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Joint Concept for Competing



10 February 2023

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FOREWORD

JOINT CONCEPT FOR COMPETING

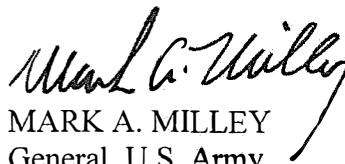
“Chess has only two outcomes: draw and checkmate. The objective of the game . . . is total victory or defeat—and the battle is conducted head-on, in the center of the board. The aim of Go is relative advantage; the game is played all over the board, and the objective is to increase one's options and reduce those of the adversary. The goal is less victory than persistent strategic progress.”

Dr. Henry Kissinger, *On China*

Our adversaries have studied our military strengths and way of war. They have implemented approaches that pursue their strategic objectives while avoiding the deterrent tripwires upon which our national security posture is based. Simply put, U.S. adversaries intend to “win without fighting.” In this context, U.S. challengers intend to pursue their objectives while avoiding armed conflict—rendering traditional Joint Force deterrence less effective. Facing this dilemma, more of the same is not enough. By ignoring the threat of strategic competition, the United States risks ceding strategic influence, advantage, and leverage while preparing for a war that never occurs. The United States must remain fully prepared and poised for war, but this alone will be insufficient to secure its strategic objectives and protect its freedoms. If the United States does not compete effectively against adversaries, it could “lose without fighting.”

For the United States, competition does not always mean hostility and does not preclude cooperation. Nor does the United States view strategic competition as an inevitable march to armed conflict. Done properly, there is much to gain from strategic competition, something U.S. adversaries have already realized. To succeed, the Joint Force will expand its mindset to understand the nature of the strategic competition it is engaged in, to focus on advancing our national interests and strategic objectives rather than just denying those of its adversaries, and to coordinate the military element with the other instruments of national power.

The Joint Force will succeed in strategic competition.



MARK A. MILLEY
General, U.S. Army
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Based on combatant commander (CCDR) assessments of their limited ability to compete successfully in strategic competition, at a Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Tank on 19 June 2020, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) directed the development of a joint concept for competition to drive joint strategic planning and joint force development and design. The *Joint Concept for Competing* (JCC) advances an intellectual paradigm shift to enable the Joint Force, in conjunction with interagency, multinational, and other interorganizational partners, to engage successfully in strategic competition. For the purposes of this concept, **strategic competition is a persistent and long-term struggle that occurs between two or more adversaries seeking to pursue incompatible interests without necessarily engaging in armed conflict with each other.** The normal and peaceful competition among allies, strategic partners, and other international actors who are not potentially hostile is outside the scope of this concept.

The Strategic Environment

Recognizing the overwhelming conventional military capability demonstrated during Operation DESERT STORM in 1991 and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in 2003, U.S. adversaries responded by seeking to circumvent U.S. deterrent posture through competitive activity below the threshold of armed conflict with the United States. Adversaries are employing cohesive combinations of military and civil power to expand the competitive space. Adversaries aim to achieve their strategic objectives through a myriad of ways and means, including statecraft and economic power as well as subversion, coercion, disinformation, and deception. They are investing in key technologies designed to offset U.S. strategic and conventional military capabilities (e.g., nuclear weapons, anti-access and area denial systems, offensive cyberspace, artificial intelligence, hypersonic delivery systems, electromagnetic spectrum). Simply put, our adversaries intend to “win without fighting,” but they are also building military forces that strengthen their ability to “fight and win” an armed conflict against the United States. Facing this dilemma, more of the same is not enough. By ignoring the threat of strategic competition, and failing to compete deliberately and proactively, the United States risks ceding strategic influence, advantage, and leverage while preparing for a war that may never occur. The United States must remain fully prepared and poised for war, but this alone is insufficient to secure U.S. strategic interests. If the Joint Force does not change its approach to strategic competition, there is a significant risk that the United States will “lose without fighting.”

Purpose of Strategic Competition

Analyzing any adversary’s way of war is instructive. As former CJCS General Joseph F. Dunford recognized, **“We think of being at peace or war...our adversaries don’t think that way.”** They believe they are in a long-term “conflict without combat” to alter the current international system, advance their national interests, gain strategic advantage and influence, and limit U.S. and allied options. The JCC postulates that the Joint Force should also view the spectrum of conflict as an enduring struggle between international actors with incompatible strategic interests and objectives, but who also cooperate when their interests coincide. **Strategic competition is thus an enduring condition to be managed, not a problem to be solved.**

The Military Challenge

How should the Joint Force, in conjunction with interorganizational partners, compete in support of U.S. Government (USG) efforts to protect and advance U.S. national interests, while simultaneously **detering** aggression, **countering** adversary competitive strategies, and **preparing** for armed conflict should deterrence and competition fail to protect vital U.S. national interests?

The Central Idea

TILTING THE COMPETITIVE BALANCE

By taking actions designed to shift the focus of strategic competition into areas that favor U.S. interests or undermine an adversary's interests, the Joint Force can exploit the competitive space to gain advantage over adversaries and pursue national interests.

This central idea of the JCC requires that the Joint Force expand its competitive mindset and its competitive approaches. A Joint Force with a competitive mindset will view strategic competition as a complex set of interactions in which the Joint Force contributes to broader USG efforts to gain influence, advantage, and leverage over other actors and ultimately to achieve favorable strategic outcomes. In conjunction with its interorganizational partners, the Joint Force can create competitive opportunities by using military capabilities to proactively probe adversary systems for vulnerabilities; establish behavioral patterns joint forces can exploit in a crisis to conceal U.S. intentions until it is too late to respond to them effectively; shift the competition to sub-areas in which the United States can exploit its advantages, leverage, and initiative; and attempt to divert adversaries' attention and resources to sub-areas of secondary or tertiary importance to the United States.

Supporting Ideas

Expand the Competitive Mindset. A competitive mindset begins with accepting that our adversaries have a very different conception of warfare; they intend to defeat the United States strategically without resorting to armed conflict to defeat the United States militarily. A competitive mindset also means embracing strategic competition as a persistent and enduring national security challenge; accepting the Joint Force's critical but supporting contribution to strategic competition; and, where appropriate and necessary, developing, designing, and fielding the forces and capabilities necessary to support the competitive efforts of other USG departments and agencies.

Shape the Competitive Space. The competitive space is vast, amorphous, and resists definition. Breaking it down into manageable and more tractable sub-areas for analysis and planning will enable the Joint Force to develop integrated competitive strategies that target those sub-areas most likely to lead to succeeding strategically. When directed by the President or Secretary of

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Defense (SecDef), the Joint Force will shape the competitive space to optimize its influence, advantage, and leverage over adversaries and ultimately to achieve favorable strategic outcomes. Where and when U.S. and adversary interests align, the Joint Force will engage adversaries selectively and seek opportunities to cooperate with them for mutual benefit in the pursuit of shared or complementary strategic interests (e.g., counterterrorism, counter-piracy).

Advance Integrated Campaigning. Integrated campaigning is premised on understanding that the Joint Force cannot and should not act alone in strategic competition. Even when providing the preponderance of resources, the Joint Force will normally campaign to support other USG departments and agencies. The Joint Force will identify approaches that enable it to apply its military capabilities proactively, and differently in some cases, to gain influence, advantage, and leverage over adversaries to establish the necessary conditions to achieve strategic outcomes. The *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* and emerging doctrine for global integration and globally integrated operations call for the integration of Joint Force actions and their alignment with the actions of interagency and allied partners at the operational level. Such alignment is necessary but insufficient against adversaries applying comprehensive national power in a unified approach to achieve their strategic objectives. To achieve unity of effort, the Joint Force must seek opportunities to integrate its operations and activities in time, space, and purpose with the activities of interorganizational partners, proxies, and surrogates.

Joint Force Role in Strategic Competition

The Joint Force will engage in strategic competition and contribute to USG efforts to **protect and advance U.S. national interests** by applying military power to tilt the competitive balance in order to:

- **Deter** aggression.
- **Prepare** for armed conflict if deterrence and competition fail to protect vital U.S. national interests.
- **Counter** adversaries' competitive strategies that threaten U.S. national interests.
- **Support** the efforts of interorganizational partners.

Recognizing the inherently multi-dimensional nature of strategic competition, the Joint Force will routinely play a mutually supporting role with other USG departments and agencies, allies and partners, and other interorganizational partners. The Joint Force does not, and should not, have the authority or capability to require its interagency partners to coordinate, align, or integrate their competitive activities with those of the Joint Force. However, the Joint Force is an active participant in the interagency process. It can foster the creation of interagency integration mechanisms to perform these functions, and it will participate in such mechanisms when established. The JCC seeks to open the aperture in terms of what is achievable by applying the central and supporting ideas to offer different approaches to force employment in integrated campaigning.

Deterring Aggression

The relationship between strategic competition and deterrence is a two-way street. Deterring an adversary from competing in a particular area is a perfectly valid strategy in strategic competition. Equally, the more competitive the United States shows itself to be, the greater the likely deterrent effect it will have upon adversaries. Shifting the competition, militarily or otherwise, into areas that favor the United States will likely increase an adversary's cost of action, impact their assessments of the likelihood of success, or force them to concentrate resources in areas that are less threatening to U.S. interests. Equally, expanding the competition into new areas will also deter adversaries, potentially forcing them to divert scarce resources away from more threatening areas. The Joint Force will take a balanced and integrated approach to the military component of deterrence, with the ability to both impose costs on adversaries and deny their ability to impose costs on the United States and its allies and partners.

Preparing for Armed Conflict

Deterrence will remain an essential driver of U.S. defense posture, but deterrence on its own will no longer be enough. The Joint Force will posture for deterrence and strategic competition, understanding that it must still remain prepared to fight and win an armed conflict should U.S. competitive strategies fail to deter aggression and protect vital U.S. national interests. Strategic competition offers the opportunity to better position the Joint Force in the event of armed conflict by increasing the range of dilemmas an adversary faces and by undermining the position of an adversary across a multi-dimensional front. The more competitive the United States is in terms of securing access, basing, and overflight; developing a defense industrial base; strengthening alliances and partnerships; and driving technological development, the better positioned the United States will be to fight and win an armed conflict. Adopting a competitive mindset and shaping the competitive space also offer the opportunity to subvert an adversary's government, economic system, or civil society to prevent an adversary from opposing an actor's actions, or to better position oneself in the event of armed conflict. The modern information environment, and especially cyberspace, have revolutionized subversion.

Countering Adversaries' Competitive Strategies

A deterrence and war preparation strategy is a necessary but insufficient requirement against adversaries that intend to defeat the United States and its allies without engaging them in armed conflict. The United States must also counter adversaries' competitive strategies to deny their strategic objectives indefinitely. Countering an adversary's competitive strategies is not as simple or straightforward as just blocking or challenging the adversary wherever it seeks to act. At best, such an approach risks ceding the initiative to the adversary; at worst, it may prove totally counter-productive and drive neutral or third-party actors towards the adversary. The intent must always be to pursue, promote, and protect U.S. national interests and, when and where necessary, challenge the activities of adversaries that threaten those interests. Deterrent and subversive activity will play their part in such an approach, but so too will subtler and more proactive approaches focused on attraction or persuasion. The most effective counter to an adversary competitive strategy is a fully integrated U.S. competitive strategy that brings together

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the components of national power in a cohesive and comprehensive manner to deliver effects across the strategic competitive space.

Supporting the Efforts of Interorganizational Partners

Recognizing the inherently strategic nature of competition, the Joint Force will routinely play a supporting role to other USG departments and agencies, allies and partners, and other interorganizational partners. Integrated competitive strategies and campaigns require **interdependence** and **mutual support**. The Joint Force supports national competitive strategies by conducting tasks, activities, or operations in conjunction with, and in support of, interorganizational partners. The Joint Force and its partners **leverage each other's authorities and capabilities** to optimize their mutual benefit and mitigate their strategic and operational risk. Supporting the efforts of interorganizational partners is fundamental to succeeding in strategic competition. The Joint Force cannot, and must not, attempt to do this alone.

Operationalizing the JCC

Development of integrated competitive strategies requires **processes and practices for the application of strategic art** and a **clear mechanism for developing, assessing, and revising integrated competitive strategies** in conjunction with key interagency and allied partners. The Structured Approach to Strategic Competition depicted in Annex A postulates a methodology for applying strategic art to the military problem of strategic competition in a systemic, comprehensive, and repeatable way. The methodology is similar to the joint planning process described in Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning*, but joint planning doctrine is written at the operational level. Joint doctrine recognizes strategic art, but there is no complementary joint doctrine for the application of strategic art in strategy development. The JCC methodology seeks to address this doctrinal void for strategic competition by augmenting the current joint planning process with a strategic-level methodology that may also be applicable to the application of strategic art across the spectrum of conflict. Working through the Structured Approach can lead to a set of four critical outputs:

- Provide **military advice** to the President and SecDef (“Up”) to inform national and defense policy and strategy development regarding strategic competition.
- Provide **strategic guidance and direction** for the application of the operational design methodology and joint planning process in integrated campaigning (“Down and In”).
- Identify and optimize **Joint Force interdependencies** with relevant interagency and allied partners (“Out”).
- Inform and guide **joint force development and design** processes (“Future Force”).

Concept Required Capabilities

An output of the JCC is a set of concept required capabilities (CRCs) to guide joint force development and design. These CRCs generally demand non-materiel solutions to expand the

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competitive mindset of the Joint Force, adopt a structured approach to the development of integrated competitive strategies, and reorganize for globally integrated campaigning with interagency, multinational, and other interorganizational partners. Further experimentation and gaming will assist in determining the optimal solutions, which must balance today's readiness requirements with developing future capabilities.

Risks

There are risks associated with adopting this concept. Increased emphasis on competition could **affect Joint Force readiness** to fight and win an armed conflict. Integrated competitive strategies could lead to ineffective campaigns of **enormous complexity**. Relevant interagency and allied partners may be **unwilling or unable to align or integrate** with a Joint Force competitive strategy and/or campaign. Strategic competition could lead to **escalation and unintended consequences**.

There is also risk associated with not adopting this concept. **If the Joint Force does not change its approach to strategic competition, there is a significant risk that the United States will "lose without fighting."** Time is of the essence, and it is not on the side of the Joint Force. The era of U.S. competitive advantage is closing rapidly. Adversary institutions are outpacing U.S. force development, design, and modernization efforts, which are too slow and too costly to reverse this trend by 2030. The Joint Force must act quickly and decisively to shape the competitive space to our advantage. In strategic competition, losing could mean accepting unfavorable regional balances of power and/or, more importantly, diminished U.S. leadership of the international system because the United States could not protect its vital national interests from the competitive behavior of adversaries.

Strategic competition is an enduring condition to be managed, not a problem to be solved.

The Joint Concept for Competing (JCC)



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Therefore those who win every battle are not really skillful—those who render others' armies helpless without fighting are the best of all.

Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

1. INTRODUCTION

Based on Combatant Commander (CCDR) assessments of their limited ability to compete successfully in strategic competition, at a Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) Tank on 19 June 2020, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) directed the development of a joint concept for competition to drive joint strategic planning and joint force development and design. The *Joint Concept for Competing* (JCC) advances an intellectual paradigm shift to enable the Joint Force,¹ in conjunction with² interagency, multinational, and other interorganizational partners,³ to engage successfully in strategic competition. For the purposes of this concept, **strategic competition is a persistent and long-term struggle⁴ that occurs between two or more adversaries⁵ seeking to pursue incompatible interests without necessarily engaging in armed conflict with each other.** The normal and peaceful competition among allies, strategic partners, and other international actors who are not potentially hostile is outside the scope of this concept.

The purpose of the JCC is to enable the expansion of individual and collective mindsets beyond warfighting to understanding and embracing strategic competition as a persistent and enduring national security challenge; the provision of a common lexicon for understanding the Joint Force contribution to strategic competition; and the leveraging of Joint Force capabilities to help align competitive activities across geographic, organizational, and functional seams.

¹ For the purposes of this concept, the **Joint Force** includes the Services, Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Staff, Combatant Commands, and Combat Support Agencies.

² Per the *DoD Issuance Writing Guide*, 4 October 2021, p. 24. this concept uses the term “**in conjunction with**” when two or more parties are equally involved, and the task cannot be accomplished without the involvement or consent of all parties. In contrast, DoD uses the term “**in coordination with**” when the main party must consult with other parties, but those parties are not necessarily an equal voice in the process.

³ For the purposes of this concept, **interorganizational partners** include participating U.S. government (USG) departments and agencies; state, territorial, local, and tribal agencies; foreign security forces and government agencies; international organizations; nongovernmental organizations; academia; private sector entities (which include private military and security companies); armed groups and their irregular forces; and foreign populations and groups. This definition expands the current definition in the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* to be even more inclusive.

⁴ This concept uses **struggle** vice **conflict** to prevent confusion with the term **armed conflict**. A **struggle** is a social condition that arises when two or more actors pursue mutually exclusive or incompatible interests or objectives. (Source: Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham, *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations* (London, New York: Penguin Books, 1998), p. 93)

⁵ The *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* defines an **adversary** as a party acknowledged as potentially hostile to a friendly party and against which the use of force may be envisaged.

What is different?

The JCC presumes that the Joint Force cannot address strategic competition on its own. The JCC requires the Joint Force to acknowledge the enduring nature of strategic competition and the requirement to optimize rather than maximize advantage, and to accept that warfighting may not be decisive. It demands a deliberately longer-term perspective, focused on the interactive nature of strategic competition and the exploitation of U.S. strengths and adversary vulnerabilities. The objective is to shape the strategic competition and channel it into more stable and less threatening areas. Above all, the JCC recognizes **strategic competition is a condition to be managed, not a problem to be solved.**

How do we use it?

Expanding the competitive mindset will be achieved through amended doctrine and enhanced professional military education. The Structured Approach to Understanding Strategic Competition will inform and advance the planning and strategy development process. The application of the ideas within the JCC will be realized through the development of comprehensive integrated competitive strategies that will guide Joint Force behaviors. By integrating the JCC's ideas and approaches with the Joint Warfighting Concept and force design process, the Joint Force will secure the ways and means to influence adversary perceptions, and their associated decision-making, regarding the present and likely future state of the competition, ultimately strengthening integrated deterrence.

What changes can we expect?

The successful implementation of an integrated approach to strategic competition will be characterized by: planning horizons that go well beyond existing Future Years Defense Program (FYDP) thresholds; a shift towards specific threat-based planning vice generic capability-based planning; the proactive pursuit of clearly identified U.S. competitive ends rather than just reacting to those of our adversaries; explicit evaluation of U.S. competitive objectives and outcomes in terms of U.S. and adversary competitive strengths and vulnerabilities; institutionalized competitive military advice to USG policymakers; identification and assessment of interdependencies amongst the Joint Force, interagency, interorganizational, and international partners; formalization and proliferation of an integrated competitive strategy across the components; and identifying the required capabilities for the Joint Force to better compete.

The central idea of this concept is to shift the Joint Force focus of strategic competition from reactive operational responses into proactive strategic actions that favor U.S. long-term interests or undermine an adversary's efforts to pursue their incompatible interests. This shift would enable the Joint Force to support broader USG and international efforts to gain advantage over adversaries. The intent of this approach is to gain warfighting and competitive advantage by

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shaping the competitive space⁶ to protect and advance U.S. national interests⁷ and counter adversaries' threats to those interests. This approach will position and prepare the Joint Force to deter and, if necessary, counter aggression by an adversary. However, it requires long-term investments to strengthen U.S. international relationships and partnerships, optimize U.S. advantage in key areas, and avoid strategic overreach or pushing the competition into areas an adversary perceives to be unacceptable.

The JCC focuses on the role of the Joint Force in strategic competition and the **integration** of Joint Force competitive strategies,⁸ campaigns, and operations with the efforts of its interorganizational partners and broader USG competitive efforts. The JCC moves beyond the **alignment** of military and non-military activities envisioned in the 2018 *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning*. Adversaries employ their comprehensive national power (CNP)⁹ against the United States in integrated campaigns that threaten U.S. national interests without engaging in armed conflict. A Joint Force that can deconflict, synchronize, and, ideally, integrate with broader USG efforts is necessary to support a comprehensive USG approach to counter such threats.

