Joint Doctrine Note 1-19

Competition Continuum

03 June 2019

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PREFACE

1. Scope

This joint doctrine note (JDN) describes the competition continuum; discusses some of its implications for how the joint force campaigns; and describes aspects of campaigning through cooperation, adversarial competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict.

2. Purpose

A JDN is a publication intended to facilitate information sharing on problems and potential solutions as a supporting effort of formal joint doctrine development and revision. This publication addresses potential gaps in joint doctrine identified by the *Joint Concept for Integrated Campaigning* (JCIC). Many JCIC terms and ideas have already been incorporated into joint and Service concepts, training, education, and processes. This publication is the first step in the further refinement of those ideas from the JCIC into doctrine.

3. Application

The guidance in this JDN is not authoritative. If conflicts arise between the contents of this JDN and a joint publication (JP), the JP will take precedence for the activities of joint forces, unless the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in coordination with the other members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, has provided more current and specific guidance.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Introduces the competition continuum.**
- **Discusses the competition continuum and integrated campaigning.**
- **Outlines campaigning through cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict.**
- **Discusses the competition continuum and deterrence.**

The Competition Continuum

Competition is a fundamental aspect of international relations. As states and non-state actors seek to protect and advance their own interests, they continually compete for diplomatic, economic, and strategic advantage.

The joint force, however, employs many constructs and procedures that reflect an artificial distinction between an environment of armed conflict and peace without significant military competition.

For the joint force to play its role in advancing national interests, it must adopt a better framework for understanding, describing, and participating within a competitive operational environment.

Rather than a world either at peace or at war, the **competition continuum** describes a world of enduring competition conducted through a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict.

Competition Continuum and Integrated Campaigning

Integrated campaigning requires the skillful combination of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and, when appropriate, armed conflict in conjunction with diplomatic, informational, military, and economic efforts to achieve and sustain strategic objectives.

To accommodate the inevitable shifts in policy over any extended period, joint force commanders

and planners adopt a mindset of **campaigning** rather than of **campaigns.** This is a flexible approach that recognizes joint force activities of all kinds—not just armed conflict—should be continually adapted in response to evolving strategic conditions and policy objectives.

Campaigning Through Cooperation

Campaigning through cooperation is usually an enduring activity with no discrete start or end point; the relationship with the ally or partner is in place and will continue for the foreseeable future. In some cases, however, cooperation in specific areas with a partner whose overall relationship with the US is neutral, or even adversarial, may be necessary. Cooperative activities can take many forms, from security force assistance with a partner in a quiet region to multinational operations and activities in an armed conflict.

Campaigning Through Competition Below Armed Conflict

Competition below armed conflict tends to occur over extended periods of time. In comparison to armed conflict, actions are often more indirect and the expenditure of resources less intense, thus allowing for a more protracted effort. As an inherently constrained and measured approach, it is not generally used by competitors requiring quick results. For the joint force to successfully campaign through competition below armed conflict, it should adopt a similar long-term approach but one supple enough to react to rapid changes in the political, diplomatic, and strategic environment.

Campaigning Through Armed Conflict

One implication of the competition continuum is that it is not solely sufficient to excel in campaigning through armed conflict. Even in an international armed conflict, success requires the skillful application of both cooperation and competition below armed conflict. If these are ignored or treated as strictly ancillary to the armed

conflict effort, then the joint force is at increased risk for failure to meet some or all of the desired objectives. Commanders and staffs should be aware of the interrelated nature of these various elements.

The joint force should also campaign in armed conflict with a long-term view toward the transition period following the end of the main period of armed conflict. Rarely do wars end with a complete end of armed conflict. Wars disrupt political, social, and economic structures, networks, and institutions to the point it is often impossible to simply return to a pre-conflict state.

The Competition Continuum and Deterrence

Deterrence applies across the competition continuum, though in different fashions according to the situation.

Within armed conflict, there are many aspects to deterrence. The joint force seeks to deter a conventional attack against a partner or ally, but even if that occurs, it is still possible to deter the attacker from expanding the war geographically or from using certain forms of weapons.

