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## **Understanding the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations and the associated Editing Log.**

Greenpeace has put up on its website two Pentagon documents about US nuclear weapons strategy. These are:

**The ‘Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations 3-12, Final Coordination (2) 15 March 2005’.** This document was at one stage up on the Pentagon’s website, but withdrawn following negative media coverage in the U.S. The next stage for this document is approval by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Then it becomes official doctrine.

**The associated ‘Editing Log of the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations 3-12, Final Coordination (2) 15 March 2005’.** This internal Pentagon document is the most interesting as it includes comments on the draft strategy by different parts of US military command and reveals strong internal disagreements. It was leaked to Greenpeace.

**This document aims to help people understand these internal military documents by:**

- **Providing background context**
- **Explaining acronyms**
- **Summarising The Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations**
- **Highlighting key sections of the Editing Log of the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations**

**The background context:** The September 2002 *National Security Strategy*, affirmed that America had the right to launch pre-emptive attacks, anytime, anywhere, to ensure that its “forces will be strong enough to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military build up in hope of surpassing, or equalling, the power of the United States.”

The implications for American nuclear strategy were further spelled out in the leaked 2002 *Nuclear Posture Review*, this stated that America would now plan to use nuclear weapons “pre-emptively” to deal with adversaries armed with chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons, to attack mobile missiles and deeply buried bunkers, and to deal with “surprising military developments.”

**The Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations:** The main significance of the *Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations* and the leaked edits to this document, both of which are available on this website, is that they show how this doctrine, and the decade of nuclear weapons developments which preceded it, are now being turned into actual military practice.

The Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations “provides guidelines for the joint employment of forces in nuclear operations. It provides guidance for the employment of US nuclear forces; command and control relationships; and weapons effect considerations.”

It is the first update of US operational nuclear doctrine in ten years and it:

- Contains discussion of both strategic and theatre and nuclear operations;

- Covers the purpose of United States nuclear forces;
- Revises the discussion of nuclear weapons use across the range of military operations;
- Provides an updated and expanded discussion of nuclear operations;
- Introduces the joint targeting cycle process to nuclear operations;
- Updates employment and force integration considerations;
- Adds an entire chapter on theatre nuclear operations;”

Joint Doctrine are “authoritative” – they are to be “followed except when, in the judgement of the commander, exceptional circumstances dictate otherwise” – and if conflicts arise between this and any other military publication this one takes precedence unless the Joint Chiefs of Staffs provide updated guidance.

The key player developing the Joint doctrine is JSDS - J5 Nuc which stands for "Joint Staff Doctrine Sponsor who comes from the Department of Defense (DoD) Strategic Plans and Policy Dept (nuclear). This is a person appointed to coordinate and adjudicate between all the comments and decide what is ignored and what is changed or added to drafts.

## Acronyms

J1 = Personnel Directorate

J2 = Intelligence Directorate

J3 = JCS Operations Directorate

J4 = Logistics

J5 = Strategic Plans and Policy Dept

J6 = Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems (C4) Directorate

J7 = Director for Operational Plans and Joint Force Development

J8 = Force Structure, Resources, and Assessment Directorate

DTRA = Defense Threat Reduction Agency

EUCOM is European Command

LC = Legal Counsel (I think)

NORAD = North American Aerospace Defense

STRATCOM = Strategic Command

SOCOM = Special Operations Command

USN = US Navy

USA = Army

USJFCOM = US Joint Forces Command

USFK = US Forces Korea

USMC = US Marine Corps

USAF = US Air Force

USPACOM = US Pacific Command

USSOUTHCOM = US Southern Command

USTC = United States Transportation Command

## Brief summary of the Final Draft Nuclear Doctrine of March 2005 (awaiting approval by the Joint Chiefs of Staff):

“The 2001 NPR constituted the first comprehensive review of nuclear forces since 1994. Because of the critical role played by US nuclear forces in the national security strategy of the United States and its allies, the report was **broader in scope** than required by law... In a **significant change** to the US approach to offensive nuclear weapons, the 2001 NPR articulated a new capabilities-based strategy for US strategic nuclear forces

that recognises the unpredictable security environment and responds to US strategic deterrence objectives and force capability requirements.” (REF)

### **The doctrine commits the US military to:**

#### **1. Maintaining a highly visible highly alert nuclear force able to react at a moments notice.**

In a much more aggressive tone than previously expressed the doctrine makes clear that: “To maintain their deterrent effect. U.S. nuclear forces must maintain a strong and visible state of readiness...permitting a swift response to any no-notice nuclear attack against the United States, its forces, or allies.”<sup>1</sup>

#### **2. Possible use of nuclear weapons in the following scenarios:**

- An adversary using or intending to use WMD against US, multinational or alliance forces and civilian populations;
- Imminent attack from biological weapons that nuclear use could safely neutralise;
- Attacks on installations such as deeply buried, hardened targets or the WMD Command and Control structure of your enemy;
- To counting overwhelming numbers of conventional enemy forces;
- “For rapid and favourable war termination on US terms”;
- “To ensure success...”
- “To demonstrate US intent and capability to use nuclear weapons to deter adversary use of WMD.”
- To respond to a terrorist attack with WMD;<sup>2</sup>