The JCC itself is adversary agnostic. Adversaries need not be great powers to compete against the United States. In addition to China and Russia, the United States has other adversaries (e.g., Iran, North Korea, and transregional violent extremist organizations) that operate in the competitive space and pursue strategic interests that threaten U.S. national interests. Complementary classified concepts will address Joint Force strategic competition against specific adversaries.

⁶ For the purposes of this concept, the **competitive space** is the contested portion of the physical domains, information environment (which includes cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum), technological industrial environment (which includes the defense industrial base and defense innovation base), and human dimension (which includes culture, the cognitive realm, and applied social sciences) in which adversaries struggle to achieve mutually incompatible strategic objectives while avoiding armed conflict with each other.

⁷ For the purposes of this concept, **national interests** are the basic determinants that guide strategic policy preferences in international relations, foreign policy, and national security policy. They express the interests of the society as a whole, not a particular government, and as such are linked to the idea of the sovereignty and legitimacy of the state. See Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham, *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1998), pp. 344-345.

⁸ For the purposes of this concept, a **competitive strategy** is an interrelated series of ideas and actions for employing the instruments of national power in a long-term, synchronized, and integrated fashion to achieve and maintain a position of advantage against a competitor. See Thomas G. Mahnken, *Competitive Strategies for the 21st Century*, (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012).

⁹ For the purposes of this concept, **comprehensive national power** (CNP) is the means by which one nation's government is able to persuade, compel, or otherwise influence another nation's government to act in a way it was not originally willing to act, or to not act in a way it originally intended to act. CNP is the complex (non-linear) product of a nation's strengths, which can be broken down into tangible strengths (e.g., geography, demography, economic capability, military capability, technological capability, natural resources) and intangible strengths (e.g., quality of government, diplomatic capability, education, culture, societal cohesion) over a period of time. Nations use qualitative and quantitative CNP assessments to inform strategic decision-making, allocate resources, and integrate actions across the instruments of national power. See Michael Pillsbury, *A Global Contest for Power and Influence, China's View of Strategic Competition with the United States* (Washington, D.C.: National University Press, January 2020), pp. 35-36; and Huang Shufeng, *Rivalries Between Major Powers, A Comparison of World Powers' Overall National Strength* (Beijing: World Affairs Press, August 2006) (DoD English translation, May 2010).

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The JCC's primary audience is Joint Force members involved in policy and strategy development, military capability development and design, and operational campaign planning. However, the JCC has broader implications for other Department of Defense (DoD) components and interagency partners because it recognizes Joint Force interdependencies that extend into interagency, multinational, and other interorganizational partners.

The JCC draws from and is consistent with national- and defense-level strategic guidance, 2018 *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning*, 2018 *Joint Concept for Operating in the Information Environment*, 2021 *Joint Warfighting Concept (JWC)*, and 2021 *Joint Concept for Contested Logistics*. Together, these mutually supporting concepts will become the intellectual foundation for the Joint Force as it continues its transition to address complex strategic challenges across the spectrum of conflict (competition, crisis, armed conflict).¹⁰ The JCC approach follows twin tracks. First, the unclassified JCC will set the context for addressing strategic competition and will translate into guidance for near-term changes to joint doctrine. Complementary classified concepts will pursue the challenges of strategic competition against specific adversaries and will inform the development of a comprehensive JWC that spans the spectrum of conflict to guide joint force development and design.

¹⁰ *Joint Warfighting Concept* 1.0, 31 March 2021, p. 20.

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The return to prominence of a 5,000-year-old civilization with 1.4 billion people is not a problem to be fixed. It is a condition—a chronic condition that will have to be managed over a generation.

Graham Allison, *Destined for War*¹¹

2. THE PROBLEM

This chapter provides an unclassified overview of the strategic environment in which the Joint Force will compete from today until at least 2030. The United States finds itself in a global competition for legitimacy, credibility, and influence. National interests require the United States to shape the strategic environment to U.S. advantage and uphold a stable and open international system.¹² Our adversaries employ cohesive and comprehensive civil and military approaches designed to advance their national interests incrementally without triggering an armed conflict with the United States. They remain focused on manipulating and altering the international system to favor their interests and authoritarian preferences, and discrediting the United States as a world leader. To counter these efforts, the Joint Force will rethink its understanding of, and approach to, warfare¹³ and strategic competition.

THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Recognizing the overwhelming conventional military capability¹⁴ demonstrated during Operation DESERT STORM in 1991 and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM in 2003, U.S. adversaries responded by seeking to circumvent U.S. deterrent posture through competitive activity below the threshold of armed conflict with the United States. Adversaries are employing cohesive combinations of military and civil power to expand the competitive space. Their strategies and underlying theories of victory commonly seek to exploit perceived vulnerabilities in the American way of war. Adversaries aim to achieve their strategic objectives through a myriad of ways and means, including statecraft and economic power as well as subversion, coercion, disinformation, and deception. They are investing in key technologies designed to offset U.S. strategic and conventional military capabilities (e.g., nuclear weapons, anti-access and area denial systems, offensive cyberspace, artificial intelligence, hypersonic delivery systems, electromagnetic spectrum). Simply put, our adversaries intend to “win without fighting,” but

¹¹ Graham Allison, *Destined for War* (New York: Mariner Books, 2017), p. xix.

¹² For the purposes of this concept, the **international system** is a multiplicity of sovereign states, intergovernmental organizations (e.g., United Nations, International Court of Justice), and nongovernmental organizations (e.g., International Red Cross, Amnesty International) that recognize common standards of behavior (e.g., balances of power, diplomacy, international law) that provide a framework within which international interactions occur. (Source: Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham, *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998))

¹³ **Warfare** is the mechanism, method, or modality of armed conflict against an enemy. It is “the how” of waging war. (Joint Publication (JP) 1 (2017), p. I-4). In contrast, **warfighting** is a synonym for waging war. The shift in Joint Force understanding of warfare at the operational level began with the *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* in 2018. The JCC expands on this thinking and argues that environmental changes require the Joint Force to undergo a similar and complementary transformation of its understanding of warfare at the strategic level.

¹⁴ For the purposes of this concept, a **military capability** is the ability of a military force to achieve a specified military objective, which is a function of six components: capacity (force structure), modernization (technical sophistication), posture (location and international agreements), readiness, sustainability, and authorities and permissions.

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they are also building military forces that strengthen their ability to “fight and win” an armed conflict against the United States. Facing this dilemma, more of the same is not enough. By ignoring the threat of strategic competition, and failing to compete deliberately and proactively, the United States risks ceding strategic influence, advantage, and leverage while preparing for a war that may never occur. The United States must remain fully prepared and poised for war—but this alone is insufficient to secure U.S. strategic interests.¹⁵ If the Joint Force does not change its approach to strategic competition, there is a significant risk that the United States will “lose without fighting.”¹⁶

China, in particular, has rapidly become more assertive; it is the only competitor capable of mounting a sustained challenge to a stable and open international system.¹⁷ In 1999, Chinese People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Colonels Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui wrote the “new principles of war are...using all means, including armed force or non-armed force, military and non-military, and lethal and non-lethal means **to compel the enemy to accept one’s interests.**”¹⁸ Accordingly, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) does not seek to defeat the United States in a direct military confrontation. The PRC intends to deter U.S. intervention militarily and present the United States with a *fait accompli*¹⁹ that compels the United States to accept a strategic outcome that results in a PRC regional sphere of influence and an international system more favorable to PRC national interests and authoritarian preferences.

Since 1999, Russia’s strategic approach has been driven by the Primakov Doctrine, named for former Russian Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov.²⁰ The Primakov doctrine is based on five fundamental factors: Russia is an indispensable actor in global politics, pursuing an independent foreign policy; a multipolar world managed by a group of nations; acceptance of a Russian sphere of influence in the post-Soviet space and in Eurasia; opposition to any expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); and a strategic partnership with China. In 2013, General Valery Gerasimov, Chief of the Russian General Staff, operationalized this doctrine, which is now commonly referred to as the Gerasimov Doctrine. The Gerasimov Doctrine is built on the concepts of whole-of-government warfare, the fusion of elements of hard and soft power across various domains, and permanent conflict blurring the boundary between peace and war.

PURPOSE OF STRATEGIC COMPETITION

Analyzing an adversary’s way of war is instructive. As former CJCS General Joseph F. Dunford recognized, “**We think of being at peace or war...our adversaries don’t think that way.**”²¹ They believe they are in a long-term “conflict without combat” to alter the current international

¹⁵ The 2019 *Irregular Warfare Annex to the National Defense Strategy*, p.4, states, “The purpose of competition is not only to gain military advantage. The purpose of competition is to counter adversaries’ strategies, shape their perceptions, and deny their strategic objectives in the pursuit of national interests.”

¹⁶ 2019 Joint Irregular Warfare Assessment, 5 December 2019, pp. 4-6. (SECRET/NOFORN)

¹⁷ *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, March 2021, p. 8.

¹⁸ Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare* (Battleboro: Echo Point Books, 1999), p. xxii.

¹⁹ For the purposes of this concept, a *fait accompli* is an irreversible or inevitable outcome that is achieved before affected parties can respond, leaving them no option but to accept the outcome.

²⁰ Eugene Rumer, “The Primakov (Not Gerasimov) Doctrine in Action” (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 5 June 2019).

²¹ Joint Doctrine Note 1-19, *The Competition Continuum* 1-19, p.1

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system, advance their national interests, gain strategic advantage and influence, and limit U.S. and allied options. The JCC postulates that the Joint Force should also view the spectrum of conflict as an enduring struggle between international actors with incompatible strategic interests and objectives, but who also cooperate when their interests coincide. **Therefore, strategic competition is an enduring condition to be managed, not a problem to be solved.**

PROTECTING AND ADVANCING U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS

The ultimate purpose of strategic competition is to protect and advance U.S. national interests. National interests tend to be enduring but they can change over time, and governments can interpret them differently. U.S. national interests are reflected in the three primary functions of the Joint Force: support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; ensure, by timely and effective military action, the security of the United States, its possessions, and its interests; and uphold and advance the national policies and interests of the United States.²²

To meet the demands of strategic competition requires an integrated and synchronized application of executive and legislative programs and initiatives, all supported by requisite authorities. The JCC acknowledges that a broader approach to strategic competition requires an integrated competitive strategy that fuses the operations, activities, and investments of actors, including the Joint Force and its interorganizational partners. The Joint Force will continue to make critical, but generally supporting, contributions.

The United States cannot forsake the military instrument; the potential for armed conflict remains a reality that the Joint Force cannot ignore. However, nuclear and conventional deterrence is not enough. The United States can and should develop a more holistic approach to strategic competition that recognizes and seizes upon the irregular, non-lethal, and non-military aspects of competing as fundamental to success, and that focuses on U.S. interests and values, not just what it opposes.

The JCC draws on these priorities and requirements to influence Joint Force thinking, planning, processes, budgeting and procurement priorities, capabilities, risks, and operating concepts to better reflect the needs and demands of strategic competition in a long-term power struggle among adversaries. As a joint concept, its focal point is the Joint Force, but its implications go much wider and are reflected in the military challenge the JCC seeks to address.

THE MILITARY CHALLENGE

How should the Joint Force, in conjunction with interorganizational partners, compete in **support** of USG efforts to protect and advance U.S. national interests, while simultaneously **detering** aggression, **countering** adversary competitive strategies, and **preparing** for armed conflict should deterrence and competition fail to protect vital U.S. national interests?

²² DoD Directive 5100.01 with Change No. 1, 20 September 2020, *Functions of the Department of Defense and its Major Components*.

You can't look at the competition and say that you're going to do it better. You have to look at the competition and say that you're going to do it differently.

Steve Jobs, Co-Founder of Apple Corp

3. THE NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF STRATEGIC COMPETITION²³

This chapter introduces strategic competition and describes its nature and characteristics. It provides an overview of strategic competition and discusses the foundational elements of strategic art upon which the JCC is built, including the distinguishing attributes of strategic competition. The chapter also discusses the system, the “rules of the game” in and through which actors participate in strategic competition, the competitive space, and the distinction between strategic competition outcomes and objectives. It concludes by recognizing the requirement for competitive strategies. Chapter 4 builds on this foundation to postulate central and supporting ideas for applying strategic art to develop such strategies.

THE NATURE OF STRATEGIC COMPETITION

All nations pursue their own interests. International rivalry occurs when these interests clash. In some cases, this rivalry develops into a struggle between competing interests, and, in extremis, these struggles become irreconcilable and result in armed conflict.

Strategic competition is not a new phenomenon. Strategic competitions are ancient in their origin, dating back in Western civilization to the struggle between Athens and Sparta (480–346 BCE) and in China to the early succession struggles (723–468 BCE). More recent historical examples that highlight the protracted nature of strategic competition in the modern era include:

- The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, and their respective allies, for global domination (1947–1991), which included spikes of armed conflict in Greece (1946–1949), Korea (1950–1953), Indochina (1960–1974), and Afghanistan (1979–1989); and major crises in Berlin (1948–1949), Cuba (1962), and the Middle East (1973).
- The unnamed struggle between France and Germany, and their respective allies, for dominance on the European continent (1870–1945), which included the Franco-Prussian War (1870–1871) and two World Wars (1914–1918, 1939–1945).

²³ For the purposes of this concept, the **nature of competition** is derived from its essential and inherent qualities or attributes that belong to it by origin or constitution. The **characteristics of a competition** reflect the distinctive traits of particular instances or forms of competition. Reflecting Clausewitz, the nature of competition is unchanging; it is a contest between two, or more, participants in pursuit of their interests. The characteristics of competition describe the ways that competition manifests itself in the real world – such characteristics will change dependent upon the importance of the interests at stake. Where the interest in question is of critical importance to participants (e.g. competition for national survival), they may resort to the use of armed force to protect that interest; war may thus be considered the most extreme form of competition.

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- The Great Game between the British and Russian Empires for control of the Indian Subcontinent and Central Asia (1830–1907), which included two Anglo-Afghan Wars (1838, 1878) and two Anglo-Sikh Wars (1845, 1848).

Throughout the Cold War, there was widespread acceptance that the Soviet Union was an adversary. Furthermore, the Soviet Union was a strategic competitor to the United States, but ultimately, its economy was unable to match the progress and performance of the Western capitalist model. In contrast, significant parts of the U.S. general population, private sector, and even government do not see China as an adversary or threat, but as a neutral power and economic partner. However, China has access to significant economic resources, has a strong industrial base, and presents an alternative governance model, making it a greater strategic competitor than the Soviet Union ever was.

THE INDEFINITE NATURE OF STRATEGIC COMPETITION

Strategic competitions generally consist of complex interactions over cultural, economic, geographic, and political ideology rivalries, often played out over decades. Winning battles, or even wars, may not be decisive. This indefinite nature of strategic competition contrasts sharply with the more finite nature of armed conflict. Armed conflicts are normally bounded in time and space. They end when one actor wins and the other actor accepts defeat, or when the adversaries arrive at a political settlement of their disagreement. World War II ended when the Germans and Japanese surrendered and the Allied Powers occupied their countries for years.²⁴ The Cold War ended when the Soviet Union collapsed under political, economic, ideological, and military pressure from the United States and its allies. In both cases, however, a follow-on strategic competition arose out of the previous one.

Strategic competitions are, in effect, open-ended situational relationships surrounding varying and evolving interests as well as the actors' place or "standing" within the international system. While finite competitions, military or otherwise, may come and go, the underlying strategic competition endures. **In strategic competition, succeeding means retaining freedom of action to pursue national interests at an acceptable risk and sustainable cost and avoiding armed conflict with adversaries.** It also means setting conditions for succeeding in armed conflict, should competition and deterrence fail to protect vital national interests. Failure in strategic competition means loss of the ability or will to pursue national interests at an acceptable risk and sustainable cost. Competitive advantages and disadvantages will shift over time, but the competition continues indefinitely until the adversaries reach an enduring political settlement, resolve the root causes of their struggle, and cease being adversaries. The peace treaties with Japan in 1952 and Germany in 1955 are examples of such settlements. In extremis, the United States may resort to armed conflict to protect a vital U.S. national interest, as it did in Korea (1950), Vietnam (1965), Kuwait (1991), Afghanistan (2001), Iraq (2003), and Iraq and Syria (2014). Even then, reaching an enduring settlement of one dispute may result in another

²⁴ In both cases, the United States and its allies translated their military victories into decisive strategic outcomes by consolidating their military gains, stabilizing the conflict-affected areas, and transitioning their area responsibility to legitimate and effective civil governments.

strategic competition against another, or even the same,²⁵ adversary that considers the political settlement an unacceptable threat to its strategic interests. Conversely, just because two nations are engaged in a strategic competition, the option to cooperate should not be ruled out when such cooperation serves a common interest.

The United States v China: Cooperation in Competition

Neither the United States nor China see armed conflict as an inherently necessary element of competition, but the risk of escalation to armed conflict increases when either side perceives an unacceptable level of activity directed at strategic interests by the other. Generally speaking, both the United States and China seek to limit the risk of escalation and cooperate on discrete issues of mutual benefit. The U.S. push for China's accession into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 is an example of such cooperation in the midst of strategic competition. China had become a global economic power, and it interpreted the "rules" in its favor to gain competitive advantage and leverage. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) viewed WTO accession as a symbol of legitimacy as well as a competitive measure to accelerate its economic growth, maintain its domestic authority, and build its economic power to achieve "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" by 2049. The West viewed China's accession as a cooperative measure to bring China into the international system, reduce the cost of entry, and build a consumer economy for its products. The parties pursued different objectives, but they cooperated within the international system.

COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

Understanding the enduring nature of strategic competition is critical. Because strategic competitions are protracted and often generational, the aim is to achieve strategic objectives by **gaining or maintaining a position of competitive advantage**, as the struggle evolves over extended time. Competitive advantage is not monolithic, singular, or static; it may revolve around military or technological superiority, but also legitimacy, credibility, influence, and will to succeed. Competitive advantage is not an end in itself; gaining or maintaining advantage is a way by which actors achieve their strategic objectives.

Competitive advantage can be achieved by shifting the competition into areas where the United States has durable relative strengths compared to our adversaries, such that our actions keep our adversaries on the strategic defensive or coerce them to undertake responses that are relatively costly or counterproductive for them in light of their strategic objectives. For example, one U.S. durable relative strength is its ability to convene and lead broad coalitions of allies and partners. Such areas may be considered positions or conditions of **competitive asymmetry, competitive leverage, or competitive initiative**. Competitive asymmetries among actors exist wherever differences exist—including interests, political will, strategies, postures, capabilities, interoperability, and relationships—and these differences generate distinct advantages and disadvantages depending on the context. Competitive leverage is the exploitation of asymmetries (i.e., a friendly advantage or an adversary vulnerability) to achieve disproportionately greater effects in the pursuit of strategic outcomes. Competitive

²⁵ For example, the resolution of the Iraq war of 1991 resolved the immediate issue of Iraqi occupation of Kuwait but the strategic competition with Saddam Hussein continued.

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initiative is where one actor has perceived relative advantage in a particular aspect of strategic competition for a period of time. The pursuit of competitive advantage thus requires understanding and prioritization not only of U.S. interests, objectives, and preferred courses of action, but also an understanding of the same factors for our adversaries, resulting in a net assessment²⁶ of areas of relative strength and weakness. By understanding where conditions of competitive asymmetry, leverage, and initiative exist, the Joint Force can exploit or protect the associated vulnerabilities to achieve competitive advantage.

STRATEGIC COMPETITION AND BALANCES OF POWER

By definition, strategic competition concerns the pursuit of national interests. When such interests are considered critical or fundamental, nations will pay a high price, in terms of blood and treasure, to protect or promote those interests, even to the point of armed conflict. However, such is the destructive power of modern armed conflict, that when considered in the context of the enduring nature of strategic competition, its use may ultimately prove too costly at best or completely counter-productive at worst. To avoid this, actors must believe they can make progress toward their strategic outcomes without facing unacceptable risk to their national interests.