Deterrence in competition below armed conflict is similarly nuanced and perhaps harder to judge. As with armed conflict, the joint force can deter future actions in competition below armed conflict by effectively responding to current challenges.

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COMPETITION CONTINUUM

"Our traditional way that we differentiate between peace and war is insufficient to [the dynamic of competition below armed conflict]."

"We think of being at peace or war…our adversaries don't think that way."

General Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
21 September and 5 October 2016

1. Introduction

a. Competition is a fundamental aspect of international relations. As states and non-state actors seek to protect and advance their own interests, they continually compete for diplomatic, economic, and strategic advantage. The Cold War was a clear example of the many facets of international competition. The US and the Soviet Union competed with each other in numerous ways (e.g., for greater influence in international organizations, for the next great achievement in space, and for more medals won at the Olympics). Rather than engage in direct armed conflict with the other, each state fought through and with proxies as an indirect means to gain advantage. Yet, the two superpowers also cooperated, such as when both backed actions in the United Nations Security Council. And, just as competitors can cooperate, friendly states can compete. Within an alliance, individual countries naturally seek to tilt policy in the direction most advantageous for their long-term interests. Diplomats, trade representatives, and other members of the US Government who routinely interact with foreign actors intuitively recognize that any strategic relationship mixes elements of both competition and cooperation.

b. The joint force, however, employs many constructs and procedures that reflect an artificial distinction between an environment of armed conflict and peace without significant military competition. There are some reasons for this. The Constitution, domestic law, and international law all use the peace/war distinction as a means to regulate the act of employing violence on behalf of the state. Maintaining a sharp distinction between peace and war also has purposes within the Department of Defense. The designation of a state of war (or armed conflict) justifies the expenditure of resources, the imposition of hardship on Service members, and the acceptance of risks far beyond what would normally be acceptable. For an institution as large as the Department of Defense, it is far easier to treat these matters in a few distinct categories rather than a complex sliding scale. Though, the joint force has long been conducting competitive activities outside of armed conflict, the previous operational environment was not so competitive that, in most cases, the legal and institutional advantages of the peace/war binary model outweighed the disadvantages created by its artificial simplicity.

c. The current operational environment requires a more nuanced model. Geopolitical rivals such as Russia and China employ a mixture of instruments of national power to achieve significant strategic advantages in a manner calculated not to trigger our legal or institutional thresholds for armed conflict. For the joint force to play its role in advancing national interests,

it must adopt a better framework for understanding, describing, and participating within a competitive operational environment.

2. The Competition Continuum

a. Rather than a world either at peace or at war, the **competition continuum** describes a world of enduring competition conducted through a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict. These descriptors refer to the relationship between the US and another strategic actor (state or non-state) in relation to a set of specific policy objectives. This description allows for simultaneous interaction with the same strategic actor at different points along the competition continuum. For instance, the US might be in a state of competition below armed conflict with China in regard to some interests, such as freedom of navigation in disputed areas, and cooperation in others, such as counter-piracy. By providing a lexicon to describe this complexity, the competition continuum facilitates shared understanding, both within the Department of Defense and also with the interagency partners who often have a leading role. This will enable better and more precise communications, planning, and decision making.

b. The **competition continuum** describes, from the joint force perspective, the environment in which we apply the instruments of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, economic) to achieve objectives. In practice, all instruments of

ELEMENTS OF THE COMPETITION CONTINUUM

Armed Conflict. Situations in which joint forces take actions against a strategic actor in pursuit of policy objectives in which law and policy permit the employment of military force in ways commonly employed in declared war or hostilities.

