

but the risk factors for this scenario would be timely and relevant.

International Law and the Internationalization of Norms. Tabletop exercises are particularly good at scrutinizing “the rules of the game” and assessing their impact on strategic choices, meaning that a focus on legal issues could be immensely valuable. Social scientists have long looked at law, not so much in the normative sense of advocating better or differently articulated human rights law, for instance, but as the contractual infrastructure that aids in making and executing agreements with partners and creates incentives that structure those agreements. Law as procedural politics would be amenable to exploration in game format (with law, itself, being the paradigmatic, qualitatively specified constraint). At the domestic level, law and procedural politics are fairly settled, but there are several international and transnational spaces where the rules of the game are rather in flux, sparse, or problematic even where the substance of a policy goal may be much less contested and where examining the implications of varying legal structures would be very interesting.

Current methods of topic selection, then, are adequate. It is not difficult to identify a handful of topics that should be relevant in the short- to mid-term. If we construct scenarios representing fairly short time spans, we can plausibly describe events that might come to pass. What this does not do is elicit particularly useful strategic insights or help us to better conceptualize problems. Conventional approaches yield little but conventional wisdom.

To identify strategic issues that will be of mid- to long-term import, we must actively seek out problems or try to find trends or situations not quite understood. If qualitatively specified games are better at identifying important factors and concept validation than solving problems per se, it is preferable to choose topics and formulate scenarios that provide a basis for generalizing about trends rather than just posing “what if” questions. It would be a useful evolution in game topic selection to focus on issues, rather than regions, and on using gaming to build bridges with social science research and seek to concretize useful but sometimes technical and abstract developments in the field. **JFQ**

Joint Doctrine and Irregular Warfare

By JEROME M. LYNES

During a recent conference at the National Defense University (NDU), an attendee expressed concern that joint doctrine has failed to adequately address irregular warfare (IW). This is not exactly so, but the charge has circulated with such frequency of late that I wish to continue the discussion.

The arc of IW, as it has been intellectually identified and expressed, is a product of the last Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR). The component pieces of IW were detailed therein, and the ensuing IW Roadmap put the Department of Defense on the path to institutionalizing irregular warfare in order to better balance warfighting capacity at both ends of the conflict intensity spectrum. I agree that we have not reached that goal yet, but I do have professional insight as to how we have endeavored to capture it in joint doctrine.

Before jumping into this discussion, it is relevant to talk about the distinction between concepts and doctrine. These two areas are frequently confused with one another, but have very different natures. *Doctrine* is the body of recorded wisdom about current capabilities; it has to be real or we cannot record it. *Doctrine* is the box that holds our wisdom about “what we think we already know.” *Concepts* are very different. They are “out of the box” ideas that may or may not work. The confusion over the distinction between the two is rampant in regard to IW, as independent concept and doctrine development work has been going on simultaneously. In a perfect schema, concept work starts with both a real problem and what we think we already know (doctrine). This linkage begins the journey to solutions that are ultimately recorded as doctrinal wisdom. Alternatively, doctrine should “wait” for concept work to come to fruition via the winding road of spiral development and field testing. In the “concepts to capabilities” journey, doctrine is after the *equals* sign.

Returning now to the question of IW in joint doctrine, first and foremost,

Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (May 17, 2007¹), establishes the definition of IW and places it in clear contrast with our traditional view of war. It does this primarily in chapter 1, “Foundations,” beginning in paragraph 1, “Fundamentals,” on page 1. The discussion continues in depth a few pages later in paragraph 2, “The Strategic Security Environment” (I–6 and I–7). JP 1 is the Capstone publication in the joint doctrine hierarchy, and it sets conditions for subordinate joint and Service doctrine publications.

The QDR deconstructed IW into a number of separate aspects. Here follows a list of them, with a number indicating how many different joint doctrine publications address the subject:

- insurgency and counterinsurgency (14 JPs), including the new JP being written on counterinsurgency
- terrorism and counterterrorism (16 JPs), including the new JP being written on counterterrorism
- stability operations (16 JPs), including the new JP being written on the subject
- unconventional warfare (21 JPs)
- foreign internal defense (23 JPs), including security force assistance
- information operations (46 JPs)
- psychological operations (41 JPs)
- intelligence and counterintelligence (40 JPs)
- civil-military operations (38 JPs).

Doctrine is continuously updated and revised, and what happens in this iterative process is a sharpening of our focus and treatment of IW to obtain an “equal footing” with traditional war. A major revision of both JP 3–0, *Operations*, and JP 5–0, *Planning*, will occur this year. These are significant opportunities to meet the QDR’s expressed goal, and these publications are “first among equals” below JP 1, influencing broad swaths of the joint doctrine hierarchy.



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An output of these revisions will be an expanded, more comprehensive treatment of IW as it relates to the big ideas in joint doctrine, such as campaign design, campaign phasing, and operational planning writ large.

One might now wonder where the “stand-alone joint doctrine publication on IW” is. We have purposely elected not to go down that road because it does not meet the intent of “equal capacity.” What we are effectively arguing is that IW needs to be in virtually every publication, cogently and cohesively veined throughout. Are we there yet? No. Have we come a long way? Yes, absolutely. Will we ever get there? Yes . . . and no. In its purest sense, knowledge is a living, ever-evolving body, and we will never reach a state where we know everything. As an anecdotal point, the previous-to-the-current version of JP 3-0 was signed on September 10, 2001. It was accurate for approximately 12 hours. Has joint doctrine failed to adequately address IW? Not by a long shot, but this is not to say that we do not seek to improve with every revision or new JP.

Let me next share that we recently surveyed the combatant command staffs and other members of the joint community regarding the efficacy and effectiveness of joint doctrine. In this survey, performed for the Joint Staff J7 and supported by a Ph.D. at NDU, our deeply held beliefs about the power and utility of joint doctrine were exposed to customer opinion. With over 7,500 respondents² representing all the combatant commands equally, only 4 percent expressed dissatisfaction with any aspect of doctrinal content, clarity, or dissemination. Ninety percent of those surveyed stated that they value and routinely use joint doctrine, 50 percent on a weekly basis. There was no clamor regarding gaps in IW content. Moreover, only 1 respondent out of 7,500 thought that we needed a stand-alone IW publication. The largest complaint—approximately 9 percent—concerned “flash to bang” (that is, the speed of revision). This is a fair com-

plaint, as we try to balance speed with the generation of wisdom on our pages.

I hope that this information is revealing and helpful. It is often easy to opine on joint doctrine, but when we pull the string on many of these complaints, we usually find that the speakers have not kept up with ongoing efforts. In their defense, part of this may be due to the fact that we do not publish hard copy volumes anymore. It is all online now, so “new editions” are somewhat harder to discern. Online publishing is the overwhelming preference of the community, validated by survey.

Please feel free to write us here at the Joint Staff J7 Joint Education and Doctrine Division with any comment, question, or observation. The address is jeddsupport@js.pentagon.mil. If you are in the Pentagon, please feel free to stop by. **JFQ**

NOTES

¹ Change 1 to JP 1 was promulgated on March 20, 2009. This change incorporated the definition of *cyberspace* and expanded discussion of joint capability areas.

² Keeping in mind that there are about 12,000 joint duty assignment list billets, 7,500 is a significant return.

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