Maintaining such an equilibrium and avoiding escalation requires a mutually acceptable **balance of power** where all parties assess that the competitive advantages of their adversaries do not present an unacceptable risk to their own interests. Although some scholars consider balances of power to be relics of the 20th century Cold War, international actors have relied on them since ancient times and they remain relevant today, particularly with respect to strategic competition. For a balance of power to work, all parties to it must avoid **strategic overreach**.²⁷ For example, the 1919 Treaty of Versailles ended the First World War, but it humiliated and impoverished Germany, leading to internal unrest, the rise of the Nazi Party, and the Second World War.

Succeeding in long-term strategic competition, therefore, requires the application of CNP to maintain or regain favorable balances of power without seeking advantages that actors perceive to be unacceptable. **Optimizing** advantage instead of maximizing it seeks to ensure the balance is acceptable to adversaries (i.e., within a “band of mutual acceptability” and below the threshold that will trigger armed conflict). Optimizing advantage does not require or imply equality of outcome, simply that the outcome is acceptable to both sides. The goal is not to reach a point where all parties are satisfied and competition stops. With numerous variables at play, the goal is to reach a dynamic tension where all parties can, effectively, **accept their level of dissatisfaction**. Managing this dynamic tension requires persistent engagement and continuous assessment to adapt U.S. strategy as conditions change and trends become apparent.

²⁶ For the purposes of this concept, **net assessment** is a systematic method of long-term analysis that compares two or more competitors and appraises balances, trends, key competitions, risks, opportunities, and future prospects to assess relative advantage.

²⁷ For the purposes of this concept, **strategic overreach** is a lopsided political outcome that leaves adversaries humiliated, impoverished, or at an unacceptable disadvantage, causing them to escalate to restore an acceptable balance of power. The term can also refer to an international actor’s own inability to consolidate and defend its gains. An actor may have the will and the power to enforce unacceptable terms on an adversary, but such action does not resolve a conflict; it merely changes the character of the conflict.

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Strategic competition is a persistent and long-term struggle in which the Joint Force campaigns and where it may be preferable to seek incremental gains toward the desired strategic outcomes. This does not preclude being proactive, probing an adversary to gauge their reaction, or imposing “drag” on an adversary’s systems. Rather, it promotes calibrating activities to mitigate adversary perceptions of unacceptable threats, undermining deterrence and provoking escalation.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF STRATEGIC COMPETITION

The preceding analysis lays down the immutable elements of strategic competition that actors must acknowledge and address. In comparison, the characteristics of strategic competition offer greater scope for variance and choice. While it may not be possible for an actor to avoid strategic competition, actors can choose how and where to compete. The following factors are germane in making such determinations.

THE SYSTEM AND “RULES OF THE GAME”

While there is no sovereign authority or “umpire” for strategic competition, there are still commonly understood international laws, agreements, and norms (hereafter “rules”) that govern how international actors should compete. These rules exert significant influence on how interactions in strategic competition play out. Nations routinely interpret the rules to their advantage, but a stable and open international system moderates and constrains international behavior in a generally successful effort to limit international conflict. As a result, nations compete to improve their ability to influence the international system and the rules that govern international interactions. The JCC assumes that maintaining U.S. leadership of a stable and open international system will remain a priority national security objective. Through engaging in the information environment and other competitive activities, the Joint Force can maintain a supporting role in shaping international norms and establishing the tenets of responsible behavior in the international arena.

THE COMPETITIVE SPACE

International actors compete in what DoD calls the **competitive space**. The competitive space is distinct from competitive actors or activity. It is the “field of play” on which international actors compete. The totality of the competitive space is too large and complex to be addressed directly in a single strategic approach. It is necessary to break down the competitive space into manageable **sub-areas** that are more tractable for analysis and planning, and that enable the focusing of efforts towards areas of strategic competition that accord with U.S. priorities. Choosing sub-areas based on an estimate of the competitive environment’s impact on U.S. national interests will allow the deconfliction, synchronization, and integration of joint operations, activities, and investments within and across sub-areas.

Such sub-areas may be geographic, cognitive, domain-related, or thematic, but this list is not exhaustive (see Figure 1). They will identify what actors are involved and how they perceive strategic competition. Such a breakdown should not be an immutable division of the world into mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories. Joint Force commanders and strategists should

have the flexibility to respond to changing circumstances and priorities and should acknowledge that competitive actions in one particular sub-area may well result in effects in others.

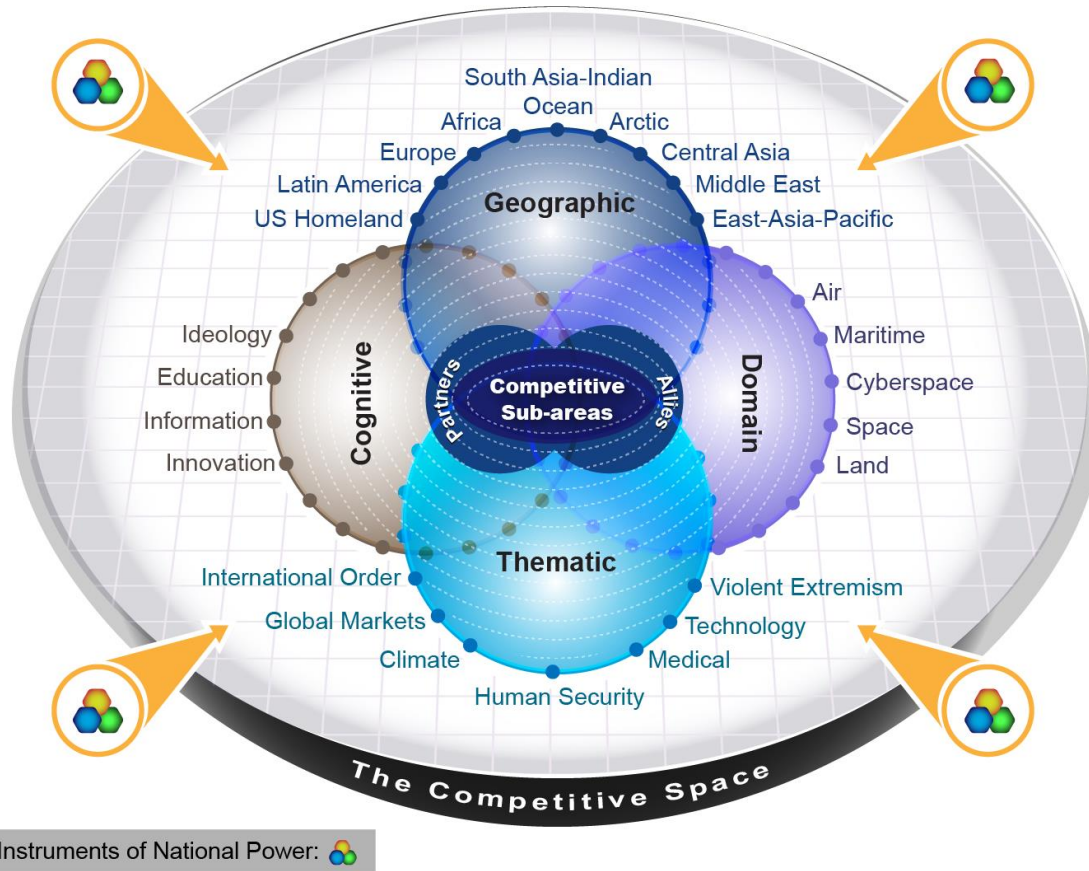


Figure 1. The Competitive Space and Illustrative Competitive Sub-Areas (Not to Scale)

Strategic Competition in Practice

China has signaled its intention to lead in the development of international norms in areas where they are not yet fully established, such as space and the Arctic. In the case of the Arctic, China is moving aggressively to enhance its role in determining the region’s future. Despite being 900 miles away from the Arctic Circle, China has provided training and financial support for thousands of Chinese researchers on Arctic-related topics, supported joint research and exploration with Arctic countries, built a fleet of state-of-the-art icebreakers, and funded research stations in several Arctic countries. Among the observer countries to the governing Arctic Council, China is the most active, hosting scientific conferences, submitting papers for review, and volunteering to serve on scientific committees. China has attempted to assert its rights in the Arctic decision-making process by referring to itself as a “near-Arctic power” and reframing the Arctic as “a global commons.” China has had some success in inserting itself into the international Arctic decision-making process, but Chinese assertiveness has caused the Arctic

powers to become less inclined to accept Chinese investment because of the potential security risks.²⁸

INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER

If the competitive space is the field of play, the instruments of national power are the means through which the plays are executed. International actors apply their instruments of national power to conduct activities within and across the competitive space. These instruments include, but are not limited to, the traditional instruments of national power (see Figure 2).²⁹ These activities are the tools competitors use to achieve a broad range of effects. International actors integrate their activities in time, space, and purpose to **optimize** their influence, advantage, and leverage in the competitive space. Of note, not all of the instruments of national power will be within the direct control, or even reach, of the Joint Force. That should not mean, however, that they should be ignored or dismissed. The deciding factor should be the relevance and effectiveness of the instrument in achieving the desired effect.

• Diplomatic	• Socio-Cultural
• Information	• Technological
• Military	• Commercial-Industrial
• Economic	• Geophysical-Environmental
• Financial	• Ideological-Theological
• Intelligence	• Public Health
• Legal	

Figure 2. Illustrative Instruments of National Power

Context of Competition in the Cold War: Using the Instruments of National Power

The United States used its instruments of national power in its Cold War competition with the Soviet Union: diplomatic, informational, military, economic, etc. Diplomatically, both sides legitimized their systems by conducting high-level diplomacy at every opportunity. The United States hosted the United Nations headquarters in New York City, for example. U.S.-Soviet diplomacy deescalated the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the two adversaries were willing participants in arms reductions treaties such as the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaties. Informationally, in a world of competing narratives, demonstrating success in international sports became an important symbol, providing a visible and clear demonstration of superiority that validated the system the athlete represented.

The United States and Soviet Union competed militarily in several ways. An ongoing arms race ensued as both sides worked to outmatch the other. The United States compensated for its

²⁸ Elizabeth Economy, “Xi Jinping’s New World Order, Can China Remake the International System?” in *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2022, p. 19. Accessed 21 November 2021 at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-12-09/xi-jinpings-new-world-order>.

²⁹ The *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* defines instruments of power as “All of the means available to the government in its pursuit of national interests. They are expressed as diplomatic, economic, informational, and military. (JP 1)” For the purposes of this concept, this definition is too restrictive. First, non-state international actors also have instruments of power. Second, there are more instruments of power than just the four listed in JP 1.

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mismatch in conventional force levels by investing in high technology hardware and sophisticated nuclear weapons. The space race, merging the arms race with scientific development, achieved significant military advantage and added to the technological capability of each side. The Soviet Union put the first man in space in 1961; just eight years later, the United States conducted the first manned lunar landing.

Economically, both sides sought to demonstrate the superiority of their respective economic systems. Although, ultimately, the Soviet planned economy system was no match for the forces of capitalism, the Soviets still competed economically through trading organizations and economic aid programs to like-minded nations. They also used the power of the state not just to disguise the failings of their economic system, but also to promote its “success” through false production projections that predicted the Soviet Union would outstrip the United States and other developed nations in volume of output. Ultimately, the economic power of the United States and its allies defeated the Soviet Union in the Cold War. Allied military power contributed to this defeat by causing the Soviet Union to overinvest in its military capabilities at the expense of its civil society.

STRATEGIC COMPETITION OUTCOMES AND OBJECTIVES

In strategic competition, the Joint Force needs to know **what it is competing for**, and **what succeeding and failing look like, in order to effectively arrange forces in time, space, and purpose**. Defining the results in terms of strategic outcomes provides strategists and campaign planners the context for developing intermediate strategic and operational-level objectives. An outcomes-based approach provides an integrated campaigning framework for employing joint forces in competitive campaigns. Outcomes-based approaches also provide the foundation for developing measures of effectiveness to assess progress toward strategic success.

Outcomes are different from end states.³⁰ End states connote finality and permanence, but in strategic competition, outcomes are merely transition points in international relations. Identifying desired or acceptable, and undesirable and unacceptable, outcomes is consequently foundational to strategy development and succeeding in strategic competition.

Objectives are different from outcomes.³¹ Outcomes are the actual results of actions; they may be favorable or unfavorable. Objectives are aspirational; they identify the environmental changes necessary to realize a desired strategic outcome. The Joint Force will actively seek to contribute to achieving U.S. strategic objectives and will not just be content to delay, disrupt, or prevent adversaries from achieving theirs.

The President, assisted by the National Security Council (NSC), establishes desired national-level outcomes and objectives and integrates them into national-level competitive strategies. The JCS and CCDRs have the statutory responsibility to provide military advice to influence the identification, nomination, and prioritization of these outcomes and objectives.

³⁰ JP 3-0 defines **end state** as: “the set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander's objectives.” *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, January 2021.

³¹ For the purpose of this concept, **objectives** are specific, measurable, achievable, and time-bound aims that collectively pursue the conditions necessary to realize a desired outcome.

Context of Competition: United States and Chinese Strategic Outcomes

U.S. national security is founded on the view that security, prosperity, and the American way of life depend on defending the nation, promoting a favorable distribution of power, and leading and sustaining a stable and open international system.³² The United States is facing challenges to the long-standing international system by adversaries seeking to reshape the international system in their favor. This challenge has created a security environment more complex and volatile than any experienced in recent memory. Inter-state strategic competition is now the primary concern in U.S. national security.

By contrast, the People’s Republic of China (PRC) seeks “the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation” by 2049, an effort to realize long-held national aspirations to “return” China to a position of strength, prosperity, and leadership on the world stage.³³ Ruled by the CCP, China pursues modernity and greater national power to defend and advance its sovereignty, security, and development interests. China’s national ambitions and statecraft cannot be accurately characterized absent the CCP-dominated political system, which is underpinned by the Party’s theory of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and asserts the Party itself as the essential feature.³⁴ The CCP’s leadership has long viewed China as embroiled in a major international strategic competition with other states, including the United States.³⁵

COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES

Addressing the complexities of strategic competition, examined in detail above, requires a dedicated **competitive strategy**. A competitive strategy differs from conventional military strategies because its purpose is to integrate activities across the instruments of national power to succeed in enduring strategic competition, not just warfighting. While most joint concepts and doctrinal publications focus on the operational-level implementation of military strategies, the JCC focuses on competitive strategies and the strategic art³⁶ upon which they depend.

Properly formed competitive strategies should be viewed as both products and processes. As products, they guide Joint Force activity to gain and maintain a long-term advantage in competition with adversaries. As processes, they are a method of systematic strategic thinking that allows for developing and evaluating Joint Force strategy in terms of the same long-term

³² *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, March 2021, p. 9.

³³ Xi Jinping, “Achieving Rejuvenation Is the Dream of the Chinese People,” 29 November 2012.

³⁴ Office of the Secretary of Defense, Annual Report to Congress, “Military and Security Development Involving the People’s Republic of China,” [commonly called the China Military Power Report], September 2020, pg. 2.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pg. 1.

³⁶ **Strategic art** is the formulation, coordination, and application of ends, ways, and means to implement policy and promote national interests. The essence of strategic art is distillation—organizing and articulating in clear terms the complex interrelationship between national interests, policy, strategic ends, and practice. Other than one descriptive paragraph in JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, the Joint Force has no joint doctrine for how to develop strategic art. Currently, joint doctrine only addresses operational art, but it should also provide joint forces an understanding of strategic art. Strategic art and operational art are mutually supporting in that strategic art provides policy context and strategic guidance and direction to operational art, and operational art demonstrates the feasibility and efficacy of a strategy.

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competition with adversaries.³⁷ Integrated competitive strategies are distinguished by a time horizon well in excess of the FYDP; a focus on a specific adversary rather than generic capabilities; a thorough understanding of U.S. and adversary interests and threats to those interests; a clear statement of U.S. competitive outcomes and objectives; and an explicit evaluation of U.S. national and defense objectives and actions in terms of U.S. and adversary strengths and vulnerabilities, current competitive advantages, and competitive positions.

A competitive strategy addresses the direct contest underway from a perspective of multi-dimensionality³⁸—to do otherwise is to ignore the nature and characteristics of strategic competition described herein. Such a requirement presents significant challenges but also significant opportunities in terms of exploiting novel avenues of competition. The ideas behind such opportunities are explored further in Chapter 4.

³⁷ Competitive Strategies Office, Office of the Secretary of Defense, “Competitive Strategies Primer,” April 1989, p. 4. See *New Competitive Strategies Tools and Methodologies, Volume 1: Review of the Department of Defense Competitive Strategies Initiative, 1986-1990*. 30 November 1990, p. 3.

³⁸ For the purposes of this concept, multi-dimensionality is used in a generic vice specific sense to indicate complexity that extends beyond the military instrument of power.

A general theme of strategy development should be the seeking of areas of U.S. competitive advantage, and the steering of the strategic competition into these areas, where possible.

Andrew Marshall, Director of Net Assessment (1973–2015)

4. CENTRAL AND SUPPORTING IDEAS

Building on the foundations laid in Chapter 3, this chapter postulates central and supporting ideas for applying strategic art to a military problem in strategic competition in order to develop competitive strategies. If the Joint Force limits its understanding of its role in strategic competition to that of just warfighting, it risks ceding ground to adversaries that have adopted a much more flexible and asymmetric approach to competition.

Changing Competition – Failure to Adapt

The most cursory search of the—largely business-oriented—competition literature reveals a host of examples of once highly successful organizations that failed to adapt to the changing competitive situation within which they were operating. Kodak and BlackBerry, both once powerful market leaders, failed to recognize and respond to the changing characteristics of their competitive business environments, with predictable results. One of the primary reasons for this was the corporations’ institutional myopia, which restricted their respective viewpoints of the competitions of which they were a part. Kodak thought it was in the wet film photography business, not the social media business; BlackBerry thought it was in the e-message business, not the information technology business. In both cases, the narrow focus of the organization prevented them from seeing the changing character of their competitions.

Instead of viewing the strategic environment through the overly simplistic dichotomy of either warfighting during armed conflict or deterrence during peace, the Joint Force must actively identify sub-areas and domains where its activities can achieve strategic effects in support of national competitive strategies. The U.S. focus upon the military element of strategic competition places our nation in a challenging position where the United States risks being outsmarted, out-thought, out-innovated, and out-competed to the associated detriment of our strategic objectives. To continue the analogy, **the Joint Force is not just in the “warfighting business”; it is in the “national security business.”** The Joint Force may lack concepts and capabilities critical to succeeding strategically in the current competitive environment. The Joint Force must ask itself whether it is appropriately and adequately prepared and postured to help defend the United States from threats that do not require the Joint Force to engage in warfighting.

THE CENTRAL IDEA

TILTING THE COMPETITIVE BALANCE

By taking actions designed to shift the focus of strategic competition into areas that favor U.S. interests or undermine an adversary's interests, the Joint Force can exploit the competitive space to gain advantage over adversaries and pursue national interests.

This central idea of the JCC recognizes the Joint Force can use military capabilities outside armed conflict to shift the focus of strategic competition into areas that favor U.S. interests or undermine an adversary's interests, while setting conditions for designated USG lead agencies to effectively prosecute U.S. strategic objectives. Shifting the focus will align U.S. strengths against adversaries' vulnerabilities, identify vulnerabilities in our own competitive capabilities, and facilitate systematic, long-range, strategic competition planning, making the U.S. approach to strategic competition more efficient and effective. It will explicitly acknowledge and address the open-ended nature of strategic competition by extending planning horizons and taking actions to better enable the Joint Force to engage in strategic competition on an enduring basis.

Succeeding in strategic competition requires the Joint Force to expand its competitive mindset and its competitive approaches. A Joint Force with a competitive mindset will view strategic competition as a complex set of interactions in which the Joint Force contributes to broader USG efforts to gain influence, advantage, and leverage over other actors and ultimately to achieve favorable strategic outcomes. In conjunction with its interorganizational partners, the Joint Force can create competitive opportunities by using military capabilities to proactively probe adversary systems for vulnerabilities; establish behavioral patterns joint forces can exploit in a crisis to conceal U.S. intentions until it is too late to respond to them effectively; shift the competition to sub-areas in which the United States can exploit its advantages, leverage, and initiative; and attempt to divert adversaries' attention and resources to sub-areas of secondary or tertiary importance to the United States.