Competition Below Armed Conflict. Situations in which joint forces take actions outside of armed conflict against a strategic actor in pursuit of policy objectives. These actions are typically nonviolent and conducted under greater legal or policy constraints than in armed conflict but can include violent action by the joint force or sponsorship of surrogates or proxies. Competition below armed conflict does not preclude some cooperation in other areas. Competition below armed conflict may include diplomatic and economic activities; political subversion; intelligence and counterintelligence activities; operations in cyberspace; and the information environment, military engagement activities, and other nonviolent activities to achieve mutually incompatible objectives, while seeking to avoid armed conflict. Within competition below armed conflict, joint force actions may include security cooperation activities, military information support activities, freedom of navigation exercises, and other nonviolent military engagement activities. Competition below armed conflict does not preclude armed conflict or cooperation in other areas. Concurrent with competition below armed conflict, potentially hostile actors may engage in forms of indirect armed conflict (e.g., external support of an

indigenous insurgency, counterinsurgency, or resistance movement) through proxies or surrogates that engage each other or the sponsor's adversaries in direct armed conflict.

Cooperation. Situations in which joint forces take actions with another strategic actor in pursuit of policy objectives. Cooperation does not preclude some element of competition or even armed conflict when their objectives are not in complete alignment. Within cooperation, joint force actions may include security cooperation activities, multinational training and exercises, information sharing, personnel exchange programs, and other peaceful military engagement activities. Military cooperation may also occur in the form of multinational operations and activities during an armed conflict or adversarial competition (or competition short of international armed conflict).

Various Sources

national power should function together as an interrelated and integrated whole. For instance, competition below armed conflict might be addressed through a mixture of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic activities.

c. The competition continuum is not a three-part model substitute for the two-part peace/war model. As the vignette demonstrates, cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict can occur simultaneously. Because the joint force rarely

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE LAW OF WAR MANUAL

- **International armed conflict occurs between two or more states.**
- **Non-international armed conflict occurs between states and non-state armed groups, or between two or more non-state armed groups, even if the conflict is transnational or transregional. Examples include civil wars, rebellions, insurrections, insurgencies, and resistance to military occupation.**
- **Mixed armed conflict occurs when parts of the conflict are international in character, while other parts are non-international in character. An example would be an armed conflict where a state is simultaneously engaged in hostilities with a rebel or resistance movement and with another state supporting that movement.**
- **Internal armed conflict occurs within the borders of a single state. It does not include internal disturbances and tensions such as riots, isolated and sporadic acts of violence, and other acts of a similar nature. The intensity of the conflict and the organization of the parties are criteria that distinguish internal armed conflict from internal disturbances and tensions.**

HISTORICAL EXAMPLE OF THE COMPETITION CONTINUUM

World War II illustrates that even in an international conflict all three elements of the competition continuum are present. The US was in conflict with the Axis powers. In Europe, the US cooperated with the United Kingdom, France, and the Soviet Union, coordinating operations and providing large amounts of arms and equipment to each. Yet, at the same time, there was also a degree of competition with the Soviet Union. The US and United Kingdom had competed with the Soviet Union to contain the spread of communism prior to the war, and many anticipated a return to competition afterward. In the Pacific theater, the Soviets offered minimal cooperation until the very end of the war, and their late entry was arguably motivated more by a desire to compete with the US in the post-war order than to cooperate in the combined effort to defeat Japan. Even with the United Kingdom and France, differences in visions for the disposition of former colonies led to low-key competition among the allies that influenced the conduct of war. The role of both civilian policymakers and military leaders was to understand these many strategic relationships, weigh their relative importance, tailor military campaigns in accordance with those priorities, and then continually reassess and adjust as the strategic and political situation evolved.

Various Sources

operates unilaterally in any significant campaign, cooperation is a feature of nearly every significant military action. In an interconnected world, there are few circumstances in which a major joint force activity does not have some ramification for competition below armed conflict with at least one of the US's global or regional rivals. For instance, competition below armed conflict with Iran to shape regional security alignments accompanied armed conflict against the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. Cooperation and competition below armed conflict are always occurring and so the presence or absence of armed conflict is the only variable element. Therefore, the notions of the US being either "in competition" or "in conflict" actually refer to whether the joint force is or is not using armed force as a means to achieve policy objectives. In either case, the joint force will be conducting cooperative activities with partners and competitive activities below armed conflict to counter adversaries who are seeking to turn the competition or conflict to their advantage. The joint force is never solely **in** cooperation (or **in** competition below armed conflict or **in** armed conflict) but instead campaigns **through** a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict calculated to achieve the desired strategic objectives.