The document justifies this stance with the following words:

“Terrorists or regional states [changed from rogue] armed with WMD will likely test US security commitments to its allies and friends. In response the US needs a range of capabilities to assure friends and foe alike of its resolve. A broader array of capability is needed to dissuade states from undertaking diplomatic, political, military, or technical courses of action (COAs) that would threaten US and allied security. US forces must pose a credible deterrent to potential adversaries who have access to modern military technology, including WMD and the means to deliver them.”<sup>3</sup>

“... It is essential US forces prepare to use nuclear weapons effectively and that US forces are determined to deploy nuclear weapons if necessary to prevent or retaliate against WMD use...”<sup>4</sup>

#### **3. Integrating conventional and nuclear forces:**

“Integrating conventional and nuclear attacks will ensure the most efficient use of force and provide US leaders with a broader range of strike options to address immediate contingencies.... Integration of forces exploits the full range of characteristics offered by US nuclear forces to support national and regional objectives.”<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter II page 12

<sup>2</sup> See chapter III page 2

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> See page III-1

<sup>5</sup> See page II-8

## The Editing Log of the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations

The following notes highlight some key issues raised by the Doctrine for Joint Nuclear Operations and the debate being had internally about them within the US military. They are intended to guide you towards key sections of the document.

### Using nuclear weapons

There was a huge discussion about the definition of 'deterrence' within this document, that resulted in a few more paragraphs being inserted including, one on what the US should publicly state when asked about particular circumstances in which they would use nuclear weapons.<sup>6</sup>

*"The US does not make positive statements defining the circumstances under which it would use nuclear weapons. Maintaining US ambiguity about when it would use nuclear weapons helps create doubt in the minds of potential adversaries, deterring them from taking hostile action. This calculated ambiguity helps reinforce deterrence. If the US clearly defined conditions under which it would use nuclear weapons, others might infer another set of circumstances in which the US would not use nuclear weapons. This perception would increase the chances that hostile leaders might not be deterred from taking actions they perceive as falling below that threshold."*

**However** the edits do reveal more about when and how the US military envisage using nuclear weapons:

European Command (EUCOM) stated that *"the use of nuclear weapons"* may not necessarily represent a *"significant vertical escalation from conventional warfare"* and that it is not necessarily *"provoked by some grave action, event or perceived threat."*<sup>7</sup>

They also point out that: *"For example, the use of a bunker-buster "mini-nuke" might not, in fact be "provoked by some action, event or perceived threat" per se; rather, it may be used simply because it is the only weapon that will destroy the target! For example, neither Hiroshima nor Nagasaki were "provoked by some action, event or perceived threat"! The strategy there was not one of "upping the ante" so to speak; it was war termination."*<sup>8</sup>

Strategic Command also points out that nuclear war will not always involve an exchange of nuclear weapons between two enemies i.e. they could be used in a conventional conflict.

The drafters also struck out the assertion that the US prepare to use nuclear weapons effectively *"on the battlefield and against adversary WMD"* on the grounds that *"where the US plans to use weapons is our business – the audience reading this should only need to know that we will use them effectively..."*<sup>9</sup>

In the same section on preparing to use nuclear weapons US Pacific Command pointed out that: *"we do not "punish" we "retaliate" against the USE of WMD. Our purpose if WMD is used is clearly to stop further employment and shape the battlespace for US, coalition and allied successful operations."*<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> See pages 21 through 31 of 147

<sup>7</sup> See page 29 of 147

<sup>8</sup> See page 29 of 147

<sup>9</sup> See page 104 of 147

<sup>10</sup> See page 105 of 147

As a result the word “*punish*” was deleted and replaced by “*US forces are determined to employ nuclear weapons if necessary to prevent or retaliate against WMD use.*”<sup>11</sup>

Another significant comment by EUCOM concerned the list of scenarios where commanders may request authority to use nuclear weapons. “*While it is proper to emphasize the fact that nuclear weapons might be used against WMD... it is not a good idea to risk the misinterpretation that the US would not consider nuclear weapons use against targets not related to WMD. This mistake is being repeated elsewhere in our professional literature, and it should not be perpetuated here. Besides, the matter of using nuclear weapons to counter WMD receives adequate attention [elsewhere]...*”<sup>12</sup>

It was also pointed out that the use of nuclear weapons to destroy a biological weapons stockpile was not always a good idea. STRATCOM points out that current analysis does “*not support a complete neutralization effect on BW*” and that “*some nuclear weapons applications may even provide excessive dispersal effects when detonated...*”<sup>13</sup>

### **Legality of the new doctrine, and targeting affecting civilians**

The editing log of the document shows a major rift within the US military on the issue of nuclear targeting. This occurs between pages 63 and 69 of the editing log.