The ultimate intent is to persuade other actors to join a U.S.-led coalition, impose costs and create dilemmas for an adversary, render an adversary's capabilities obsolete or irrelevant, or create uncertainty in an adversary's perceptions of competitive advantages and the effectiveness of its strategies, plans, and activities.

Within this expanded understanding of strategic competition, the traditional boundaries between military and civilian, between peace and war, between environments, and across domains are increasingly blurred. It is possible, and sometimes necessary, to simultaneously cooperate, compete, and engage in some form of armed conflict with another nation state. Large-scale armed conflict between nuclear powers risks a global catastrophe that must be avoided short of extreme (existential) or major (catastrophic) military strategic risk to vital U.S. national

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interests.³⁹ The Joint Force, in conjunction with its interorganizational partners, will initiate and exploit change in the complex strategic environment to create the influence, advantage, and leverage necessary to pursue U.S. interests, and counter adversary threats to those interests, to achieve favorable strategic outcomes.

SUPPORTING IDEAS

The Joint Force cannot be content with its ability to deter strategic attacks and traditional aggression in a time when adversaries are employing combinations of military and non-military power to achieve their strategic objectives while avoiding armed conflict against the United States. The JCC is founded on the premise that the Joint Force, in conjunction with its interorganizational partners, can initiate and exploit change in a complex strategic environment to create the competitive advantage necessary to advance U.S. interests and achieve favorable strategic outcomes. To do so coherently, the JCC proposes three supporting ideas:

- Expand the Competitive Mindset.
- Shape the Competitive Space.
- Advance Integrated Campaigning.

Expand the Competitive Mindset

The Joint Force will adopt a proactive competitive mindset, develop long-term competitive strategies, and conduct persistent and enduring campaigning in conjunction with its interagency, multinational, and other interorganizational partners to protect and advance U.S. national interests. A competitive mindset begins with accepting that our adversaries have a very different conception of warfare; they intend to defeat the United States strategically without resorting to armed conflict to defeat the United States militarily. A competitive mindset also means embracing strategic competition as a persistent and enduring national security challenge; accepting the Joint Force's critical but supporting contribution to strategic competition and, where appropriate and necessary, developing, designing, and fielding the forces and capabilities required to support the competitive efforts of other USG departments and agencies.

To enable strategic success, the Joint Force will accept its critical but supporting role in strategic competition. Embracing the following propositions is essential to expanding the individual and collective mindsets of the Joint Force:

- **The Joint Force will focus on pursuing and promoting U.S. national interests and strategic objectives** in addition to focusing on denying adversaries' incompatible interests.

³⁹ CJCSM 3105.01A, *Joint Risk Analysis Methodology*, October 2021, p. C-3, defines **military strategic risk** as the probability and consequence of current and contingency events with direct military linkages to the United States. This includes the U.S. population, territory, civil society, institutional processes, critical infrastructure, and interests. The consequences are tied to national interests, which are articulated in strategic guidance provided by the President.

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- **Military campaigns and operations are generally not strategically decisive;** they establish the conditions and behaviors necessary for strategic success through the subsequent political process.
- **The appropriate basis of interorganizational cooperation is interdependence to achieve shared or complementary objectives, not interorganizational support to military campaigns and operations.**
 - In strategic competition, the Joint Force role is critical, but generally in support of interorganizational partners.
 - The interdependent relationship between the Joint Force and its interorganizational partners may be one of mutual support in integrated or “collaborative” campaigning.

Shape the Competitive Space

The competitive space is vast, amorphous, and resists definition. Breaking it down into manageable and more tractable sub-areas for analysis and planning will enable the Joint Force to develop integrated competitive strategies that target those sub-areas most likely to lead to succeeding strategically.

When directed by the President or SecDef, the Joint Force will shape the competitive space to optimize its influence, advantage, and leverage over adversaries, complicate their military preparations for armed conflict, and ultimately to achieve strategic outcomes favorable to the United States and its allies and partners.

History demonstrates that the United States has a range of policy options for shaping the competitive space. For example, the United States may expand the competitive space to increase costs⁴⁰ and create dilemmas that impose “drag” on the adversary’s systems (e.g., U.S. support to Afghan resistance to Soviet occupation (1979–1989)). The United States may contract the competitive space by countering an adversary’s competitive activities (e.g., U.S. interventions in Lebanon (1958), Thailand (1962), Dominican Republic (1966), and Grenada (1983)). The United States may concede space to an adversary when presented with a *fait accompli* (e.g., Japanese annexation of Manchuria (1931–1932)). The United States may take no action when an adversary makes an unforced error (e.g., Soviet interventions in East Germany (1953), Hungary (1956), and Czechoslovakia (1968)).

Where and when U.S. and adversary interests align, the Joint Force will engage adversaries selectively and seek opportunities to cooperate with them for mutual benefit in the pursuit of shared or complementary strategic interests (e.g., counterterrorism, counter-piracy in the Gulf of Aden).

⁴⁰ For the purposes of this concept, **costs** refer to human, material, and financial costs, as well as loss of forces, time, position, advantage, and opportunity. If the cost of a strategic competition is an unfavorable balance of power, significant competitive disadvantage, or catastrophic losses in legitimacy or credibility, those are costs, not means. See JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, 1 December 2020, p. I-21.

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Shaping the competitive space depends on the U.S. network of allies, partners, proxies, and surrogates. These actors are force multipliers that enable the Joint Force to leverage its capabilities, optimize its advantages, and mitigate its vulnerabilities. The Joint Force must protect its network to prevent adversaries from manipulating or dismantling it in strategic competition. Therefore, the foundation of Joint Force strategic competition will be security cooperation and other military engagement⁴¹ activities that strengthen the U.S. network and foster the ability of its members to protect their own interests against internal and external threats and contribute to multinational coalitions in pursuit of shared or complementary strategic interests.

Inevitably, the ability of the Joint Force to conduct security cooperation and other military engagement activities is affected by U.S. legal and policy limitations in ways that of security forces in autocratic states is not.⁴² These limitations may force potential security partners to seek military assistance from adversaries out of necessity, even when the United States is the security partner of choice. U.S. efforts in the struggle of narratives may also be impacted according to how U.S. actions are perceived to affirm its messaging on human rights and democracy.

While shaping the competitive space to sustain favorable and stable balances of power, the Joint Force will also prepare for crisis response and protracted armed conflict if competition and deterrence fail to protect vital U.S. national interests. These preparations will bolster deterrence by demonstrating U.S. capability and will to succeed. They will also affect an adversary's cost-benefit analysis and decision calculus to reinforce the upper threshold of strategic competition.

There will always be a dynamic tension between shaping the competitive space to **avoid armed conflict** and setting favorable conditions to **prepare for armed conflict**. International actors sustain stable balances of power by choosing to remain in the “band of mutual acceptability” in which all parties are dissatisfied but none perceive an unacceptable threat to its national interests. The key to international stability will be assuring that no party is allowed to reach a point where they consider they could “win” through armed conflict, or be pushed to a point where they consider an armed conflict as their only option to protect their national interests. This strategic imperative requires all parties to optimize their relative advantages and disadvantages over time as the competitive environment evolves and actors adapt to emerging changes and trends. Tilting the competitive balance too far in one's own favor will affect an adversary's decision-making and behavior, but the effect may be vertical or horizontal escalation, not compliance.

⁴¹ For the purposes of this concept, **military engagement** is the routine and/or contingency contact and interaction among individuals and elements of the Department of Defense and their interorganizational partners. Military engagement may include developing and maintaining partnerships in a theater and tasks related to security assistance, security force assistance, foreign assistance stability actions, foreign internal defense, counterinsurgency, unconventional warfare, combating terrorism, counterdrug operations, humanitarian demining activities, peace operations, noncombatant evacuation operations, foreign humanitarian assistance, defense support of civil authorities, and homeland defense within the United States. (Source Universal Joint Task (UJT) Strategic Theater (ST) 8, Perform Military Engagement.) This definition differs from the Definition in the *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, which limits military engagement only to routine contact and interaction, and excludes contingency contact and interaction. The doctrinal definition seems invalid given the list of military engagement activities listed in UJT ST 8. The draft JP 3-0 will address this inconsistency.

⁴² Examples of such limitations include prohibitions against military engagement with countries after a military coup or with records of human rights abuses, including violations of the Child/Soldier Protection Act and the Leahy Law.

For example, the U.S. imposition of economic sanctions on Japan in 1941 caused Japan to declare war on the United States, not end its aggression in China.

Advance Integrated Campaigning

Integrated campaigning is premised in understanding that the Joint Force cannot and should not act alone in strategic competition. Even when providing the preponderance of resources, the Joint Force will normally campaign to support other USG departments and agencies. The Joint Force will identify approaches that enable it to apply its military capabilities proactively, and differently in some cases, to gain influence, advantage, and leverage over adversaries to establish the necessary conditions to achieve strategic outcomes. The *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* and emerging doctrine for global integration and globally integrated operations call for the integration of Joint Force actions and their alignment with the actions of interagency and allied partners at the operational level.⁴³ Such alignment is necessary but insufficient against adversaries applying CNP in a unified approach to achieve their strategic objectives. To achieve unity of effort, the Joint Force must seek opportunities to integrate its operations and activities in time, space, and purpose with the activities of interorganizational partners, proxies, and surrogates.

Integrated campaign planning begins with operational design: the conception and construction of the framework that underpins a campaign or major operation and its subsequent execution.⁴⁴ The first step in the operational design is to understand the strategic direction and guidance.⁴⁵ As JP 5-0 notes, strategic guidance and direction can be “vague, incomplete, outdated, or conflicting.”⁴⁶ It can also be unsound and contribute to strategic failure, as it did in Vietnam and Afghanistan, despite the operational successes of the Joint Force. The JCC structured approach in Annex A will mitigate these risks by providing a methodology for applying strategic art to strategic problem sets to:

- Develop military advice to inform national and defense strategy development.
- Provide military strategic guidance and direction to operational design and joint planning in a manner that is feasible, suitable, acceptable, and sustainable over time.⁴⁷

Integrated campaigning must leverage advantages, mitigate disadvantages, and seize the strategic initiative to control the character, scope, tempo, and intensity of the competition, or it risks achieving operational success but failing strategically.

⁴³ Central Idea of *Joint Concept of Integrated Campaigning*, 16 March 2018, p. 6.

⁴⁴ JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, 22 October 2018, p. II-4.

⁴⁵ JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, 1 December 2020, pp. IV-3 to IV-4.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. IV-3.

⁴⁷ JP 5-0 defines feasibility as: “The plan review criterion for assessing whether the assigned mission can be accomplished using available resources within the time contemplated by the plan.” However, feasibility assessments are often based on near-term estimates of the duration of a specific operation, disregarding the resources required to sustain potential follow-on missions over a protracted period of time. For example, the feasibility assessment of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM did not contemplate the sustainability of a potential ten-year occupation and counterinsurgency campaign. Sustainability is a proposed new plan review criterion for assessing whether the

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Yet many political leaders still focus entirely on military assets and classic military solutions. They mistake the necessary for the sufficient. They are one-dimensional players in a three-dimensional game.

Joseph Nye, *Soft Power*⁴⁸

5. THE JOINT FORCE ROLE IN STRATEGIC COMPETITION

Based on the central and supporting ideas in Chapter 4, this chapter describes ways in which the Joint Force can engage in strategic competition and contribute to USG efforts to **protect and advance U.S. national interests** by applying military power to tilt the competitive balance in order to:

- **Deter** aggression.
- **Prepare** for armed conflict if deterrence and competition fail to protect vital U.S. national interests.
- **Counter** adversaries' competitive strategies that threaten U.S. national interests.
- **Support** the efforts of interorganizational partners.

Recognizing the inherently multi-dimensional nature of strategic competition, the Joint Force will routinely play a mutually supporting role with other USG departments and agencies, allies and partners, and other interorganizational partners. To do this, the Joint Force will operate in conjunction with its partners to first understand the character and scope of the competition, then identify the lead and supporting organizations involved, and, finally, discern where and how the Joint Force can contribute to achieve desired outcomes. In this regard, the Joint Force supports national strategies for competing by conducting tasks, activities, or operations relative to a specific adversary or adversaries, and in conjunction with interorganizational partners. The Joint Force's contribution can often create disparate effects simultaneously at different points throughout the competition.

The Joint Force does not, and should not, have the authority or capability to require its interagency partners to coordinate, align, or integrate their competitive activities with those of the Joint Force. However, the Joint Force is an active participant in the interagency process. It can foster the creation of interagency integration mechanisms to perform these functions, and it will participate in such mechanisms when established. Although the Joint Force will frequently be in a supporting role in strategic competition, it does possess many capabilities that are either in limited supply or simply lacking outside DoD. In particular, the Joint Force has the potential to reallocate significant time and resources to planning and the development of competitive strategies. Bringing this capability to bear offers the potential to develop truly integrated competitive strategies that provide a multiplier effect to the actions of individual departments.

assigned mission and potential follow-on missions can be supported if the time contemplated for the assigned mission proves to be insufficient to achieve the desired strategic outcome.

⁴⁸ Nye, Joseph. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs, 2004.

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See Annex A for a structured approach to guide the application of strategic art to strategic competition problem sets.

Fundamental to this concept is the idea that the Joint Force is never “off the clock.” The persistent and enduring nature of strategic competition requires that the Joint Force never stops analyzing, assessing, and improving its competitive position. Traditionally, the Joint Force perceives it is either deterring wars or fighting them. This chapter describes how the Joint Force, in conjunction with its interorganizational partners, can and should do more during strategic competition when it is not actually warfighting.

THE USE OF MILITARY POWER IN STRATEGIC COMPETITION

The JCC seeks to guide the use of military power in strategic competition to **deter, prepare, counter, and support**.⁴⁹ The JCC seeks to open the aperture in terms of what is achievable by applying the central and supporting ideas laid down in Chapter 4 to offer different approaches to force employment in integrated campaigning.

DETECTING AGGRESSION

The relationship between strategic competition and deterrence is a two-way street. Deterring an adversary from competing in a particular sub-area is a perfectly valid strategy in strategic competition. Equally, the more competitive the United States shows itself to be, the greater the likely deterrent effect it will have on adversaries. Deterrence⁵⁰ restrains an adversary’s behavior in two ways: **deterrence by punishment** depends on the adversary’s fear of reprisal; **deterrence by denial** depends on the adversary’s perception that the undesirable action will not succeed or will be too costly for the returns achieved. Deterrence by punishment establishes and enforces the upper threshold of strategic competition, causing adversaries to pursue their national interests without triggering a U.S. traditional military response.

In the competitive space that sits below this threshold, deterrence is a more complex and sophisticated undertaking. Here, the ability to punish, although not irrelevant, is less likely to be considered a credible option against adversaries. Under such circumstances, deterrence by denial assumes a more prominent role. Deterrence by denial can be achieved in multiple ways: by building national resilience to be able to withstand actions the adversary may take; by increasing defensive capabilities to increase the likely cost of action to an adversary beyond the limits of acceptability; or by complicating an adversary’s decision-making calculus such that they can never be sufficiently certain of achieving their desired outcomes at acceptable cost. Alternatively, actors may be deterred by competing to remove or limit the range of options available to them, the so-called *fait accompli*.

Shifting the competition, militarily or otherwise, into areas favoring the United States will likely increase an adversary’s cost of action, impact their assessments of the likelihood of success, or

⁴⁹ See the “Military Challenge,” JCC, p.13.

⁵⁰ The *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* defines **deterrence** as “The prevention of action by the existence of a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction and/or belief that the cost of action outweighs the perceived benefits.”

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force them to concentrate resources in areas that are less threatening to U.S. interests. Alliances are a prime example of such activity as they increase overall resilience by spreading the defensive burden, force an adversary to dilute their efforts across a broader front, and greatly complicate the adversary's decision-making. The Strategic Defense Initiative is an oft-quoted example of how the U.S. expanded the strategic competition with the Soviet Union into new areas that presented a drain on Soviet resources that they could not meet.

The Joint Force will take a balanced and integrated approach to the military component of deterrence, with the ability to both impose costs on adversaries and deny their ability to impose costs on the United States and its allies and partners. Although lethality will remain a principal contribution of the Joint Force in deterrence, it will be a necessary but insufficient consideration in strategic competition. U.S. deterrence in strategic competition includes diplomacy to limit adversaries' international influence and their ability to establish alliances and strategic partnerships. It includes information activities to dominate the struggle of narratives and delegitimize an adversary's threatening behavior. It includes economic and financial pressure to influence adversaries' decision-making and intelligence and law enforcement actions to counter threat networks. None of these sit wholly, or in some cases even partly, within the direct control of the Joint Force, yet they are vital to successful deterrence across the spectrum of conflict. This requires a broader approach to deterrence that incorporates elements from across the strategic competitive space into a fully integrated competitive strategy. This also requires a feedback mechanism to gauge the efficacy and effects of U.S. competitive activities and the maneuverability to change course if needed.

The Limits of Traditional Deterrence

The Maginot Line was a series of fortifications constructed along the French border with Germany in the 1930s. It was built to provide a permanent defense against German attack, so France could mobilize its forces behind it. Considered cutting edge at the time, its fortifications were designed to provide an impenetrable barrier to a German attack with strongpoints established in depth and fixed rail networks to provide rapid reinforcements of troops as required. The scale and cost of the build was considerable but reflected the genuine concern, at the time, of a likely attack from the east. Its purpose was twofold. Firstly, it aimed to provide the means to defend against a direct assault, and second, in the process of so doing, it acted as a deterrent to the Germans by raising the likely cost of any such assault and increasing the likelihood of failure. In this respect, and contrary to popular opinion, it was a great success; the Germans did not attempt to attack through the Maginot Line. The failure came about because of the French assumption that it was not possible for the Germans to attack through the Ardennes, an assumption that proved fatally flawed. The lesson to take from this example is that, while deterrence can and does work, the United States must always be open and alert to the possibility that an adversary may seek to circumvent its deterrent posture via an alternative route, even one that may not, outwardly, seem viable.

PREPARING FOR ARMED CONFLICT

Deterrence will remain an essential driver of U.S. defense posture, but deterrence on its own will no longer be enough. The Joint Force will posture for deterrence and strategic competition,

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understanding that it must still remain prepared to fight and win an armed conflict should U.S. competitive strategies fail to deter aggression and protect vital U.S. national interests. Strategic competition offers the opportunity to better position the Joint Force in the event of armed conflict by increasing the range of dilemmas an adversary faces and by undermining the position of an adversary across a multi-dimensional front. The more competitive the United States is, in terms of securing access, basing, and overflight; developing a defense industrial base; strengthening alliances and partnerships; and driving technological development; the better positioned the United States will be to fight and win an armed conflict.

During the Cold War, the United States and its allies compensated for a less competitive position in numerical terms by exploiting competitive advantages in technology and through the strength of the NATO alliance. Our adversaries have recognized this and sought to do the same by developing positions of competitive advantage to compensate for U.S. technological and alliance advantages.

Redefining the Competitive Space: An Example

The PRC has redefined the competitive space in the South China Sea: physically through the creation of artificial islands; economically through the exploitation of market power with neighboring nations; militarily by the declaration and enforcement of exclusion zones; and legally through its attempts to re-interpret international treaties such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. All of these are deliberately designed to neutralize or mitigate traditional U.S. competitive advantages.

Adopting a competitive mindset and shaping the competitive space also offer joint forces the opportunity to subvert an adversary's government, economic system, or civil society to prevent them from opposing U.S. actions, or to better position U.S. joint forces in the event of armed conflict. The modern information environment, especially cyberspace, has revolutionized subversion. With appropriate authorities, the Joint Force can weaponize information to manipulate an adversary's perception of reality by influencing and disrupting social systems and technical connections that are foundational to a modern society. Disinformation, misinformation, and propaganda can trigger a chain of events in an adversary's society that gradually degrades its domestic unity, undermines societal trust in its government and institutions, and diminishes its international stature. Cyberattacks, disinformation spread across social media, false narratives disguised as news, and similar subversive activities weaken societal trust by undermining the foundations of government (e.g., law and order, societal relations, internal politics).

COUNTERING ADVERSARIES' COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES

A deterrence and war preparation strategy is a necessary but insufficient requirement against adversaries that intend to defeat the United States and its allies without engaging them in armed conflict. The United States must also counter adversaries' competitive strategies to deny their strategic objectives indefinitely.