3. Competition Continuum and Integrated Campaigning

a. Integrated campaigning requires the skillful combination of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and, when appropriate, armed conflict in conjunction with diplomatic, informational, military, and economic efforts to achieve and sustain strategic objectives. This requires a different framework than that employed for tactical operations, particularly in situations where the US is in a long-term competition with a

global or regional power. For instance, it would have been meaningless to try to impose operational phases to the strategic competition during the Cold War, stretching from the end of World War II through the collapse of the Soviet Union. Describing the Berlin Airlift, Greek Civil War, or Cuban Missile Crisis as shaping phase applies an inappropriate operational model to a strategic situation, as if the Cold War were a single major operation. Similarly, it would be misleading to describe Korea, Vietnam, or the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan as a dominate phase. Just as rigid phases associated with definite military end states would not have captured the complexity of the Cold War, such constructs are equally unhelpful in the context of enduring competitions for strategic advantage, which are likely to extend decades into the future. In enduring competition, even when policy objectives are definitively stated at one point, they will evolve with the strategic and political situation. This is also true for shorter periods of a specific armed conflict. The experience of past wars demonstrates that initial policy objectives shift as the conflict rearranges the political and strategic context. To accommodate the inevitable shifts in policy over any extended period, joint force commanders and planners adopt a mindset of **campaigning** rather than of **campaigns.** This is a flexible approach that recognizes joint force activities of all kinds—not just armed conflict—should be continually adapted in response to evolving strategic conditions and policy objectives.

DESCRIPTION OF KEY TERMS

Armed Conflict

Defeat. Create conditions to impose desired strategic objectives upon the adversary.

Deny. Frustrate the strategic objectives of the adversary.

Degrade. Reduce the adversary's ability and will to the greatest extent possible within resource constraints and acceptable risk.

Disrupt. Temporarily interrupt the enemy's activities or the effectiveness of enemy organizations by interdiction, subversion, or coercion.

Competition Below Armed Conflict

Enhance. Achieve strategic objectives, prevent the competitor from achieving incompatible objectives, and improve relative strategic or military advantage without causing an escalation to armed conflict.

Manage. Maintain relative strategic or military advantage to ensure the competitor achieves no further gains; only seek to improve the US advantage when possible with existing resources and in a manner that does not jeopardize interests elsewhere.

Delay. Achieve the best possible strategic objective within given resources or policy constraints, recognizing that this lesser objective entails risk that the competitor will achieve further gains.

Cooperation

Engage Selectively. Cooperate transactionally with a partner (who is often a competitor elsewhere) to achieve a specific objective.

Maintain. Sustain an open-ended cooperative relationship with an ally or partner and secure bilateral advantage but without significant increase in resources or commitment.

Advance. Establish and improve an open-ended cooperative relationship with an ally or partner by significantly increasing resources or commitment.

b. To facilitate shared understanding as strategic objectives change, the competition continuum includes further descriptors to direct the relative intensity with which the joint force competes in a given situation.

c. These expanded elements provide a fuller lexicon that can capture the nuances of strategic prioritization and change. This benefit is of particular use in relation to cooperation and competition below armed conflict but pertains to armed conflict as well. For instance, as shown in the example of World War II (see vignette), the initial Allied approach was to **defeat** Germany while **denying** Japan further gains in the Pacific until more favorable conditions would allow its **defeat.** Such distinctions are particularly important in competition below armed conflict, which, by its very nature, is a mode of campaigning within policy restraints; competition below armed conflict exists when policy dictates that military forces not employ the full array of military capabilities. Thus, identifying the desired scale, intensity, and tempo of the competition below armed conflict is crucial to prioritization of resources and granting of authorities and permissions in globally integrated operations.

