOD) policy to improve communications and mutual understanding within the department, among other Federal agencies, and between the United States and its international partners through standardization of military and associated terminology. Joint Publication (JP) 1–02, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* and its associated database are the key documents within the joint doctrine discipline that support this policy. It is the primary terminology source when preparing correspondence, including policy, strategy, doctrine, and planning documents and applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), Services, Joint Staff, combatant commands, DOD agencies, and all other DOD components. As such, it is by far the most widely referenced document within the entire body of joint doctrine, receiving nearly

250,000 individual page views and 23,000 full document downloads per month.

Over 25 years after the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 mandated “jointness,” Service personnel still sometimes struggle to communicate with one another during joint operations. No doubt there has been marked improvement, but there is room for more. In 1989, OSD decided that joint terminology should be consolidated in one place and managed accordingly. The responsibility was transferred to the J7. The Secretary of Defense, in DOD Directive 5025.12, *Standardization of Military and Associated Terminology*, directed the use of JP 1–02 (originally called JCS Pub 1) throughout DOD to ensure standardization of military and associated terminology. The idea was not to capture the voluminous Service-specific technical terms but those of a broader nature that have significance in the planning and conduct of joint operations. Currently, there are ongoing initiatives to improve JP 1–02 which include appropriately standardizing and annotating source publications for all entries.

As early as 1993, source documents were identified and noted in JP 1–02 and the newly developed Joint Terminology Master Database (JTMD) in order to provide a contextual basis for proper understanding of each term. Additionally, a process was established for terms to be reviewed regularly as part of the normal revision cycle of the source document to ensure relevance. This methodology of sourcing terms in conjunction with the normal joint doctrine development process continues. Yet even with such a process, entries such as “white cap—a small wave breaking offshore as a result of the action of strong winds. See also wave” remain in JP 1–02. *White cap* and *wave* were defined in JP 1–02 almost exactly as they

are in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary, begging the question of their utility as entries.

In late 2005, however, the joint/Service terminologist’s working group embarked on the sourcing project guided by the mantra “precise terms used precisely” and nears completion today. The results of this multi-phase long-term effort is that from the high water mark of approximately 6,000 DOD and North Atlantic Treaty Organization terms in 2005 in JP 1–02, approximately 2,500 of them (without approved sources and those that are deemed unnecessary) have been removed. The fourth and final term sourcing coordination is in progress. There are still 1,250 terms without sources annotated in JP 1–02, but they have candidate sources identified for resolution during the current JP revision cycle. It should be noted that each removed term is kept if ever needed again, along with over 20,000 other entries in the JTMD archive. *Wave* is now more appropriately defined in a military context in JP 1–02, but *white cap* remains a target of our project.

The other joint terminology initiative in progress is standardizing entries by enforcing the brief “Definition Writing Guide” benchmarks. This guide is part of the recently updated Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 5705.01D, “Standardization of Military and Associated Terms,” which governs JP 1–02. Concise terminology is critical to military communication, and the CJCSI guidance makes a stark distinction between desired definitions and unwanted descriptions. A *definition* is a formal statement of the exact meaning of a term that enables it to be distinguished from any other. A *description*, in contrast, is a narrative containing informa-

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tion about the term that is not constrained in format or content. Only definitions are permitted in JP 1–02.

The primary focus of J7 guiding instruction and efforts is to ensure the quality and

relevance of entries in JP 1–02 for the user. The U.S. military is the most advanced, specialized, and complex joint force the world has ever seen, which makes a broad, overarching joint lexicon designed to cross-connect

operations that much more important. J7 is committed to furthering the mantra of precise terms used precisely and will continue to ensure joint terminology is maintained at the heart of doctrine. **JFQ**

JPs Under Revision

JP 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*
 JP 1–0, *Personnel Support to Joint Operations*
 JP 1–04, *Legal Support to Military Operations*
 JP 1–06, *Financial Management Support in Joint Operations*
 JP 2–0, *Joint Intelligence*
 JP 2–01, *Joint and National Intelligence Support to Military Operations*
 JP 2–03, *Geospatial Intelligence Support to Joint Operations*
 JP 3–0, *Joint Operations*
 JP 3–00.1, *Strategic Communication*
 JP 3–01, *Countering Air and Missile Threats*
 JP 3–03, *Joint Interdiction*
 JP 3–04, *Joint Shipboard Helicopter Operations*
 JP 3–07, *Stability Operations*
 JP 3–07.3, *Peace Operations*
 JP 3–07.4, *Joint Counterdrug Operations*
 JP 3–08, *Interorganizational Coordination during Joint Operations*
 JP 3–12, *Cyberspace Operations*
 JP 3–13, *Information Operations*
 JP 3–13.1, *Electronic Warfare*
 JP 3–13.3, *Operations Security*
 JP 3–13.4, *Military Deception*
 JP 3–15, *Barriers, Obstacles, and Mine Warfare for Joint Operations*
 JP 3–15.1, *Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Operations*
 JP 3–16, *Multinational Operations*
 JP 3–27, *Homeland Defense*
 JP 3–28, *Civil Support*
 JP 3–32, *Command and Control for Joint Maritime Operations*

JP 3–33, *Joint Task Force Headquarters*
 JP 3–34, *Joint Engineer Operations*
 JP 3–35, *Deployment and Redeployment Operations*
 JP 3–40, *Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction*
 JP 3–41, *Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives Consequence Management*
 JP 3–50, *Personnel Recovery*
 JP 3–57, *Civil-Military Operations*
 JP 3–59, *Meteorological and Oceanographic Operations*
 JP 3–60, *Joint Targeting*
 JP 3–63, *Detainee Operations*
 JP 3–72, *Nuclear Operations*
 JP 4–0, *Joint Logistics*
 JP 4–01, *The Defense Transportation System*
 JP 4–01.2, *Sealift Support to Joint Operations*
 JP 4–01.5, *Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Transportation Terminal Operations*
 JP 4–01.6, *Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore*
 JP 4–02, *Health Service Support*
 JP 4–06, *Mortuary Affairs in Joint Operations*
 JP 4–08, *Logistics in Support of Multinational Operations*
 JP 4–10, *Operational Contract Support*
 JP 5–0, *Joint Operation Planning*
 JP 6–01, *Joint Electromagnetic Spectrum Operations*

JPs Revised (within last 6 months)

JP 2–01.2, *Counterintelligence and Human Intelligence Support in Joint Operations*
 JP 3–05, *Special Operations*
 JP 3–68, *Noncombatant Evacuation Operations*
 JP 4–03, *Joint Bulk Petroleum and Water Doctrine*