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Countering an adversary's competitive strategies is not as simple or straightforward as just blocking or challenging the adversary wherever it seeks to act. At best, such an approach risks ceding the initiative to the adversary; at worst, it may prove totally counter-productive and drive neutral or third-party actors towards the adversary. The intent must always be to pursue, promote, and protect U.S. national interests and, when and where necessary, challenge the activities of adversaries that threaten those interests.

Deterrent and subversive activity will play their part in such an approach, but so too will subtler and more proactive approaches focused on attraction or persuasion. Approaches focused on **attraction** seek to make a particular behavior appeal to another actor's pre-dispositions. Approaches focused on **persuasion** seek to convince another actor to believe in the benefit of a particular behavior.⁵¹ Attraction is a powerful force in strategic competition. As the avowed leader of the free world and a beacon of economic, societal, and technological success, the United States is already seen by many as an aspirational standard. This is a significant attribute that can be exploited. Persuasion begins with diplomacy, and Joint Force military diplomacy plays a significant supporting role. For example, it conducts senior leader military-to-military visits, ship visits, military personnel exchanges, joint training and exercises, international military education and training, and other security cooperation and military engagement activities that provide venues for the exchange of ideas and beliefs in word and deed.

When directed by the President or SecDef, the Joint Force will contribute to countering adversaries' competitive strategies in integrated campaigns that apply the instruments of national power both reactively and proactively. Such campaigns will deny adversaries their strategic objectives by helping to build resilience and endurance against adversary coercion and subversion, not just in allied and partner nations, but also in the U.S. homeland. The Joint Force and interorganizational partners will conduct operations in the information environment to expose and discredit adversary coercive and subversive behavior, and to promote U.S. alternatives. The Joint Force will provide security force assistance and conduct other security cooperation and military engagement activities in order to help allies and partners defend their own sovereignty and territorial integrity and to uphold the established international system. The Joint Force will conduct irregular warfare operations and activities proactively to subvert, create dilemmas for adversaries, and impose costs on an adversary's strategic interests, including its economy, civil society, institutional processes, and critical infrastructure. Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and political will.

The Joint Force is an important actor in countering adversary competitive strategies, but it cannot do so alone. The most effective counter to an adversary competitive strategy is a fully integrated U.S. competitive strategy that cohesively and comprehensively brings together the components of national power to deliver effects across the strategic competitive space.

⁵¹ A controlling actor may achieve this effect by making all other options seem inappropriate or unlikely to succeed or through providing political, economic, financial, or security incentives of greater benefit to the other actor than the costs associated with compliance.

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SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF INTERORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

Recognizing the inherently strategic nature of competition, the Joint Force will routinely play a supporting role to other USG departments and agencies, allies and partners, and other interorganizational partners. Integrated competitive strategies and campaigns require **interdependence** and **mutual support**. The Joint Force supports national competitive strategies by conducting tasks, activities, or operations in conjunction with, and in support of, interorganizational partners. The Joint Force and its partners **leverage each other's authorities and capabilities** to optimize their mutual benefit and mitigate their strategic and operational risk. This connectivity and mutual support require long-term relationships and interdependence.

Supporting the efforts of interorganizational partners is fundamental to succeeding in strategic competition. The Joint Force cannot, and must not, attempt to do this alone. For this reason, the Joint Force will identify the consequences its actions may have on key interorganizational partners in the competition space, and determine which of their operational requirements the Joint Force must, should, or could support. Integrated competitive strategies identify the best tool for the job; the Joint Force must learn to understand and accept where and when that tool lies elsewhere.

The Joint Force frequently equates interdependence with interagency support of military requirements, but interdependence and mutual support also include Joint Force support to interorganizational partners. For example, most USG departments and agencies do not have the resources of the Joint Force or the ability to operate effectively in remote, austere, and contested environments. This places the Joint Force in a position where it must enable other organizations to achieve shared or complementary objectives. When directed, the Joint Force will provide interorganizational partners the area security, logistics, communications, engineering, and other support they traditionally require to operate effectively in such environments, reducing the need for the Joint Force to perform functions better accomplished by non-DoD organizations. As integrated campaigning matures in practice, the Joint Force may identify new ways for military forces and capabilities to support mission partners to make them more effective in the competitive space.

The United States may also support allies and partners facing a military strategic risk even when the United States has only a peripheral interest at stake. Such supporting activities may be necessary to reaffirm the U.S. security commitment, avoid the supported actor seeking a new security arrangement with an adversary, secure U.S. access rights, and assure the supported actor's future contributions to multinational coalitions.

Examples of the Use of Military Power in Strategic Competition				
	Deterring Aggression	Preparing for Armed Conflict	Countering Adversaries' Competitive Strategies	Supporting the Efforts of Inter-organizational Partners
Shape Adversary Perceptions of Competitive Advantage	X	X		X
Build Resilience and Endurance	X	X		X
Maintain a Credible Forward Presence	X	X	X	
Prepare for Protracted Campaigning	X	X		X
Strengthen Collective Security	X	X	X	
Manage Horizontal and Vertical Escalation	X	X		X
Engage Persistently and Consistently			X	X
Engage in the Struggle of Narratives	X		X	X
Compete Asymmetrically			X	X
Seek Incremental Advantage			X	
Concede Enduring Asymmetrical Disadvantages			X	
Integrate Competition, Deterrence, and Military Engagement	X		X	X
Build Relationships with Allies and Partners			X	X
Enable Partner Efforts			X	X

Figure 3. Actions the Joint Force may take in Strategic Competition

Figure 3 details some of the actions and activities the Joint Force may be required to undertake in strategic competition, but it should not be considered exhaustive. These actions, expanded upon in the section below, represent a sample of what the Joint Force can do, other than warfighting, to contribute to a strategic competition with an adversary. The intent here is to identify the potential broader effects that military activity can have as well as the expansion of options that an integrated competitive strategy may bring to the Joint Force. The ultimate purpose of such activities is to enhance the U.S. position across the spectrum of conflict by progressively advancing the capabilities, posture, authorities, and response times of the Joint Force in the event of armed conflict.

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- **Shape Adversary Perceptions of Competitive Advantage.** The Joint Force will shape (e.g., influence and manipulate) an adversary's perceptions to affect their net assessment, cost-benefit-risk analyses, and decision-making. Adversaries form their own perceptions of competitive advantage, and they weigh their assessments and decisions accordingly. Integrated competitive strategies present the opportunity to expand the range of options for bringing **capabilities** to bear in a strategic competition thereby complicating an adversary's decision-making calculus.
- **Build Resilience and Endurance.** The Joint Force can help bolster resilience and endurance both at home and abroad. Through defense support to U.S. civil authorities, the Joint Force will collaborate with federal, state, and other domestic interorganizational partners to identify and mitigate gaps in homeland security and homeland defense, strengthen national resilience, and help defend the U.S. homeland from non-traditional strategic attacks (e.g., cyberspace, disinformation) against U.S. infrastructure and U.S. civil society. Further, through security cooperation, foreign internal defense, network engagement, and other military engagement activities, the Joint Force will help allies and partners to resist and counter adversaries' coercion and subversion; develop the **capabilities** to defend their own sovereignty against external and internal threats with minimal U.S. assistance; and participate in multinational contingency operations.
- **Maintain a Credible Forward Presence.** The Joint Force will **posture** to maintain a credible forward military presence to deter aggression, counter coercion and subversion, and mitigate an adversary's "first mover" advantage in a crisis and accelerate **response** times. The perceptions of allies, partners, and adversaries determine whether a forward military presence is credible. Key to credibility are military **capabilities** that enable joint forces to counter threats below the level of traditional armed conflict with lethal or intermediate force. When challenged, the Joint Force must impose a cost on adversaries' unacceptable coercive and subversive activities.
- **Prepare for Protracted Campaigning.** The Joint Force will build the physical, mental, and emotional endurance to sustain a long-term effort in strategic competition and armed conflict. Without a resilient Joint Force, adversaries will simply outlast the United States until it culminates and accepts strategic defeat. Strategic competition is inherently protracted. Short, decisive armed conflicts between great powers often become protracted, resource-intensive wars that do great damage to the populations, economies, and civil societies of the participants. Winning the first battle is not as important as winning the last battle. Strategic competition expands the range of **capability** and **posture** options available to the Joint Force, building depth and breadth.
- **Strengthen Collective Security.** Collective security leads to burden sharing agreements with interagency, multinational, and other interorganizational partners, proxies, and surrogates. These agreements can reduce Joint Force commitments and enable the Joint Force to reallocate resources to higher priorities that only the Joint Force can address. Collective security agreements also potentially give the Joint Force access to **authorities** and **capabilities** that it may otherwise not have. However, burden sharing can also increase Joint Force commitments when a foreign partner, proxy, or surrogate requires

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U.S. military assistance with a security problem they consider existential, but the United States does not consider important to U.S. national interests.

- **Manage Horizontal and Vertical Escalation.** The Joint Force will be deliberate but not risk-averse in its management of horizontal and vertical escalation. It will avoid unnecessary or unintended horizontal or vertical escalation, but escalation may become necessary if deterrence and competition fail to protect a U.S. critical interest. For example, horizontal escalation may be an effective option to neutralize an adversary's first mover advantage. As part of its escalation management program, the Joint Force will provide military advice regarding which adversary actions are "red lines" that will trigger military responses and whether to communicate those "red lines" to allies, partners, and adversaries to avoid strategic surprises. Escalation management also includes developing options to increase friendly decision space and to deescalate or reverse effects to prevent strategic miscalculations. Access to a broader range of **posture** options, **capabilities**, and **authorities** enabled by an integrated competitive strategy may present alternative escalatory or de-escalatory routes.
- **Engage Persistently and Consistently.** It is not possible to succeed in strategic competition through an ad hoc or episodic approach. Approaches that reactively "dip-in and dip-out" of the strategic competition cede the initiative to those adversaries that remain in place. The Joint Force must adopt a long-term outlook and be persistent and consistent in its military engagement with relevant actors. This approach will strengthen the U.S. network of allies and partners, facilitate the Joint Force being the partner of choice for nations vulnerable to internal and external threats, and allow for a potentially swifter **response** to adversary activity. Persistent and consistent engagement is also essential for consolidating strategic gains during the transition to and from armed conflict, and for preventing an enemy from continuing the struggle after a traditional military defeat.
- **Engage in the Struggle of Narratives.** The Joint Force, in conjunction with its interorganizational partners, will conduct operations in the information environment to support broader USG and international efforts to develop and present a compelling narrative that favors a stable and open international system. A compelling narrative resonates with selected audiences, bolsters the legitimacy and credibility of the United States and its allies and partners, and undermines adversaries' narratives. In strategic competition, the Joint Force must **posture** its strategic messaging in the information environment as effectively as it postures its forces in the physical domains.
- **Compete Asymmetrically.** The Joint Force can seize the strategic initiative in ways that do not trigger an armed conflict. It may probe an adversary's systems to test its reactions and capabilities. It may confront an adversary's coercive and subversive actions and measure our reactions to an adversary's probing of U.S. systems. The Joint Force may employ U.S. current **capabilities** in new and innovative ways, develop new **capabilities** based on emerging technologies, exploit enhanced access to the **authorities** of interorganizational partners, and reorganize for global integration.

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- **Seek Incremental Advantage.** The Joint Force will seek incremental advantage and leverage over adversaries to optimize balances of power without destabilizing the strategic counterbalance. Maximizing U.S. advantage and leverage will create a lop-sided balance of power that presents unacceptable risks to adversaries' interests. The broader range of options enabled by a strategic competitive approach allows for a more diverse range of proactive and reactive activities that deliver advantage without destabilizing the competitive balance.
- **Concede Enduring Asymmetrical Disadvantages.** The Joint Force cannot and need not compete in all aspects, all the time. It will identify sub-areas where and when (and by how much) the United States can acknowledge its asymmetrical disadvantages, accept an adversary's significant advantages, allow an adversary to succeed, and mitigate predictable effects.
- **Integrate Competition, Deterrence, and Military Engagement.** The Joint Force will integrate these three closely related activities in time, space, and purpose. Competition demonstrates national will and resolve, which enhances deterrence. Deterrence establishes and enforces the upper boundary of competition, and requires adversaries to compete below the threshold established by deterrence. Purposeful military engagement activities contribute to both competition and deterrence.
- **Build Relationships with Allies and Partners.** The development and nurturing of alliances and partnerships is a critical element in promoting U.S. values and national interests. In the competition for influence in world affairs, what the Joint Force does matters. In conjunction with interagency partners in U.S. missions, it represents U.S. values and commitment to collective security and a stable and open international system. Joint Force actions, even at the tactical or local level, can have strategic effects on the legitimacy, credibility, and influence of the United States. Effective relationships with interorganizational and international partners offers the expansion of **capabilities**, **authorities**, and **posture** options.
- **Enable Partner Efforts.** The Joint Force may provide area security, information and intelligence, and logistic and communications support that enable interagency partners to operate in locations denied to them without the support of military capabilities. The Joint Force may augment partner capabilities and capacity when the partner's operational requirements exceed their capabilities and capacity. Historical examples include the Berlin Airlift (1948–1949) that carried supplies to the people of West Berlin after the Soviet Union blocked rail, road, and canal access to the sectors of Berlin under Western control. In extremis, the Joint Force enables U.S. Agency for International Development foreign humanitarian and foreign disaster relief efforts and conducts noncombatant evacuation operations in crisis situations. The Joint Force provides defense support of civil authorities to federal, state, and local officials during domestic incidents (e.g., natural disasters, domestic disturbances). Finally, the Joint Force enables foreign allies and partners by providing strategic lift assets and other support to foreign contingency operations that indirectly protect or advance U.S. national interests (e.g., French contingency operations in West Africa).

Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.
Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*

6. OPERATIONALIZING THE CONCEPT

The Structured Approach to Strategic Competition depicted in Annex A (Figure 4) is a methodology to assist in the development of integrated competitive strategies. It postulates a methodology for applying strategic art to the military problem of strategic competition in a systemic, comprehensive, and repeatable way.⁵² The methodology is similar to the joint planning process described in JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, but joint planning doctrine is written at the operational level. Joint doctrine recognizes strategic art, but there is no complementary joint doctrine for the application of strategic art in strategy development. The JCC methodology seeks to address this doctrinal void for strategic competition by augmenting the current joint planning process with a strategic-level methodology that may also be applicable to the application of strategic art across the spectrum of conflict. The competitive strategic environment is complex and includes multiple actors using various traditional and non-traditional levers of national power towards strategic aims. The methodology outlined in the Structured Approach, specifically its competitive sub-area analysis, is meant to bring clarity to a complex environment by broadening thinking, identifying the most appropriate and/or effective organization to lead in the delivery of competitive effects, and identifying gaps in capabilities, authorities, and posture required to compete effectively. Working through the Structured Approach can lead to a set of four critical outputs.

Structured Approach to Strategic Competition (ANNEX A)

1. Understand the Character and Scope of the Strategic Problem Set.
2. Understand the Competitive Environment.
3. Identify Relevant Competitive Sub-Areas and Instruments of Power.
4. Assess the Competitive Sub-Area.
5. Evaluate Alternative Sub-Area Strategies.
6. Develop an Integrated Competitive Strategy for Problem Set.

Figure 4. Strategic Competition Methodology

- Provide **military advice** to the President and SecDef (“Up”) to inform national and defense policy and strategy development regarding strategic competition.
- Provide **strategic guidance and direction** for the application of the operational design methodology and joint planning process in integrated campaigning (“Down and In”).
- Identify and optimize **Joint Force interdependencies** with interagency and allied partners (“Out”).
- Inform and guide **joint force development and design** processes (“Future Force”).

⁵² This methodology is designed primarily for use by the Joint Staff and combatant commands, but other USG departments and agencies could modify the methodology for application to their own strategy development.

MILITARY ADVICE

The Joint Force does not have the lead in developing high-level strategic guidance and direction, but it is not a passive recipient of that guidance and direction. The JCS and CCDRs have the statutory responsibility to provide military advice to the President, NSC, Homeland Security Council, and SecDef (10 U.S. Code § 164(b) and 10 U.S. Code § 151). Joint Staff members actively participate in the NSC interagency process and contribute to national security strategies to ensure they are militarily feasible and suitable at an acceptable level of risk and a sustainable cost. Similarly, the Joint Force components are active participants in the development of defense and military strategies within the DoD. CJCS and CCDRs will advise on the feasibility, suitability, and sustainability of policy options and advise against competing when and where it is not in the U.S. interest to compete.

Integrated competitive strategies will facilitate the JCS and CCDRs providing military advice to the President and SecDef (“Up”) to inform national and defense policy and strategy development regarding strategic competition. Recognizing that the Joint Force is normally a supporting actor in strategic competition, the JCS and CCDRs will inform, and be informed by, the strategic planning products of relevant interagency and allied partners during, not after, the strategy development process.

Military Advice to the President and Secretary of Defense⁵³

On 23 June 1965, Under Secretary of State George Ball recommended that the United States cut its losses and withdraw from Vietnam. SecDef Robert McNamara and Secretary of State Dean Rusk opposed this recommendation and argued for deepening U.S. military involvement in the war. McNamara directed John McNaughton, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, to outline a political and military “scenario” for U.S. intervention in Vietnam. McNamara tasked the JCS to develop a list of specific military actions that could be taken in Vietnam, but he did not permit the JCS themselves to participate in higher-level discussions concerning policy or strategic options. With the Joint Staff providing only technical advice and the JCS shut out of policy meetings, the discussions emphasized tactics and means rather than strategy and the end state desired in Vietnam. Overlooking the complexities of countering the political and military challenges of defeating an insurgency, military operations were aimed at killing large numbers of the enemy in conventional battles.

Believing that the war would require up to three times as many troops as the President was considering, the JCS continued to advocate for incremental troop deployments. Despite their personal beliefs, the JCS never made recommendations for the total force. As the President enlarged the U.S. commitment to Vietnam, he did not hear from his military advisors concerning how the U.S. military would fight the war or how many troops it might take to force a political settlement. The JCS had become technicians whose principal responsibility was to carry out decisions already made rather than fully participating in the planning and advisory process.

⁵³ H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997).

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STRATEGIC GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION

Integrated competitive strategies will provide strategic guidance and direction for integrated campaigning (“Down and In”).⁵⁴ They will translate national and defense strategic guidance and direction into military strategic objectives for strategic competition against and across strategic problem sets. They will provide the “Why?” (pursue and protect U.S. national interests) and the intent (contribute to achieving a desired strategic outcome, often in a supporting role) necessary to inform, guide, and direct the operational design methodology, joint planning process, and integrating construct already in joint doctrine.

JOINT FORCE INTERDEPENDENCIES WITH INTERAGENCY AND ALLIED PARTNERS

Unified action and economy of force demand that the Joint Force identify and optimize Joint Force interdependencies with relevant interagency and allied partners (“Out”) and assess the opportunities and risks therein. The methodology outlined in the Structured Approach identifies relevant interagency and allied partners and their interdependencies with the Joint Force. The comprehensive nature of integrated competitive strategies requires that all parties understand the requirements placed upon them by other actors and by themselves upon others. Without such understanding, actors will be unable to calculate the true levels of risk they are carrying, nor fully understand the extent of the opportunities, and vulnerabilities, that an integrated competitive strategy brings. By design, integrated competitive strategies require differing degrees of interdependence—this in turn requires trust between actors, and such trust requires full visibility.

JOINT FORCE DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN

The methodology outlined in the Structured Approach and consequent integrated competitive strategies will, where appropriate and necessary, provide strategic guidance and direction for joint force development and design (“Future Force”). They will guide future capabilities-based and threat-based assessments, experimentation, and wargaming; reduce the risk of developing operational-level “solutions” to strategic problems; and integrate interorganizational perspectives into joint force development and design.

Wherever possible and practicable, the organization best placed to achieve an effect in strategic competition should be the lead; other organizations, including the Joint Force, will play a supporting role.

CONCEPT REQUIRED CAPABILITIES

An output of the JCC is a set of CRCs to guide joint force development and design. These CRCs generally demand non-materiel solutions to expand the competitive mindset of the Joint Force; adopt a structured approach to the development of integrated competitive strategies; and

⁵⁴ The *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* defines integrated campaigning as “Joint Force and interorganizational partner efforts to enable the achievement and maintenance of policy aims by integrating military activities and aligning non-military activities of sufficient scope, scale, simultaneity, and duration across multiple domains.”