d. The competition continuum facilitates dialogue between civilian policymakers and military leaders by providing means to more precisely convey degrees of strategic initiative or restraint. In turn, military advice should clearly articulate when the Armed Forces of the United States cannot provide effective or efficient means to achieve the desired policy objective with given resources and authorities. Just as in armed conflict, something less than defeat of the enemy is more realistic if policymakers do not allocate sufficient resources, authorities, and permissions; so too in competition below armed conflict, the decision to restrain the intensity of competition might cause continued degradation of the US's strategic position. Restraint might be directed to reduce the risk of escalation, to use resources elsewhere, or to preserve limited resources for a major armed conflict. What balance policymakers choose to strike among competing demands will vary, but the competition continuum lexicon facilitates the civil-military dialogue, whatever balance is struck.

e. The competition continuum complements and supports a campaigning mindset. Though policymakers might limit the intensity with which the joint force competes in relation to a specific policy objective, this does not alleviate the responsibility to still

compete to achieve the best possible strategic objective under the circumstances. Indeed, commanders and staffs must be particularly resourceful and imaginative when confronted with severely limited resources and authorities. Inherent within the campaigning mindset is a long-term perspective. In enduring competitions, the joint force does not **win** or **lose** but is in the process of **winning** or **losing.** Every setback contains the possibility of future success, and every victory, the seeds of potential failure. For instance, if a competitor achieves some gain through competition below armed conflict, the joint force must seek ways to turn that to the US's advantage by taking the opportunity to deepen ties with a partner or by exacting some cost so that the short-term success for the competitor actually becomes a long-term loss.

4. Campaigning Through Cooperation

a. Campaigning through cooperation is usually an enduring activity with no discrete start or end point; the relationship with the ally or partner is in place and will continue for the foreseeable future. In some cases, however, cooperation in specific areas with a partner whose overall relationship with the US is neutral, or even adversarial, may be necessary. Cooperative activities can take many forms, from security force assistance with a partner in a quiet region to multinational operations and activities in an armed conflict. The common thread is that campaigning through cooperation is a purposeful activity to achieve or maintain policy objectives.

b. Campaigning through cooperation requires patience, consistency, and empathy. The most productive relationships take time to build. A partnership is unlikely to reach its potential if the joint force approaches military engagement as discrete events rather than as part of a deliberate, continuous process. Commanders and staffs must have an understanding of the environment, a realistic appraisal of the partner's objectives, and the nature of the partner's relationship with the US to derive a range of feasible and productive military options that lead to sustainable and acceptable outcomes for the US and its partner. If done well, the resulting relationships can yield not only immediate tactical or operational benefits but also enduring benefits such as increased commitment of a foreign military to the rule of law or greater willingness to assist US efforts in a crisis. Though the immediate benefits of cooperative relationships are not always apparent, history demonstrates that long-term relationships can pay dividends in unanticipated ways. For instance, the defense relationship with Saudi Arabia paid dividends by creating a foundation for cooperation during Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM.

c. Campaigning through cooperation aids competition below armed conflict and armed conflict by integrating the contributions of partners and allies, but cooperation should not be regarded as merely a subordinate activity to those other forms of competition. Particularly in an enduring competition with an adversary seeking to overturn the existing security order, the consolidation of strategic gains can be achieved through cooperation with partners. If, for instance, an adversary is using aggressive air or maritime incursions to intimidate US partners or allies, the joint force might increase its activities and challenge the competitor. If credible, these tactical actions reassure the partner of US capability and intentions, making the partner more likely to deepen cooperation through actions such as

increased intelligence sharing, allowing greater US presence, or more closely integrating its air defenses into a regional network. If campaigning through cooperation creates a more favorable strategic balance in the region, then it has countered the adversary's use of competition below armed conflict. The joint force can combine competition below armed conflict against a competitor and cooperation with partners to turn an adversary's attempted intimidation into an overall gain for the US. Such actions also help deter future efforts by adversaries to destabilize regional security through competition below armed conflict.

