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## Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, Fall 2005 (forthcoming)

The updated version of Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (Joint Pub 3-12) was scheduled for publication August 15, 2005. Yet issues remain, and the publication date slipped again. The document is already more than two years overdue (publication was initially planned for October 2003, see graph below). Sources at the Pentagon now anticipate publication later in the fall.

Despite the delay, the second final coordination draft from March 2005 is mature enough to permit an analysis of the content of the final document. Some things will likely change in the final document, but at this late a stage they are anticipated to be cosmetic and not significantly change the content of the document. Once the final document is published, this analysis will also be updated.

### Introduction

The new doctrine incorporates preemption into joint nuclear doctrine for the first time, lowers the threshold for nuclear use further by reducing the level of hostilities where U.S. nuclear weapons might be used, endorses a role of nuclear weapons against all forms of weapons of mass destruction, endorses a role of nuclear weapons against terrorists, and describes missile defenses as a means of defending nuclear forces rather than people against attack.

The new doctrine incorporates the findings of the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review and the 2002 National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction. It reflects the impact of 9/11 on U.S. strategic thinking with a focus on all WMD threats whether from countries or non-state actors. As a result of these developments, the updated Joint Pub 3-12 has been changed significantly compared with the previous versions of the document.

The decision to update the doctrine dates back to March 2001, when the Joint Staff issued a



<b>Navigating Joint Doctrine</b>
» Top
» Joint Pub 3-12, 1993
» Joint Pub 3-12, 1995
» Joint Pub 3-12.1, 1996
» Joint Pub 3-12, 2005



### download documents:

» Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, Joint Pub 3-12, fall, 2005. [forthcoming]

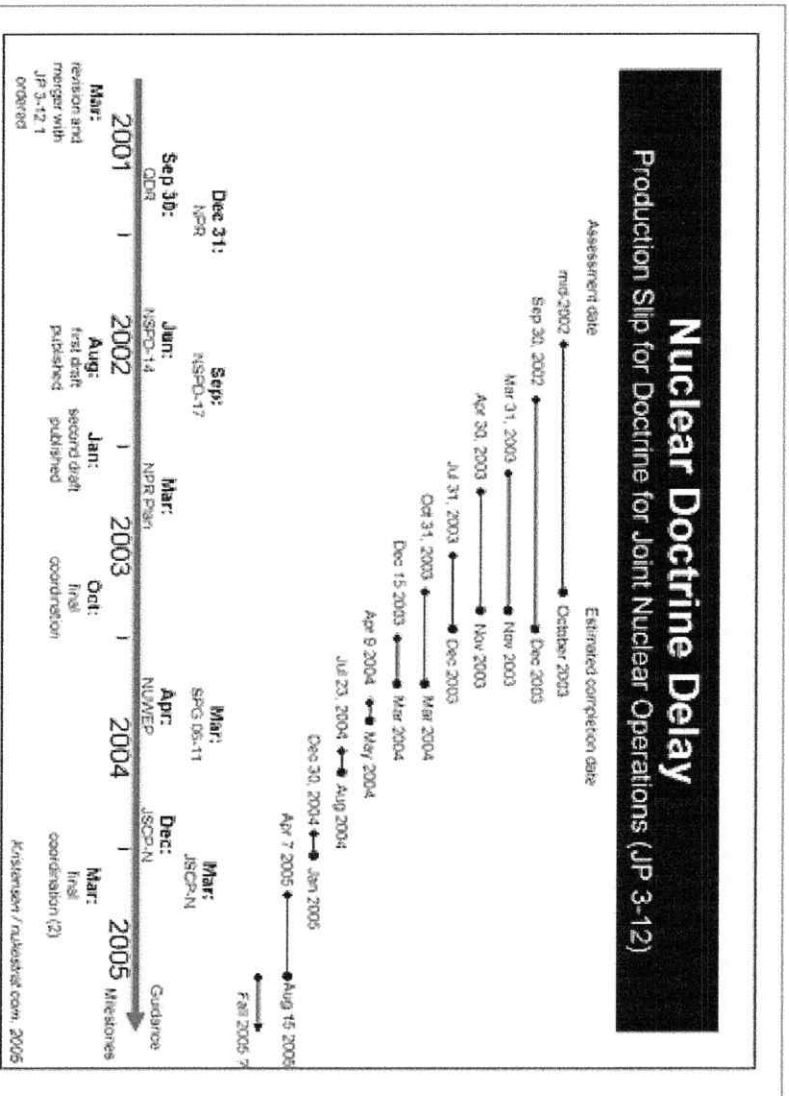
### to see how the 2005 version evolved, see:

- » JCS, Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, Joint Pub 3-12, final coordination 2, March 15, 2005. (1.76 MB)
- » JCS, Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (FC), JP 3-12 Comment Matrix Combined Sorted December 21, 2004, as of December 16, 2004. (1.1 MB)
- » JCS, Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations, Joint Pub 3-12, final coordination, September 3, 2003. (2.59 MB)
- » JCS, Joint Staff Input to JP 3-12, Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (Second Draft), as of May 28, 2003. (0.62 MB)
- » Message, Joint Staff//J7 to list, "Program directive for Joint Publication 3-12 'Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations,'" March 12, 2001. [0.19 MB]

### background article:

» Hans M. Kristensen, "New

program directive directing consolidation of Joint Pub 3-12 and Joint Pub 3-12.1 (theater) into a single Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations to guide employment of both strategic and non-strategic (theater) nuclear forces.



Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations (Joint Pub 3-12) states that it should be revised "no later than 5 years after development." Yet updating the 1995 version has taken double that time. Moreover, since completion of the Nuclear Posture Review in December 2001, the estimated completion date for the revision has slipped nearly two years from October 2003 to August 2005. During the same period, half a dozen nuclear guidance documents have been issued by the White House and the Pentagon (see guidance chronology).

### Specific Changes

The format of the new nuclear doctrine has changed considerably from the 1995 version. It is 22 pages longer because of a new chapter on theater nuclear operations, a discussion of the role of conventional and defensive forces, and an expanded discussion on nuclear operations.

The addition of a chapter on theater nuclear operations reflects the post-Cold War

Doctrine Falls Short of Bush Pledge to Reduce Nuclear Role," *Arms Control Today*, September, 2005.

» Hans M. Kristensen, "Nuclear Futures: Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and U.S. Nuclear Strategy," BASIC, March 1998.

» "Hans M. Kristensen, "Targets of Opportunity," Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, September/ October 1997.

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preoccupation of U.S. nuclear planners on finding ways of deterring regional aggressors (i.e. rogue states) armed with nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. It also reflects a decade-old rivalry between the regional combatant commanders and U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM) over who "owns" regional nuclear strike planning. The document shows that STRATCOM today has responsibility for more than half of the phases in the theater planning support process.

The new doctrine's approach grants regional nuclear strike planning an increasingly expeditionary aura that threatens to make nuclear weapons just another tool in the toolbox. The most extreme example of this is nuclear preemption, which the revised doctrine enshrines into official U.S. joint nuclear doctrine for the first time by describing at least four scenarios where geographic combatant commanders might request Presidential approval for use of nuclear weapons first.

In nuclear preemption, the objective no longer is deterrence through threatened retaliation but battlefield destruction of targets with nuclear weapons first in anticipation that deterrence *will* fail. The use of nuclear weapons might occur at a much lower intensity level than envisioned during the Cold War, and the new doctrine replaces "war" with "conflict" to describe the lower intensity of hostilities that could involve the use of U.S. nuclear weapons in post-Cold War nuclear battlefields.

Unlike the two previous versions of the doctrine from 1993 and 1995, however, the new doctrine does not mention a need for weapons with lower yields. The paragraph included in the previous version has been deleted. Instead, lower yields are mentioned in the section that discusses reducing nuclear collateral damage as a matter-of-fact potential capability:

"Specific techniques for reducing nuclear collateral damage may include lower yield weapons, improving accuracy, employing multiple smaller weapons, adjusting the height of burst, and offsetting the desired ground zero."

Another noticeable change is the incorporation of a discussion of the role of conventional weapons and defensive forces into the sections describing the purpose, planning, and employment of nuclear forces. This reflects the 2001 Nuclear Posture Review, which directed creation of a "new triad" with nuclear weapons portrayed as constituting only part (together with advanced conventional weapons) of one of the legs in the triad. A second leg, the NPR said, would be missile defense, and together the two (conventional weapons and missile defenses) would reduce the role of nuclear weapons by providing the president with other response options than nuclear retaliation.

Four years after completion of the NPR, however, advanced conventional capabilities and missile defenses that can reduce the role of nuclear weapons appear to remain a future possibility, and the revised doctrine reminds that "some contingencies will remain where the

most appropriate response may include the use of US nuclear weapons."

More than describing a reduced role of nuclear weapons, the revised doctrine appears to see another objective: how advanced conventional weapons and missile defenses can be used to increase the survivability and effectiveness of U.S. offensive nuclear forces. Indeed, throughout the document, protection of nuclear forces appears to have priority over protecting people.

The revised doctrine also eliminates all references to "countervalue targeting." The 1995 version described countervalue targeting as a strategy that "directs the destruction or neutralization of selected enemy military and military-related activities, such as industries, resources, and/or institutions that contribute to the enemy's ability to wage war." But countervalue is missing from the new doctrine because STRATCOM determined that it violates international law. STRATCOM initially proposed renaming countervalue to critical infrastructure targeting, but this was rejected by the other commands. Name change or not, critical infrastructure targeting is central to WMD deterrence and the new Global Strike war planning and continues.

### **Reaffirmation of Nuclear Deterrence**

Beyond and above the individual new elements incorporated into the revised doctrine, the core nuclear mission remains surprisingly similar to that described in previous versions of the document. As such, the major reduction in the role of nuclear weapons promised by the Bush administration in 2001-2002 is not evident from the revised doctrine.

Instead, the new Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations is opportunistic by deepening existing missions and carving out new roles for nuclear weapons. Despite White House rhetoric about reducing the role of nuclear weapons, the new doctrine reaffirms the importance of maintaining an aggressive nuclear posture of continuously modernized forces on a high readiness level capable of destroying -- even preemptively -- targets anywhere on the globe (see article New Doctrine Falls Short of Bush Pledge in Arms Control Today for further analysis).

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