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reorganize for globally integrated campaigning with interagency, multinational, and other interorganizational partners. Further experimentation and gaming will assist in determining the optimal solutions, which must balance today's readiness requirements with developing future capabilities.

The central and supporting ideas advocated in this concept entail potentially significant CRCs for force development. After analyzing inputs from across the community of interest, the following CRCs emerge as essential to implementing this concept. The following CRC framework deconstructs the imperatives of the concept's military challenge and central and supporting ideas into the capabilities required to implement the concept. The framework organizes the CRCs into the capability sets required for each supporting idea. Whenever possible, the CRCs are linked to the universal joint task list (UJTL)⁵⁵ to provide a common lexicon for future assessments. See Annex B for detailed descriptions of each CRC.

Supporting Idea A: Expand the Competitive Mindset

- **CRC A1: Strategic Assessment of the Competitive Environment.** The ability of the Joint Force and its joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) partners to assess the character, scope, and areas of competition in the global security environment.

Supporting Idea B: Shape the Competitive Space

- **CRC B1: Continuous, Globally Integrated Competitive Strategy Design and Production.** The ability of the Joint Force and its interagency partners to develop a long-term integrated competitive strategy for globally integrated multi-domain campaigning that tilts the competitive balance in the favor of the U.S. and its allies.
- **CRC B2: DoD Organization to Manage Integrated Competitive Campaigns.** The ability of the Joint Force and its interagency partners to provide enterprise-wide leadership, direction, coordination, resourcing, and oversight of integrated competitive campaigns in order to achieve and maintain unified action to tilt the competitive balance.

Supporting Idea C: Advance Integrated Campaigning

- **CRC C1: Data-Driven Enterprise Management System for Continuous Situational Understanding of the Competitive Environment.** The ability of the Joint Force and its interagency partners to maintain continuous situational understanding of conditions of the strategic security environment and the status of operations, activities, and investments for strategic competition in order to enable the planning, conduct, and management of integrated campaigning in strategic competition.
- **CRC C2: Continuous Integrated Campaigning in Support of Competitive Strategy.** The ability of the Joint Force to conduct persistent integrated campaigning in conjunction

⁵⁵ CJCSI 3500.02B, *Universal Joint Task List Program*, 15 January 2014. The UJTL is accessible at: <<https://jdeis.js.mil/jdeis/index.jsp?pindex=43>>

with interorganizational partners in support of the competitive strategy in order to shape the competitive space to advance U.S. interests and set conditions to deter and prevail in conflict.

- **CRC C3: Continuous Campaign Assessments.** The ability of the Joint Force and its JIIM partners to assess the strategic effectiveness of integrated campaigning in pursuit of assigned strategic objectives in order to ensure the Joint Force and its JIIM partners understand changes and trends in the competitive environment, the effectiveness of past and ongoing operations, and the requirements to modify current policies, authorities, strategies, plans, orders, and resources.

CONCEPT TO PRACTICE: PATH TO OPERATIONALIZE THE JCC

The Joint Force will continue to further assess and mature the CRCs through the development of future classified concepts that apply the tenets of the JCC and the Structured Approach (Annex A) to specific adversaries. Ultimately, the CRCs will be consolidated with the JWC CRCs to form a CRC set that spans the spectrum of conflict. Where necessary and appropriate, the CRCs will be routed through the established Joint Requirements Oversight Council process. Figure 5 depicts the path to operationalize the JCC, as described below.

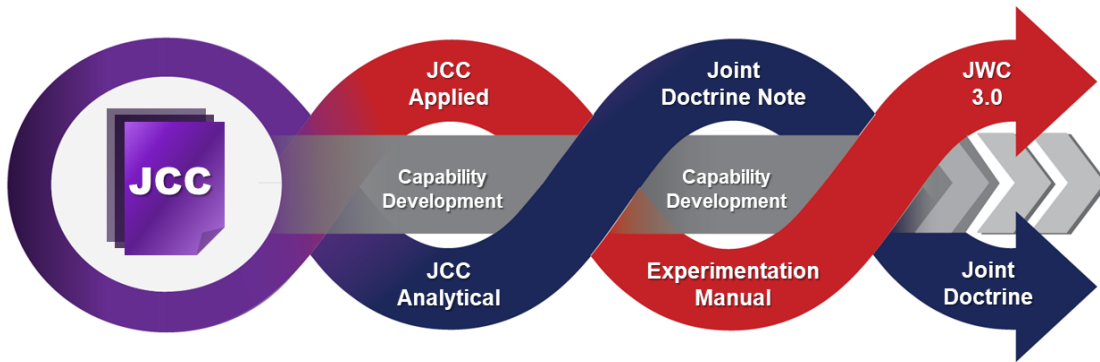


Figure 5. JCC Operationalization

Strategic competition is an inherently whole-of-nation endeavor conducted in conjunction with allies and partners. Marshalling these disparate actors is not a Joint Force function. Rather, the Joint Force must become adept at working by, with, and through interorganizational partners to optimize outcomes in pursuit of U.S. national interests. The JCC provides the Joint Force with a framework for how to adapt and expand competitive mindsets beyond warfighting; address partners’ interests, objectives, and issues; and accept a critical but supporting role in strategic competition. To be useful to the Joint Force, the elements of this framework must be translated into practice. Taking ideas from a joint concept to practice is a multi-step process. Following a similar process to the JWC, the JCC will take the following logical steps:

- **Incorporate JCC into Joint and Service Experimentation Campaigns:** Continuous experimentation is key to any concept. As the Joint Force develops adversary-specific concepts, it will further examine assumptions and test hypotheses to determine what works in practice. The Joint Force will publish an experimentation manual to facilitate incorporating strategic competition into joint and Service experimentation campaigns.

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- **Incorporate JCC into Professional Military Education (PME):** The JCC provides a baseline understanding of strategic competition. The next step is to expose PME students to these new conceptual ideas and further solidify this baseline understanding in PME. Doing so will provide a necessary foundation of essential knowledge of competitive activities and tools for individuals within the Joint Force, and cement a competitive mindset for the future force. PME is key to improving understanding of the interaction between adversaries and ourselves in the global competitive environment and where and when it is necessary to compete. This can happen incrementally, but once doctrine has been updated, the Joint Force must embrace the fundamentals of new doctrine by updating PME curricula.
- **Develop a Joint Doctrine Note:** The JCC is the first step to establishing a common lexicon for strategic competition; developing a joint doctrine note will further codify this lexicon with new ways of operating in the strategic environment that the current Joint Force can execute.
- **Update Joint Doctrine:** As familiarity expands, incorporating elements of the strategic competition joint doctrine note into the broader family of joint doctrine will institutionalize ideas into Joint Force strategic and operational practices. Joint doctrine can capture nascent practice as long as the competitive logic is accepted by the force.

7. RISKS

The Joint Force must consider risk globally to allocate resources, set priorities, and achieve national military objectives. This is done primarily through the Joint Strategic Planning System processes and the Global Force Management process. As each process tackles problem sets, commanders and staffs will use risk analysis to provide the best military advice possible in pursuit of executing an effective strategy. Appraising, managing, and communicating global risk lays the foundation and priorities to employ, manage, compare, and develop the Joint Force to meet and prioritize national military objectives.⁵⁶

RISKS OF ADOPTING THE CONCEPT

1. **Increased emphasis on competition could affect Joint Force readiness to fight and win an armed conflict.** There must be a balance between the expanding focus on competition and preparedness for warfighting. There will be an inherent tension between how to resource the training and equipping of forces for armed conflict (and deterrence thereof) versus how to resource the training and equipping of forces for strategic competition.

Mitigation. The Joint Force will need to exercise strategic discipline in focusing competition towards those areas to progressively build warfighting advantage to deter, and if necessary, prevail in conflict. To further mitigate this risk, the Joint Force will also need a narrowly defined, outcomes-focused approach to operations, activities, and investments to avoid labeling all effort as competition.

2. **Integrated competitive strategies could lead to ineffective campaigns of enormous complexity.** Strategic competition is complex by nature, but integrated competitive strategies will reward simplicity and parsimony in design. Senior leaders must be alert to this tension and must continuously strive for the proper balance between complexity and effectiveness.

Mitigation. The Joint Staff will need to balance simplicity with comprehensiveness in campaign plan design. Establishing formal mechanisms for interaction between the Joint Force and the rest of the USG during this campaign design process will build understanding of the limits of the Joint Force. This understanding will allow the Joint Force to focus activity towards specific competitive objectives. Continuous campaign assessment will mitigate the risk posed by increased complexity.

3. **Relevant interagency and allied partners may be unwilling or unable to align with the Joint Force as part of a USG competitive strategy and/or campaign.** The current arrangements and relationships are not well suited for integrated strategy development or campaigning with interorganizational partners. Partners may not align or integrate their efforts for various bureaucratic, organizational, legal, cultural, or financial reasons. Without interagency participation in the process, the Joint Force cannot implement the

⁵⁶ CJCSM 3105.01A, *Joint Risk Analysis Methodology*, 12 October 2021, p. A-2.

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JCC. If the Joint Force does not undertake the effort to align and integrate with interagency and allied partners, the vision for strategic competition outlined in the JCC could have limited efficacy.

Mitigation. Through DoD leadership, the Joint Force will need to leverage existing interagency mechanisms to build greater understanding and more effective integration with interagency and allied partners. Such integration may require building and implementing additional mechanisms (institutional, technical, etc.).

4. **Strategic competition could lead to inadvertent escalation and unintended consequences.** Actions taken below the level of armed conflict intended to counter an adversary's coercion and subversion could create a security dilemma, where other states respond in kind, leading to heightened tensions or even armed conflict. The Joint Force will need to calculate risk very carefully when proposing and executing activities short of armed conflict.

Mitigation. Through ongoing efforts to develop information advantage, the Joint Force is developing a shared understanding of the decision-making processes of an adversary and perceptions of U.S. activity and planned activities to reduce the likelihood of an unexpected reaction. Through this effort, the Joint Force will be able to consider and assess multiple response paths to its competitive actions and will prepare "off-ramps" where necessary and appropriate. Continuing to advance the capabilities required for information advantage will mitigate some of this risk.

RISK OF NOT ADOPTING THE CONCEPT

If the Joint Force does not change its approach to strategic competition, there is a significant risk that the United States will be at risk of "losing without fighting." In this case, losing could mean accepting unfavorable regional balances of power and, more importantly, the loss or diminishing of U.S. leadership in the international system. Time is of the essence; the era of U.S. competitive advantage is closing rapidly. The Joint Force must act quickly and decisively to reverse the tide of decline in the ability of the Joint Force to protect and advance U.S. national interests.

Mitigation. The Joint Force can mitigate this risk by adopting a comprehensive approach to strategic competition and developing in-house capabilities to address the broader competitive activity of adversaries. The Joint Force may also seek to identify potential shortcomings in the U.S. approach to a strategic competitor but without seeking to identify appropriate responses outside the military domain. The Joint Force might also seek agreements with interorganizational partners on integrated approaches and clear lines of responsibility in addressing a strategic competitor.

ANNEX A: A STRUCTURED APPROACH FOR STRATEGIC COMPETITION

The Joint Force requires a structured approach to implement the ideas in this concept in a **systemic, comprehensive, and repeatable** way. Established processes and practices within the Office of the Secretary of Defense exist for defense strategy development, but they focus primarily on warfighting and deterrence, not strategic competition. Joint Staff processes and practices exist for the design, planning, conduct, and assessment of military campaigns, but they focus primarily on the application of operational art (“How to execute strategic guidance and direction”) to joint warfighting and deterrence, not to the Joint Force’s supporting role in strategic competition. **Competitive strategies require a different logic trail because they do not focus on military victory with interagency partners in a supporting role.** The Joint Force requires **processes, practices, and mechanisms for the application of strategic art** (“What, Why, When, Where, and With Whom”) to the **development, assessment, and revision of integrated competitive strategies** in conjunction with relevant interagency and allied partners.

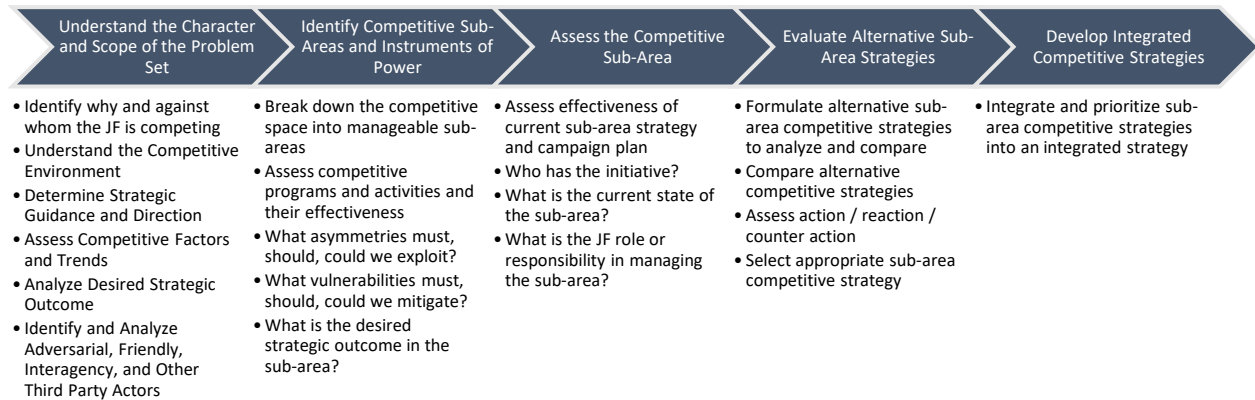


Figure 5. The Stages of the Structured Approach

This annex describes a Structured Approach to Strategic Competition to guide the application of strategic art to strategic competition problem sets. The Joint Staff, combatant commands (CCMDs), and Defense Intelligence Enterprise (DIE) are the primary target audiences of this approach, but other DoD components and other USG departments and agencies may find utility in applying this approach to their problem sets in strategic competition. The Structured Approach identifies new intelligence requirements for the DIE. It also identifies shortfalls in the Joint Strategic Planning System, especially regarding the integration of key interagency and allied partners early in the strategy development process, and in joint doctrine for the application of strategic art in strategy development. The Joint Staff and CCMDs will benefit from the incorporation of the Structured Approach into their processes for developing national, theater, and functional strategies. Finally, the integrated strategic estimates, competitive strategies, and campaign assessments envisioned in the Structured Approach will enable CCMDs to link their integrated campaigning more effectively to their strategic guidance and direction, and to broader U.S. and international efforts in strategic competition, and across the spectrum of conflict. As depicted in Figure 5, the Structured Approach has five stages described below.

UNDERSTAND THE CHARACTER AND SCOPE OF THE STRATEGIC PROBLEM SET

Any attempt to address the challenges of strategic competition must begin with a clear and thorough understanding of the problem the Joint Force is seeking to address. A problem statement is a clear, concise, and precise working hypothesis of what the Joint Force perceives the character and scope of the strategic problem to be. **The problem statement identifies why and against whom the Joint Force is competing.** In strategic competition, the Joint Force is normally a supporting actor. Therefore, the Joint Force must understand and take into consideration the interests, desired outcomes, objectives, operational requirements, and risk and cost assessments of relevant interagency and allied partners during its consideration of a strategic problem. The Joint Staff, in conjunction with the CCMDs and other key partners, will take the lead in developing a clear understanding of the problem set. As understanding builds, the initial problem statement will likely need refinement as new information and insights become available and feed back into the original analysis and assessment. Issues and areas to consider at this stage include:

- What U.S. national interests are the Joint Force pursuing or protecting in the competitive space?
- What threat(s) are limiting the ability of the United States to pursue or protect one or more national interests at an acceptable level of risk and a sustainable cost?
- What does the United States perceive is the essence of the political clash of interests that threatens one or more U.S. national interests? What does the adversary perceive is the essence of the clash?
- What created and sustains the political struggle? (What are the root causes of the struggle?)
- What is the nature of the actor behind this threat (a state government, a terrorist group, an insurgency or resistance organization, a transnational criminal organization, a militia or other armed group, something else, or a combination thereof)? Be as specific as possible (e.g., CCP vice the Chinese people).
- What form does the threat take and what is its strategic purpose? (What is the threat doing now and why?)
- How does the adversary frame and justify its cause and behavior?
- What is the adversary's theory of success and competitive strategy? What strategic outcome is the threat pursuing? What capabilities is the threat using to pursue it?
- Why has the threat proven so difficult to counter?
- Why is a change in policy, strategic approach, or operational behavior necessary? (Why is current U.S. policy, strategy, or operational behavior not working?)

- What is the likely role or responsibility of the Joint Force in managing this problem?
- What roles and responsibilities can allies and partners assume to help manage the problem?
- Does the Joint Force have the necessary authorities and capabilities to fulfill its likely role or responsibility? If not, who does?

Understand the Competitive Environment

Identifying and understanding the problem the Joint Force is seeking to address is the conduit to understanding the competitive environment as it currently exists and the dynamics that are shaping environmental trends and potential future scenarios. In understanding and analyzing the competitive environment, it is important to do so not only from a U.S. perspective but also, as far as possible, from the perspective of the adversary and relevant allies and partners, as depicted in figure 6 below.

	United States	Adversary	Allies and Partners
United States	United States sees itself	United States sees Adversary	United States sees Allies and Partners
Adversary	Adversary sees United States	Adversary sees itself	Adversary sees Allies and Partners
Allies and Partners	Allies and Partners see United States	Allies and Partners see Adversary	Allies and Partners see themselves

Figure 6. Nine Ways of Seeing a Strategic Problem

Joint Staff strategists, **in conjunction with relevant military, interagency, and multinational strategists**, will conduct net assessments of the competitive environment to establish a common understanding of the competitive environment and recognize where partners’ assessments diverge from, or disagree with, those of the Joint Force. Any such divergences or disagreements will be fed back as necessary to inform the framing of the original problem statement in relation to how the United States, adversaries, and allies and partners see things. Conversely, the model can be used with any relationship, including how an established friendly or adversary alliance or coalition perceive themselves and one another. These independent but integrated Joint Staff net assessments of the competitive environment are foundational for the CJCS to provide military advice to the President and SecDef to inform national and defense policy and strategy development.

Strategic Guidance and Direction

This section analyzes broad policy, strategic guidance, and authoritative direction and identifies strategic requirements at the national strategic level. Issues and areas to consider at this stage include:

- What U.S. policy goals, authorities, national or defense objectives, and strategic tasks are currently in place?
- What multinational (i.e., alliance or coalition) or other non-U.S. (e.g., United Nations) policy goals, security or military objectives, and strategic tasks are currently in place?
- What policy and strategic assumptions about domestic and international unknowns are relevant? Are these assumptions reasonable? How can they be improved or clarified?
- What statutory, policy, or resource limitations impose constraints or restraints on strategic planning? Are these limitations reasonable? How can they be improved or clarified?

Competitive Factors and Trends

This section is a continuously updated net assessment of the state of strategic competition and associated trends. Its purpose is to identify where the Joint Force is currently positioned in the strategic competition and/or the direction of associated trends; where opportunities or threats exist, either from adversaries or third parties; and where the Joint Force would ideally wish to be positioned, all other things being equal. This section identifies and assesses the relevant political, military, economic, sociocultural, information, infrastructure (PMESII) systems; and geographic, demographic, and technological factors and trends that affect the competitive space. Issues and areas to consider at this stage include:

- Determine the facts and unknowns regarding the context, nature, and character of the competitive space.
 - What is the form of the strategic competition (e.g., direct, or indirect by surrogates or through proxies)?
 - What resources and objectives are in play?
 - Is this strategic competition overt or covert?
 - What are the trends and asymmetries in the strategic competition?
 - What assumptions will be made to mitigate the unknowns?
 - What actions will be taken to test assumptions and mitigate unknowns?