5. Campaigning Through Competition Below Armed Conflict

a. Competition below armed conflict tends to occur over extended periods of time. In comparison to armed conflict, actions are often more indirect and the expenditure of resources less intense, thus allowing for a more protracted effort. As an inherently constrained and measured approach, it is not generally used by competitors requiring quick results. For the joint force to successfully campaign through competition below armed conflict, it should adopt a similar long-term approach but one supple enough to react to rapid changes in the political, diplomatic, and strategic environment. These competing demands create challenges for commanders and staffs who work through processes to employ military forces that operate on different, and often inflexible, time horizons—administrative and logistical preparations, the request and receipt of authorities and permissions, the granting of access, coordination with interorganizational partners, and the request and expenditure of funds. Nonetheless, the joint force should set conditions to enable the maximum range of options to accommodate and respond to changing political and diplomatic situations. When properly executed, competition below armed conflict creates strategic opportunities for the US and its partners.

b. The methods employed in competition below armed conflict will vary with the situation, but successful action will feature several characteristics. First, the joint force should begin with the best possible understanding of how relevant actors will perceive action. Second, the joint force and its partners should conduct a broad array of activities: establish access to critical areas, forward position units, establish appropriate and timely presence, organize exercises, share intelligence, prepare the environment for crisis response, and conduct operations in the information environment, to include efforts to counter and undermine the competitor's narrative. Third, the joint force and its partners should ensure the creative and flexible conduct of these activities within a fluid, strategic situation and pervasive information environment. Fourth, the joint force should conduct continual reassessment of the competitor's intentions and capabilities, which will change over time. For these actions to have tangible effects on a competitor's behavior, it is essential to have a deep understanding of competitor perceptions and decision making, as well as the close integration of diplomatic, informational, military, and economic efforts. Finally, in comparison to armed conflict, competition below armed conflict makes use of latent, rather than direct military power.

THE GREAT GAME

The Great Game was a political and diplomatic confrontation that existed for most of the nineteenth century between the British Empire and the Russian Empire over Afghanistan and neighboring territories in Central and Southern Asia. Russia was fearful of British commercial and military inroads into Central Asia, and Britain was fearful of Russia adding "the jewel in the crown," India, to the vast empire that Russia was building in Asia. This resulted in an atmosphere of distrust and the constant threat of war between the two empires.

The Great Game began in 1830 as Britain intended to gain control over the Emirate of Afghanistan and make it a protectorate, and to use the Ottoman Empire, the Persian Empire, the Khanate of Khiva, and the Emirate of Bukhara as buffer states between both empires. This would protect India and also key British sea trade routes by stopping Russia from gaining a port on the Persian Gulf or the Indian Ocean. Russia proposed Afghanistan as the neutral zone. The results included the failed First Anglo-Afghan War of 1838, the First Anglo-Sikh War of 1845, the Second Anglo-Sikh War of 1848, the Second Anglo-Afghan War of 1878, and the annexation of Khiva, Bukhara, and Kokand by Russia. The Great Game ended in 1895 when the border between Afghanistan and the Russian empire was defined.

Various Sources

c. The enduring nature of competition below armed conflict poses unique challenges for consolidation of strategic objectives. Local successes rarely mean the end of the larger competition and few gains are reliably permanent. Instead, the situation is reminiscent of the "Great Game" of the nineteenth century between the British Empire and Russian Empire over control of Afghanistan and neighboring territories, in the sense that each party continually sought to improve its position and guard against the competitor undermining the desired order. In this context, consolidation is an ongoing effort to protect and advance national interests and position the joint force for the next evolution of competition.

d. Competition below armed conflict reflects a choice by the US Government to pursue policy objectives while constraining military actions so they remain short of armed conflict. Though this competition will typically be directed against a strategic competitor that has also resolved to compete below armed conflict, the two antagonists will rarely be equal in willingness to commit resources and accept risk. This policy asymmetry is a defining feature of competition below armed conflict. When the US is more committed than the competitor, the joint force seeks to translate the operational advantage of greater resources and risk acceptance to achieve strategic objectives. When the competitor is willing to exert greater effort than the US, the joint force seeks the best possible outcome under the circumstances.

6. Campaigning Through Armed Conflict

a. Naturally, joint and Service doctrine already address many aspects of campaigning through armed conflict. Yet, one implication of the competition continuum is that it is not

solely sufficient to excel in campaigning through armed conflict. Even in an international armed conflict, success requires the skillful application of both cooperation and competition below armed conflict. If these are ignored or treated as strictly ancillary to the armed conflict effort, then the joint force is at increased risk for failure to meet some or all of the desired objectives. Commanders and staffs should be aware of the interrelated nature of these various elements. For instance, in World War II, even as the Allies were defeating Germany, the conditions for what eventually became the competition with the Soviet Union during the Cold War were being established. At the same time, the depth of the US's post-war cooperative relationships with France, the United Kingdom, and other Western European allies were influenced by the conduct of operations. Operation IRAQI FREEDOM offers another example. While Multinational Force-Iraq was in armed conflict with several groups of insurgents, the manner in which it cooperated with the Iraqi Security Forces, Sons of Iraq, and Kurdish Peshmerga had implications for longer-term political transitions. Moreover, cooperation and armed conflict took place against a background of competition below armed conflict with Iran, which was trying to extend its influence at the expense of the US. In sum, it is neither realistic nor helpful for the joint force to concentrate all of its efforts on armed conflict until "peace," when it can then devote any remaining resources to cooperation and competition below armed conflict. These elements should be regarded as an integrated campaigning effort. In some instances, this might mean adopting what would normally be considered a sub-optimal military course of action in relation to the armed conflict to bolster the US's position within a cooperative relationship with an ally or in relation to a third-party competitor.

b. The joint force should also campaign in armed conflict with a long-term view toward the transition period following the end of the main period of armed conflict. Rarely do wars end with a complete end of armed conflict. Wars disrupt political, social, and economic structures, networks, and institutions to the point it is often impossible to simply return to a pre-conflict state. Destruction of government and societal institutions can create conditions for intense competition among internal, regional, and global actors seeking to retain or gain power, status, or strategic advantage within a new order. Thus, the joint force might be directed to fight in an armed conflict against enemy combatants who become guerrillas, warlords, or criminal militias. Global or regional competitors can then exploit these conditions by supporting these groups as proxies or surrogates to continue the armed conflict. Therefore, the immediate "post-war" period still requires the joint force to campaign through a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict. Violent, chaotic transitions are made more difficult when significant resources are withdrawn and redeployed because "peace" has returned. Another significant complication is that ongoing military activities may be essential to maintaining an acceptable security situation but may be conducted in support of the activities of other governmental department or interorganizational partners.

7. The Competition Continuum and Deterrence

a. Deterrence applies across the competition continuum, though in different fashions according to the situation. Within armed conflict, there are many aspects to deterrence. The most absolute form is nuclear deterrence in defense of the homeland; if such an attack

occurs, deterrence failed. In other instances, deterrence must be thought of over extended periods of time. The joint force seeks to deter a conventional attack against a partner or ally, but even if that occurs, it is still possible to deter the attacker from expanding the war geographically (such as by attacking US installations elsewhere) or from using certain forms of weapons (such as weapons of mass destruction). Moreover, if deterrence fails because an adversary miscalculates US will or capability, but is then decisively defeated, the one "failure" of deterrence might deter future adversaries from taking similar risks.

b. Deterrence in competition below armed conflict is similarly nuanced and perhaps harder to judge. For instance, if an adversary supports proxy "separatists" in a neighboring country, this cannot be taken as proof that deterrence has failed. The adversary might have preferred to make an overt incursion but concluded the risks were too great. In that case, successful deterrence of armed conflict led to competition below armed conflict. Perhaps the adversary might have employed proxies, but successful intelligence and security cooperation between the US and an ally caused them to conclude such operations would be fruitless, so they confined their actions to propaganda to discredit the US. Once again, the act of competition may in fact be the result of successful deterrence rather than its failure. And, as with armed conflict, the joint force can deter future actions in competition below armed conflict by effectively responding to current challenges. If the use of proxies fails to achieve the desired objectives, the same or other competitors might not resort to similar methods in the future.

c. Deterrence also applies to cooperation, though this is not a desirable outcome. Nonetheless, if partners conclude that working with the US was diplomatically/politically or militarily counterproductive, then securing cooperation from them or others will be more difficult.

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GLOSSARY

(There is no glossary for this joint doctrine note.)

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JOINT

CHIEFS OF STAFF