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- Identify relevant actors (friendly, adversarial, third party) and their interests, relationships, and interdependencies.
 - What are their interests, objectives, motivations, and capabilities?
 - What are the relationships and interdependencies among them?
- Identify current domestic and international laws, agreements, and norms (“rules”) in place (if any).
 - What laws, agreements, or norms may be broken within the confines of the competition (e.g., direct or indirect use of military force)?
 - Which laws, agreements, or norms cannot be broken without changing the competition?
- Identify current assumptions, specified or implied, and their validity.
- Identify current restraints and constraints that limit freedom of action in the competitive space.
- Determine where in the competitive space the United States is currently competing?
- Identify the intended and unintended consequences of the strategic competition to date?
 - Where and why are the United States and its allies and partners gaining advantage that they can leverage? How are these advantages trending? How can they be exploited asymmetrically?
 - Where and why are the adversary and its allies and partners gaining advantage that they can leverage? How are these advantages trending? How can they be mitigated asymmetrically?
 - Where and why are the United States and its allies and partners not competing?
 - Where and why is the adversary not competing?

Desired Strategic Outcome

This section analyzes the desired strategic outcome and acceptable alternative outcomes and provides metrics for assessing progress towards achieving the desired outcome. As the strategic competition progresses, the President or SecDef will likely change desired outcomes. Accordingly, there will be a need for persistent Joint Staff assessment and feedback to ensure the relevance of Joint Force campaign efforts.

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- What conditions and behaviors are necessary to protect and advance U.S. national interests and counter adversarial threats to those interests?
- What is the Joint Force contribution to achieving the desired outcome?
- What new threats are likely to emerge if the United States achieves the desired outcome?
- What risks are associated with not achieving the desired outcome?
- What alternative and less desirable strategic outcomes would be acceptable? Which would not be acceptable?

Adversarial Actors

This section identifies and analyzes all relevant states, armed groups, and organizations that threaten U.S. and partner interests. Based on DIE strategic intelligence estimates, the Joint Staff will assess adversaries' current positions in the strategic competition; their likely desired outcomes, strategic objectives, and competitive strategies; and the extent to which adversary outcomes, objectives, and strategies threaten U.S. national interests.

- How do adversaries perceive the context, nature, and character of the competitive space? Why do they perceive it the way they do?
- What factors drive their perceptions (e.g., history, bureaucracy, ideology, culture)?
- Why are they competing against the United States? What are the incompatible strategic interests?
- What strategic outcomes do they seek?
- Why do they seek those outcomes?
- How do they intend to achieve those outcomes (i.e., their theories of success)?
- What are their decision-making processes?
- What factors influence their decision-making processes (e.g., history, experience, strategic culture, ideology, bureaucracy)?
- What are their capabilities and strengths (actual or perceived)?
- What are their weaknesses and vulnerabilities (actual or perceived)?
- How reliable are the adversary's potential allies or strategic partners?

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- What actors are being targeted by the adversary as objects of competition?

Friendly International Actors

This section identifies and analyzes all relevant states, armed groups, and organizations that are actual or potential allies or strategic partners. Based on U.S. net assessments of key allied partners, the Joint Staff will identify the interdependencies between the Joint Force and key allied partners. The Joint Staff will answer the same questions asked about adversarial actors, plus:

- What support is the United States currently providing them? What support are they providing or committed to providing during contingency operations?
- How effective is their military capability? How strong is their will to employ that capability to achieve complementary objectives?
- Do they experience endemic corruption that will limit the results of a large investment in their capabilities?
- Are focused and limited investments more likely to provide out-sized returns?
- How reliable are potential U.S. allies and partners?
- What additional support would make them more effective partners? Are their contributions to a U.S.-led coalition worth the cost in time and other resources to make them effective partners?

Interagency Partners

This section identifies and analyzes all relevant components of non-DoD USG departments and agencies. Based on their net assessments or their inputs to Joint Staff net assessments, the Joint Staff will identify non-DoD USG departments' and agencies' interests, objectives, capabilities, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities. It will also identify the interdependencies between the Joint Force and its interagency partners. Understanding these factors is critical to developing integrated competitive strategies and plans. The Joint Force will consider the following questions related to its interagency partners:

- How are they currently involved in the competitive space?
- How do they perceive the context, nature, and character of the competitive space, and why do they perceive it the way they do? What in the competitive space is a priority for them? Why is it a priority for them?
- What factors drive their perceptions (e.g., history, bureaucracy, ideology, culture)?
- What strategic outcomes do they seek?

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- Why do they seek those outcomes?
- How do they intend to achieve those outcomes (i.e., its theory of success)? What resources do they intend to use?
- What are their decision-making and information-sharing processes?
- How do they evaluate risk?
- What are their capabilities (actual or perceived)?
- What are their weaknesses and vulnerabilities (actual or perceived)?
- What relevant policies and programs do they have in place? Where do they align or conflict with DoD policies and programs? Where and how can they leverage Joint Force authorities, capabilities, and posture? Where can the Joint Force leverage their authorities, capabilities, and posture?

Third Party Actors

This section identifies and analyzes all other relevant states, armed groups, and organizations. In conjunction with key interagency and allied partners, the Joint Staff will answer the same questions asked about adversarial and friendly actors and assess whether the value these actors would bring to the U.S.-led coalition is worth the cost in time and resources to make them effective partners.

IDENTIFY RELEVANT COMPETITIVE SUB-AREAS AND INSTRUMENTS OF POWER

The scale and complexity of the competitive space necessitates breaking it down into competitive sub-areas that are more tractable for analysis and planning and that enable the focusing of efforts towards areas of strategic competition where the United States has an advantage. The determination of such sub-areas is not simply a matter of convenience and must be driven by **where**, **when**, and **how** U.S. competitive objectives are challenged, ignored, or reinforced by those of the adversary, allies and partners, and relevant third parties. Joint Staff strategists, in conjunction with relevant military, interagency, and allied strategists, will identify and assess competitive advantage, leverage, opportunities, and vulnerabilities in each sub-area. These assessments will indicate **where** and **when** the United States **must**, **should**, or **could** compete and the instruments of power most relevant to each sub-area.⁵⁷ Issues and areas to consider at this stage include:

⁵⁷ Only the President has the authority to decide where and when the United States **will compete**. For the purposes of this concept, the United States **must compete** where and when the failure to compete creates an unacceptable risk to vital U.S. national interests. The United States **should compete** where and when the failure to compete creates an unacceptable risk to non-vital U.S. national interests. The United States **could compete** where and when failure to compete creates an acceptable risk to U.S. national interests. The United States **should not** compete where and when the competition is likely to create unacceptable escalatory risk or unsustainable long-term costs.

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- Identify, assess, and prioritize **where, how, and why** the United States, the adversary, allies and partners, and third parties have competitive advantage, leverage, opportunities, and vulnerabilities in each sub-area of the competitive space.
- Identify and analyze the adversary's **known or potential vulnerabilities** that the United States **must, should, or could** exploit to gain influence, advantage, or leverage in a strategic competition.⁵⁸
 - What are the adversary's known or potential vulnerabilities?
 - Where and when must, should, can the Joint Force compete successfully to exploit those vulnerabilities to U.S. advantage?
 - What statutory, regulatory, policy, or resource limitations exist that restrain the ability of the Joint Force to compete where and when it must or should exploit opportunities?
 - How will the adversary react to Joint Force exploitation of these opportunities?
 - How will the Joint Force counter those reactions?
- Identify and analyze **known or potential U.S. or partner vulnerabilities** that an adversary **must, should, or could** exploit to gain influence, advantage, or leverage in the strategic competition. The Joint Force cannot afford to ignore its own vulnerabilities because adversaries will identify and exploit them.
 - What are the known or potential U.S. vulnerabilities?
 - Where and when must, should, can the United States compromise or concede?
 - What statutory, regulatory, policy, or resource limitations exist that restrain the ability of the Joint Force to compete where and when it must or should mitigate U.S. vulnerabilities?
 - How will the adversary react to Joint Force mitigation of these vulnerabilities?
 - How will the Joint Force counter those reactions?
- Determine how these sub-areas overlap or gap with the sub-areas in which the adversary is trying to compete.
- Identify which asymmetries the Joint Force must, should, or could exploit.

⁵⁸ **Critical factor analysis** is an excellent tool for identifying and prioritizing the critical capabilities, critical requirements, and critical vulnerabilities in a complex adaptive system. For additional information, see JP 3-25, *Countering Threat Networks*, 21 December 2016.

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- Identify where and when the United States must, should, or could cooperate with adversaries (e.g., counterterrorism, counter-piracy).
- Identify and prioritize relevant sub-areas where the Joint Force must, should, or could exploit opportunities and mitigate vulnerabilities.

DEVELOP INTEGRATED COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES

Assess the Relevant Competitive Sub-Areas

The previous assessment will enable the CJCS to identify and prioritize a range of competitive sub-areas through which to address the challenges of strategic competition. Depending on the relevant strategic guidance, the CJCS may require Presidential or SecDef approval at this stage of the strategy development process. For each competitive sub-area identified and approved for further development, the Joint Staff will identify the optimum strategy for getting from the current state of competition to the desired outcome. Issues and areas to consider at this stage include:

- Determine the desired strategic outcome in each sub-area, and the acceptable alternative outcomes.
- Assess the current state of the sub-area.
 - What are the relevant PMESII, geographic, demographic, and technological factors and trends that affect the competitive space?
 - Who are the relevant actors? What are their interests, priorities, relationships, interdependencies?
 - What are the current assumptions?
 - What are the current restraints and constraints?
 - Who has the strategic initiative (freedom of action)?
 - What is working? Why?
 - What is not working? Why not?
- Determine the desired timeline to achieve the desired strategic outcome.
- Identify opportunities that are not being exploited.
- Identify vulnerabilities that are not being mitigated, defended, or protected.

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- Determine which Joint Force effects (coerce, subvert, compensate, persuade, legitimize) are most relevant to each sub-area.
- Determine what set of Joint Force operations, activities, and investments is most likely to optimize U.S. influence, advantage, and leverage across each sub-area and across the competitive space.
- Determine what measures of effectiveness will provide senior decision-makers the information and insights they require to assess, monitor, and evaluate the effectiveness of Joint Force integrated campaigning efforts in each sub-area.
- Identify the likely Joint Force role or responsibility in managing the problem in this competitive sub-area.
- Review and revise the problem statement as required to achieve a deep understanding of the specific strategic competition being addressed.
- Provide feedback on the likelihood of achieving strategic success including shortfalls in the Joint Force ability to perform this role or responsibility in this sub-area.

Identify and Evaluate Alternative Sub-Area Competitive Strategies

Based on strategic assessments and strategic guidance, and in conjunction with relevant military, interagency, and allied partners, Joint Staff and CCMD strategists will develop sub-area competitive strategies that nest under higher strategies, integrate supporting military strategies, and integrate the competitive efforts of participating partners. Joint Force strategists will use the course of action development, analysis and wargaming, and comparison steps of the joint planning process to select the most appropriate sub-area competitive strategy for integration into broader national, defense, and military competitive strategies. Joint Staff strategists will lead or participate in the development of transregional (“cross-cutting”) cognitive and thematic competitive strategies. CCMD strategists will lead the development of geographic and domain competitive strategies for the sub-areas within their geographic or functional area of responsibility. When developing, analyzing, and comparing alternative sub-area competitive strategies, Joint Force strategists will consider the following issues and areas:

- Compare the adversary’s desired strategic outcomes and supporting objectives against our own.
 - What are the threats, incompatibilities, interferences, inconsistencies, and irrelevancies?
 - What are the asymmetries in importance, risk, and cost?
- Compare the adversary’s current and trending strengths, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities against our own.

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- Determine how and why U.S. allies and partners, enemies and adversaries, and other relevant actors are likely to perceive U.S. actions and respond to them.
 - Which responses matter? Which do not matter?
 - How can the United States preempt, mitigate, or counter adverse responses (e.g., impede progress or impose drag)?
- For each alternative competitive strategy:
 - Identify employment mechanisms to implement.
 - Estimate time and resources to prepare, implement, achieve desired effects, and achieve desired strategic outcome.
 - Assess authorities against requirements and capabilities.
 - Identify assumptions.
 - Identify interdependencies.
 - Identify restraints and constraints.
 - Identify risks and mitigation measures.
 - Identify measures of effectiveness for assessment, monitoring, and evaluation.
 - Estimate associated costs.
- Determine the likely Joint Force role or responsibility in managing the strategic problem in this sub-area.
- Provide feedback on the likelihood of achieving strategic success in this sub-area.

Develop an Integrated Theory of Success

Each strategic competition is unique and requires its own integrated theory of success (IToS). Based on the strategic estimate and selected sub-area competitive strategies, Joint Force strategists will develop a working hypothesis for how to gain or maintain competitive advantage over adversaries in those sub-areas deemed essential to achieving the desired strategic outcome. Strategists will test and refine these hypotheses through iterative tabletop exercises and competition games in a continuous process.

There is no doctrinal format for an IToS. At a minimum, an IToS will answer the following questions:

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- Where, when, and how do U.S. and adversary interests, objectives, and actions conflict in the sub-area?
- What does strategic success look like at the national strategic level? (By what measures of effectiveness will the United States know if it is succeeding or failing?)
- What environmental conditions are necessary to enable strategic success?
- What non-military national strategic objectives must the Joint Force support to establish the necessary environmental conditions for strategic success?
- What strategic objectives must the Joint Force achieve to establish the necessary environmental conditions for strategic success?
- What potential courses of action (COAs) are feasible, suitable, acceptable, and sustainable in a persistent and long-term campaign?
- Based on a comparison of alternative COAs, which COA is most likely to establish the necessary environmental conditions for strategic success with acceptable risk and at an acceptable cost?
- What lines of effort and supporting tasks are necessary to implement the approved course of action?
 - When, where, and how will the Joint Force and its partners take **proactive actions** to exploit opportunities to advance U.S. interests?
 - When, where, and how will the Joint Force and its partners take **proactive actions** to exploit opportunities to create dilemmas or impose costs on an adversary?
 - When, where, and how will the Joint Force and its partners take **defensive actions** to mitigate vulnerabilities and/or protect U.S. interests that are being threatened?
 - When, where, and how will the Joint Force and its partners take **stabilization actions** to create conditions in which locally legitimate authorities and systems can manage conflict and prevent violence with minimal external assistance?
 - Where, when, and how will the Joint Force and its partners take **pre-emptive actions** in crisis to deter adversary aggression and assure advantage in armed conflict?
 - Where, when, and how will interorganizational partners be dependent on the activities of the Joint Force?
 - Where, when, and how will the Joint Force be dependent on the activities of its interorganizational partners?

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- How can the Joint Force integrate or align its campaign planning, coordination, execution, and assessment with the efforts of its interagency, multinational, and other interorganizational partners? What formal processes does the Joint Force require to enable interorganizational decision-making?
- Who are the appropriate supported and supporting CCDRs and coordinating authorities?
- What are the estimated costs, including human, material, and financial costs, as well as loss of forces, time, position, advantage, and opportunity costs associated with long-term strategic competition over time?
- Collect feedback on the likelihood of the strategy being successful.⁵⁹

Develop an Integrated Competitive Strategy

The Joint Staff will expand the IToS into an integrated competitive strategy for each strategic problem set and reconcile the strategies across problem sets for feasibility, sustainability, and interdependence. The Joint Staff may issue these integrated competitive strategies separately or as annexes to the *National Military Strategy*, similar to the way the Joint Staff issues global campaign plans as annexes to the *Joint Strategic Campaign Plan*.

⁵⁹ The CJCS formal feedback mechanisms include the Chairman's Risk Assessment and the Chairman's Program Recommendations.

ANNEX B: CONCEPT REQUIRED CAPABILITIES

This list of CRCs spans the strategic national (SN), strategic theater (ST), and operational (OP) levels of the UJTL. Most joint concepts focus on OP-level tasks for joint campaigns and operations. However, the JCC is a strategic-level concept. Succeeding in strategic competition depends on the Joint Force performing SN- and ST-level tasks that enable joint forces to conduct and sustain integrated campaigning across the spectrum of conflict.

These CRCs define a set of near- and mid-term force development and design actions that the Joint Force will implement by 2030 to mitigate shortfalls in its ability to compete strategically across the spectrum of conflict. Most of these CRCs will require non-materiel solutions (e.g., doctrine, organization, training, professional military education).

SUPPORTING IDEA A: EXPAND THE COMPETITIVE MINDSET

CRC A1: Strategic Assessment of the Competitive Environment

- a. **Task:** The ability of the Joint Force and its joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) partners to assess the character, scope, and areas of competition in the global security environment.⁶⁰
- b. **Purpose:** Enable the Joint Force and its JIIM partners to determine the conditions, circumstances, and influences across all domains that comprise the competitive environment to support development of long-term integrated strategies for competing with adversaries.
- c. **Conditions:** Adversaries are employing cohesive combinations of military and civil power, below the level of armed conflict, to pursue objectives that threaten the strategic interests of the United States, its allies, and its strategic partners. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners have the authorities and mechanisms in place to conduct integrated analysis in the competitive environment. The Joint Force has a narrow understanding of the limitations (restraints and constraints) imposed by the competitive environment, statutory and policy guidance and direction, authorities, and how resources can best be applied to address emergent problems.
- d. **Standards:**
 1. The Joint Force identifies and persistently assesses the relevant actors (United States, allies, partners, neutral parties, and adversaries) and their interests, intent, desired and acceptable outcomes, capabilities, intentions, and limitations across multiple domains, dimensions, and perspectives.
 2. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners identify political, military, economic, social, infrastructure, information, technological, and environmental trends in, and project their impact on, the security environment to identify risks, opportunities, and vulnerabilities.

⁶⁰ The security environment is the set of conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of the Armed Forces of the United States. (JP 3-04)

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3. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners understand the operational limitations (restraints and constraints) imposed by the competitive environment, statutory and policy guidance and direction, authorities, and resources.
 4. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners identify and assess current shortfalls in strategic guidance and direction and in Joint Force and JIIM partner authorities, capabilities, and resourcing.
 5. The Joint Force estimates the risk, cost, return on investment, and adversary impact.
- e. **Discussion:** A unilateral military assessment is insufficient to perform this task. In strategic competition, the Joint Force and its interorganizational partners, proxies, and surrogates must have a deep and comprehensive understanding of the character and scope of the competition and the environment in which it is occurring. Such an understanding is essential to identifying areas of competitive advantage and disadvantage, leveraging opportunities, and mitigating vulnerabilities.
- f. **Supporting References:**
1. JP 2-0, *Joint Intelligence*, 22 October 2013.
 2. JP 3-60, *Joint Targeting*, 28 September 2018.
 3. JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, 1 December 2020.
 4. UJTL: SN 2 Provide Strategic Intelligence, SN 5.2 Assess Strategic Security Environment, SN 8.3 Conduct Interagency Interaction, ST 2.6 Maintain Situational Awareness, ST 5.3 Conduct Strategic Estimates, OP 5.1.5 Maintain Awareness of Strategic Situation.

SUPPORTING IDEA B: SHAPE THE COMPETITIVE SPACE

CRC B1: Continuous, Globally Integrated Competitive Strategy Design and Production

- a. **Task:** The ability of the Joint Force and its JIIM partners to develop an integrated long-term competitive strategy.
- b. **Purpose:** Provide Joint Force and its JIIM partners with comprehensive strategic guidance and direction for globally integrated multi-domain campaigning that tilts the competitive balance in favor of the United States and its allies to ensure their interests are protected and prepared for evolving adversaries.
- c. **Conditions:** One or more adversaries are employing cohesive combinations of military and civil power short of armed conflict to pursue objectives that threaten the strategic interests of the United States, its allies, and its strategic partners. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners have the authorities and mechanisms in place to conduct integrated planning for a globally integrated competitive strategy.
- d. **Standards:**

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1. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners develop an approach to integrate operations, activities, and investments in time, space, and purpose to tilt the competitive balance. The strategy identifies, by adversary:
 - Competitive Sub-Areas in which the United States and its JIIM partners can exploit their advantages, leverage, and initiative;
 - A Theory of Success that describes how to gain or maintain competitive advantage over adversaries in those sub-areas deemed essential to achieving the desired strategic outcome;
 - Strategic Outcomes that promote a favorable distribution of power and a stable and open international system;
 - Lead Organizations for executing operations, activities, and investments to bring about strategic outcomes;
 - Priorities of effort to focus resources; and
 - Coordinating Mechanisms across the spectrum of JIIM partners.
2. The strategy takes a long-term approach (15-20 years) toward tilting the competitive balance.

e. **Discussion:**

1. The Joint Force lacks the mechanism and capability to develop an integrated competitive strategy to succeed in enduring strategic competition, not just warfighting.
2. Integrated competitive strategies are distinguished by a time horizon well beyond the FYDP; a focus on a specific adversary rather than generic capabilities; a thorough understanding of U.S. and adversary interests and threats to those interests; a clear statement of U.S. competitive outcomes and objectives; and an explicit evaluation of objectives and actions in terms of U.S. adversary strengths and vulnerabilities, current competitive advantages, and competitive positions.

f. **Supporting References:**

1. JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, 1 December 2020.
2. UJTL: SN 5 Provide Strategic Direction. SN 5.3.2 Develop Multinational and National Military Strategy Options, SN 5.4 Provide Strategic Direction to Forces.

CRC B2: DoD Organization to Manage Integrated Competitive Campaigns

- a. **Task:** The ability of the Joint Force and its interagency partners to provide enterprise-wide leadership, direction, coordination, resourcing, and oversight of integrated competitive campaigns.
- b. **Purpose:** Enable the Joint Force and its interagency partners to resource, synchronize, coordinate, and integrate operations, activities, and investments at the national level to achieve and maintain unified action to tilt the competitive balance.

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- c. **Conditions:** One or more adversaries are employing cohesive combinations of military and civil power below the level of armed conflict to pursue objectives that threaten the strategic interests of the United States and its allies and strategic partners. The Joint Force and its interagency partners have a common understanding of the U.S. strategic interests, constraints, and restraints and a common understanding of the global competition space.
- d. **Standards:**
 - 1. At the department level, the Joint Force and its interagency partners have developed coordinated strategies based on agreed upon competition sub-areas, theories of success, and strategic outcomes.
 - 2. At the department level, the Joint Force and its interagency partners have synchronized multi-year resourcing for execution of competitive campaigns.
 - 3. At the department level, the Joint Force and its interagency partners have coordinated environmental estimates, strategies, and assessments.
- e. **Discussion:** Interagency integration mechanisms already exist to manage complex problems beyond the scope and reach of any single USG department or agency. A new mechanism for strategic competition, below the policy level of the NSC, should draw on the best practices of these other mechanisms to foster interagency cooperation in the arena of strategic competition. Current examples of such mechanisms include:
 - 1. National Counterterrorism Center, Office of the Director of National Intelligence.
 - 2. Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces, Department of Justice.
 - 3. Joint Terrorism Task Forces, Federal Bureau of Investigation.
 - 4. National Incident Management System and National Response Framework, Federal Emergency Management Agency.
- f. **Supporting References:**
 - 1. 2019 *Joint Irregular Warfare Assessment*, 5 December 2019 (SECRET//NOFORN).
 - 2. JP 3-08, *Interorganizational Cooperation*, 18 October 2017.
 - 3. UJTL; SN 8.3 Conduct Interagency Interaction, SN 8.3.3 Establish Interagency Cooperation Structures. ST 8.5.3 Conduct Interagency Liaison and Cooperation.

SUPPORTING IDEA C: ADVANCE INTEGRATED CAMPAIGNING

CRC C1: Data-Driven Enterprise Management System for Continuous Situational Understanding of the Competitive Environment

- a. **Task:** The ability of the Joint Force to maintain continuous situational understanding of conditions of the strategic security environment and the status of operations, activities, and investments for strategic competition in order to enable the planning, conduct, and management of integrated campaigning in strategic competition.
- b. **Purpose:** The Joint Force maintains sufficient understanding of the competition space to make strategic and operational level decisions ICW JIIM partners to protect and advance U.S. interests.
- c. **Conditions:** One or more adversaries are employing cohesive combinations of military and civil power below the level of armed conflict to pursue objectives that threaten the strategic interests of the United States and its allies and strategic partners. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners have the authorities and mechanisms in place to collect relevant military and non-military information and to conduct integrated analysis of conditions in the competitive environment.
- d. **Standards:**
 1. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners, at operational echelons, have a common understanding of the state of competition sub-areas and the status of adversary and neutral party activities across the competitive sub-areas.
 2. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners, at operational echelons, have a common understanding of adversary intent and capabilities in relevant competition sub-areas.
 3. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners, at operational echelons, have a common understanding of constraints/restraints of competitive operations, activities, and investments.
- e. **Discussion:** Succeeding in strategic competition requires accurate near-real-time information, data, and intelligence to support decision-making. Leaders at all levels must acquire and maintain a deep understanding of the strategic environment and a dynamic appreciation for trends in friendly and adversary capabilities, intentions, strengths, and vulnerabilities.
- f. **Supporting References:**
 1. JP 2-0, *Joint Intelligence*, 22 October 2013.
 2. JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, 1 December 2020.
 3. UJTL: SN 2 Provide Strategic Intelligence, SN 5.2 Assess Strategic Security Environment, ST 2.6 Maintain Situational awareness, ST 5.1.5 Maintain Awareness of the Strategic Situation.

CRC C2: Continuous Integrated Campaigning in Support of Competitive Strategy

- a. **Task:** The ability of the Joint Force to conduct persistent integrated campaigning in support of the competitive strategy.
- b. **Purpose:** Enable the Joint Force to shape the competitive space to advance U.S. interests and set conditions to deter and prevail in conflict.
- c. **Conditions:** One or more adversaries are employing cohesive combinations of military and civil power below the level of armed conflict to pursue objectives that threaten the strategic interests of the United States and its allies and strategic partners. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners have the authorities and mechanisms in place to synchronize integrated operations, activities, and investments across the competition space.
- d. **Standards:**
 1. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners have increased influence, advantage, and leverage over adversaries in selected sub-areas of competition.
 2. The Joint Force engagement operations, activities, and investments shape adversaries' perceptions of their ability to maintain control and deter horizontal and vertical escalation.
 3. Integrated physical and informational activities produce desired attitude, behavior changes, or capability/capacity changes in relevant actors and freedom of maneuver for the Joint Force and its JIIM partners.
 4. Allies, partners, proxies, and surrogates have the will, skills, and ability to defend their own sovereignty and territorial integrity against coercive adversary activities.
 5. Desired strategic outcomes are produced and threats to U.S. strategic interests are minimized.
- e. **Discussion:** Integrated campaigning is premised on understanding that the Joint Force cannot and should not act alone in strategic competition. Even when providing the preponderance of resources, the Joint Force will normally campaign to support other USG departments and agencies. The Joint Force will identify approaches that enable it to apply its military capabilities proactively, and differently in some cases, to gain influence, advantage, and leverage over adversaries to establish the necessary conditions to achieve strategic outcomes. To achieve unity of effort, the Joint Force must seek opportunities to integrate its operations and activities in time, space, and purpose with the activities of interorganizational partners, proxies, and surrogates.
- f. **Supporting References:**
 1. JP 3-0, *Joint Campaigns and Operations*, TBD.
 2. JP 3-60, *Joint Targeting*, 28 September 2018.
 3. JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, 1 December 2020.

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4. *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning*, 16 March 2018.
5. UJTL: SN 5.4 Provide Strategic Direction to Forces, SN 8.1 Assist Foreign Nations or Groups, SN 8.2 Direct Interagency Support, ST 8.2 Coordinate Foreign Assistance, ST 8.5 Synchronize Military Efforts with Activities of Other USG Departments and Agencies.
6. JP 3-04, *Information in Joint Operations*, 1 December 2021.
7. JP 3-13.2, *Military Information Support Operations*, 2 November 2014.
8. *Joint Concept for Operating in the Information Environment*, 25 July 2018.
9. UJTL: SN 5.5 Manage Information Operations, SN 5.5.6 Coordinate Military Information Support Operations, ST 5.5.6 Manage Military Information Support Operations, ST 5.5.6.1 Conduct Military Information Support Operations.
10. *Irregular Warfare Mission Analysis*, 19 October 2021.
11. UJTL: SN 8 Coordinate Military Engagement Activities, ST 8 Perform Military Engagement, OP 8 Conduct Military Engagement, SN 8.1.17 Direct Unconventional Warfare, ST 1.3.7 Coordinate Unconventional Warfare, OP 1.2.4.8 Conduct Unconventional Warfare, SN 8.1.10 Coordinate Combating Terrorism, ST 8.4.2 Coordinate Counterterrorism Operations, OP 8.20 Integrate Counterterrorism, T 5.4.4 Coordinate Security Cooperation, OP 7.3 Conduct Security Cooperation. (No SN UJT), SN 8.1.3 Direct Stabilization Efforts, ST 8.6 Coordinate Stabilization Effort. (No OP UJT), ST 8.2.9 Coordinate Foreign Internal Defense, OP 4.7.7 Conduct Foreign Internal Defense. (No SN UJT), ST 6.2.11 Identify Threat Networks, ST 6.6.6 Counter Threat Networks, OP 6.8 Detect Threat Networks, OP 6.8.1 Attack Threat Networks. (No SN UJT), SN 3.8.1 Coordinate Counter Threat Finance, ST 3.8 Direct Counter Threat Finance, OP 3.8 Dismantle Threat Finance, SN 8.1.6 Direct Civil Affairs Operations, ST 8.2.16 Coordinate Civil Affairs Operations, OP 4.7.6 Conduct Civil Affairs Operations.

CRC C3: Continuous Campaign Assessments

- a. **Task:** The ability of the Joint Force and its JIIM partners to assess the strategic effectiveness of integrated campaigning in pursuit of assigned strategic objectives.
- b. **Purpose:** Ensure the Joint Force and its JIIM partners have a common understanding of changes and trends in the competitive environment, the effectiveness of past and ongoing operations, and the requirements to modify current policies, authorities, strategies, plans, orders, and resources.
- c. **Conditions:** One or more adversaries are employing cohesive combinations of military and civil power to pursue objectives that threaten the strategic interests of the United States and its allies and strategic partners. The Joint Force understands the limitations (restraints and constraints) imposed by the competitive environment, statutory and policy guidance and direction, authorities, and resources.

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d. **Standards:**

1. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners understand the impacts of integrated campaigning upon conditions in the competition space.
2. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners identify and assess current shortfalls in the competitive campaign and in Joint Force and JIIM partner authorities, capabilities, and resourcing.
3. The Joint Force estimates the risk, cost, return on investment, and adversary impact of the competitive campaign.
4. The Joint Force and its JIIM partners identify required changes to authorities, strategy, plans, and resources

e. **Discussion:** Strategic competition is a persistent and long-term struggle requiring continuous assessment to adapt U.S. Joint Force strategy and campaigning as conditions change and trends become apparent. The theater strategic security environment is a composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of joint forces and bear on the decisions of the chain of command at the national and theater levels. Joint Force commanders and staffs continuously evaluate information and intelligence regarding the general operational situation and the effectiveness of the theater strategy, campaigning, and operations. As part of this evaluation, joint force commanders must decide whether current strategies, plans, or orders need to be changed in response to change in the security environment.

f. **Supporting References:**

1. JP 2-0, *Joint Intelligence*, 22 October 2013.
2. JP 2-0.1, *Joint and National Intelligence Support to Military Operations*, 5 July 2017.
3. JP 3-0, *Joint Campaigns and Operations*, TBD.
4. JP 5-0, *Joint Planning*, 1 December 2020.
5. UJTL: SN 5.2 Assess Strategic Security Environment, ST 5.2 Assess Theater Strategic Environment.

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GLOSSARY

Unless otherwise noted, this Glossary contains terms defined for the purposes of this concept.

advantage – A tangible or intangible benefit accrued by committing resources to change environmental conditions. It may revolve around military or technological superiority, but also legitimacy, credibility, influence, and will to succeed, relative to an adversary and other relevant local, regional, and global actors.

adversary – A party acknowledged as potentially hostile to a friendly party and against which the use of force may be envisaged. (*DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*)

armed conflict – The direct application of military force to compel another actor to conform to an enemy's will; protracted armed violence of an intensity and scale that excludes the isolated and sporadic use of armed violence during competition; the support of surrogates engaged in armed conflict against an adversary.

attraction – Making a particular behavior appeal to another actor's pre-dispositions.

coercion – Taking threatening actions to make an adversary decide to behave in obedience with one's intent.

compellence – A form of coercion wherein an actor makes an adversary take action they otherwise would not have or cease an action already begun.

compensation – Providing political, economic, financial, or security incentives of greater benefit to the other actor than the costs associated with compliance.

competition – See "strategic competition."

competitive space – The contested portion of the physical domains, information environment (which includes cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum), technological industrial environment (which includes the defense industrial base and defense innovation base), and human dimension (which includes culture, the cognitive realm, and applied social sciences) in which adversaries struggle to achieve incompatible strategic objectives while avoiding armed conflict with each other.

competitive strategy – An interrelated series of ideas and actions for employing the instruments of national power in a long-term, synchronized, and integrated fashion to achieve and maintain a position of advantage against a competitor.

comprehensive national power – (1) The means by which one nation's government is able to persuade, compel, or otherwise influence another nation's government to act in a way it was not originally willing to act, or to not act in a way it originally intended to act; (2) The complex (non-linear) product of a nation's strengths, which can be broken down into tangible strengths (e.g., geography, demography, economic capability, military capability, technological capability,

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natural resources) and intangible strengths (e.g., quality of government, diplomatic capability, education, culture, societal cohesion) over a period of time.

costs – Human, material, and financial costs, as well as loss of forces, time, position, advantage, and opportunity.

deterrence – The prevention of action by the existence of a credible threat of unacceptable counteraction and/or belief that the cost of action outweighs the perceived benefits. (JP 3-0)

end state – The set of required conditions that defines achievement of the commander's objectives. (JP 3-0)

failure – In competition, the loss of the ability or will to pursue national interests at an acceptable risk and sustainable cost, leading to armed conflict or a decision to continue competing while significantly disadvantaged.

fait accompli – An irreversible or inevitable outcome that is achieved before affected parties can respond, leaving them no option but to accept the outcome.

feasibility – The plan review criterion for assessing whether the assigned mission can be accomplished using available resources within the time contemplated by the plan. (JP 5-0) See also **sustainability**.

global integration – A systematic organizational process that enables the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to provide advice to the President and SecDef on ongoing joint activities and prioritization for the allocation and transfer of joint forces required to execute those activities effectively across the worldwide campaigning effort. (Draft JP 3-0)

hypothesis – An unconfirmed supposition or proposed explanation made on the basis of limited evidence as a starting point for further investigation to see if it might be true, without any assumption of its truth.

instrument of power – All of the means available to an international actor in its pursuit of strategic interests, including but not limited to political, diplomatic, informational, military, economic, financial, intelligence, and legal. See also **comprehensive national power**.

intermediate force – The application of force to deliver effects below lethal intent, when the presence and threat of force is insufficient, and the application of lethal force is unsuitable or undesirable, in order to temporarily impair, disrupt, delay, or neutralize targets across all domains.

international system – A multiplicity of sovereign states, intergovernmental organizations (e.g., United Nations, International Court of Justice), and nongovernmental organizations (e.g., International Red Cross, Amnesty International) that recognize common standards of behavior (e.g., balances of power, diplomacy, international law) that provide a framework within which international interactions occur.

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interorganizational partners – Participating USG departments and agencies; state, territorial, local, and tribal agencies; foreign security forces and government agencies; international organizations; nongovernmental organizations; academia; private sector entities (which include private military and security companies); armed groups and their irregular forces; and foreign populations and groups.

joint force – A force composed of elements, assigned or attached, of two or more Military Departments operating under a single joint force commander. (JP 3-0)

Joint Force – The Services, Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Staff, combatant commands, and combat support agencies.⁶¹

legitimization – A form of control conferred by the consent of the actors accepting the controlling actor's right to command and enforce compliance, thereby granting a degree of authority over their behavior.

military capability – The ability of a military force to achieve a specified military objective, which is a function of six components: capacity (force structure), modernization (technical sophistication), posture (location and international agreements), readiness, sustainability, and authorities and permissions.

military engagement – The routine and/or contingency contact and interaction among individuals and elements of the Department of Defense and their interorganizational partners. (Universal Joint Task ST 8 Perform Military Engagement)

military strategic risk – The probability and consequence of current and contingency events with direct military linkages to the United States. (CJCSM 3105.01A)

national interests – The basic determinants that guide strategic policy preferences in international relations, foreign policy, and national security.

nature of competition – The specific combination of qualities or attributes belonging to a competition by origin, constitution, or inherent character.

net assessment – A systematic method of long-term analysis that compares two or more competitors and appraises balances, trends, key competitions, risks, opportunities, and future prospects to assess relative advantage.

operations in the information environment – Military actions involving the integrated employment of multiple information forces to affect drivers of behavior. (JP 3-04)

persuasion – Convincing another actor to believe in the rightness of a particular behavior.

⁶¹ DoDD 3000.06 with Change 1, *Combat Support Agencies (CSAs)*, 8 July 2016, does not list the Defense Security Cooperation Agency as a combat support agency, but its new responsibility to support combatant commanders makes it a de facto combat support agency until DoDD 3000.06 changes to reflect this new mission.

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relevant actor – Individual, group, population, or automated system whose capabilities or behaviors have the potential to affect the success of a particular campaign, operation, or tactical action. (JP 3-04)

security cooperation – All Department of Defense interactions with foreign security establishments to build security relationships that promote specific United States security interests, develop allied and partner nation military and security capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide United States forces with peacetime and contingency access to allied and partner nations. (JP 3-20)

strategic art – The formulation, coordination, and application of ends, ways, and means to implement policy and promote national interests.

strategic competition – A persistent and long-term struggle that occurs between two or more adversaries seeking to pursue incompatible interests without necessarily engaging in armed conflict with each other.

strategic overreach – A lopsided political outcome that leaves adversaries humiliated, impoverished, or at an unacceptable disadvantage, causing them to escalate to restore an acceptable balance of power.

strategy – (1) A prudent idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives. (JP 3-0) (2) The art and science of determining a future state or condition (ends), conveying this to an audience, determining the possible approaches (ways), and identifying the authorities and resources (means) to achieve the intended objective, all while managing the associated risk. (JP 5-0)

struggle – A social condition that arises when two or more actors pursue mutually exclusive or incompatible interests or objectives.

sub-area – A manageable component or area of the competitive space that is more tractable for analysis and planning, and that enables the focusing of efforts towards areas of strategic competition that accord with U.S. priorities. Sub-areas may be geographic, cognitive, domain-related, or transregional, but this list is not exhaustive.

subversion – Actions designed to undermine the military, economic, psychological, or political strength or morale of a governing authority. (JP 3-24).

success – In competition, retaining freedom of action to pursue national interests at an acceptable risk and sustainable cost, and avoiding armed conflict with adversaries.

sustainability – A proposed new plan review criterion for assessing whether the assigned mission and potential follow-on missions can be supported if the time contemplated for the assigned mission proves to be insufficient to achieve the desired strategic outcome.

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theory – An unconfirmed supposition intended to explain something, with an assumption of its truth until it is proven false.

theory of success – A hypothesis of how to achieve a favorable strategic outcome in pursuit of national interests in an actual or notional situation.

universal joint task list – An authoritative menu (or library) of all approved joint tasks written in a common language. The UJTL facilitates the translation of the National Defense Strategy, National Military Strategy, and other policy and direction into actionable joint tasks commonly understood across the Department of Defense. (CJCSI 3500.02B)

ACRONYMS

CCDR – combatant commander

CCMD – combatant command

CCP – Chinese Communist Party

CJCS – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

CJCSI – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction

CJCSM – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual

CNP – comprehensive national power

COA – course of action

CRC – concept required capability

DoD – Department of Defense

FYDP – Future Years Defense Program

IToS – integrated theory of success

JCC – *Joint Concept for Competing*

JCS – Joint Chiefs of Staff

JP – joint publication

JPME – joint professional military education

LOE – line of effort

OP – operational

PLA – People’s Liberation Army

PME – professional military education

PMESII – political, military, economic, sociocultural, information, infrastructure

PRC – People’s Republic of China

SN – strategic national

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ST – strategic theater

UJTL – universal joint task list

USG – U.S. Government

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