What is being debated is whether the term ‘counter value’ or the term ‘counterforce’ should be employed to describe targeting (in addition to the term counter-force).

In section 351 European Command, EUCOM, claims that “counter-value” targeting has been replaced by the term “critical infrastructure” and strongly objects to the change. EUCOM gives two arguments for its objection. The first is that the term “critical infrastructure” is not widely understood in the academic literature on nuclear warfare and the second is that erodes the distinction between nuclear and conventional weapons:

“Changing “counter value” to “critical infrastructure” obscures the reality that although nuclear weapons are, in some cases at least, weapons with military utility, they are *always political* weapons in a way that other weapon systems are not. If we lose the ability to speak in terms of “value” when dealing with nuclear weapons and instead must think of them in “infra-structural” terms, we risk losing view of the reality that the US *may* at some juncture use nuclear weapons for political – rather than strictly military—purpose.” (Italics in the original).<sup>14</sup>

In short, EUCOM wants to resist the shift away from the Cold War deterrence idea that nuclear weapons are weapons of last resort which involve a horrifying decision to kill vast numbers of people to the post-Cold War idea that nuclear weapons can be used in a way which is strictly military and may not involve killing large numbers of civilians.

EUCOM argues for a replacement paragraph on counter-value targeting. This replacement, however, itself avoids the whole issue that counter-value targeting has typically involved the targeting of cities and by implication civilian populations.

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<sup>11</sup> See page 104 of 147

<sup>12</sup> See page 107 of 147

<sup>13</sup> See page 108/9 of 147

<sup>14</sup> See pages 143 through 144 of 147

In the editing log, the arbitrator does not accept EUCOM's changes. It states that discussions with the Strategic Command (STRATCO) lawyers were the origin of the suppression of talk about counter-value which EUCOM objects to. Its comment reads:

**R Open – Need to discuss with Legal – STRATCOM position from the Second Draft which generated the change to EUCOM objects is:** Many operational law attorneys do not believe “countervalue” targeting (especially as defined in this JP) is a lawful justification for employment of force, much less nuclear force. Countervalue philosophy makes no distinction between purely civilian activities and military related activities and could be used to justify deliberate attacks on civilians and non-military portions of a nations economy. It therefore cannot meet the “military necessity” prong of the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC). Countervalue targeting also undermines one of the values that underlies LOAC – the reduction of civilian suffering and to foster the ability to maintain the peace after the conflict ends. For example, under the countervalue philosophy, the attack on the World Trade Center Towers on 9/11 could be justified.<sup>15</sup>

In section 350 JSDS – J5 initially seeks to deal with the conflict with EUCOM by simply listing all three categories, counter-force, counter-value, and critical infrastructure. Interestingly, its definition of counter-value highlights the point that EUCOM's definition suppresses, that counter-value can involve targeting civilians and civilian populations centers and is about breaking the will of the nation to continue a war:

“In some fora, a countervalue targeting strategy has come to be perceived as synonymous with attacks on cities and population centres. The goal of such targeting is to break the will of the adversary population; resulting in the surrender of the adversary on terms favourable to the United States.”

The Arbitrator rejects this solution, again citing lawyer's objections.

The final acceptable text is given by JSDS-J5 in section 339. JSDS –J5 says in its comments on its rationale: This change and its associated one on page 2.06 removes the discussion of counterforce vs countervalue targeting from the document. Also removed are the definitions from the glossary.

The final text is a typical bureaucratic compromise which can be interpreted by all parties as allowing them to go on with whatever targeting approach they favour, whether it is counter-force, counter-value, or critical targeting:

#### **Integration of nuclear and conventional forces:**

This is a key theme of the new doctrine, and it is the subject of many complaints, from the US Navy in particular, that whilst “*there is repeated reference to how critical it is that nuclear and conventional forces be integrated... there is no explanation of how to do this.*”<sup>16</sup>

Other comments that display confusion/concern about integration include:

*“...this is never explained satisfactorily in the pub. Coordination is certainly required, but integration is not clear. Specific examples are needed. This is a major weakness in the pub.”*<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See pages 67 through 69 of 147

<sup>16</sup> See p.1 of 147 and p.127 of 147 where USN requests sentence “successful integration of conventional and nuclear forces is crucial to fulfilling overall theatre strategy” to be deleted with the rather terse comment attached – “saying this repeatedly without addressing it further is of no use”.

And: *“It must be understood how integration of nuclear and conventional forces will affect the overall strategy.”*<sup>18</sup>

The retort from the Joint Chiefs is that *“many things remain under development in classified fora, like the integration discussion...”*<sup>19</sup>

This is astounding – the nuclear posture review came out some four years ago and yet still no conclusion has been reached as how to make the new triad of nuclear and conventional forces actually function.

### **Reversing nuclear arms ‘cuts’?**

The US Navy also pointed out in their comments something that the peace movement has been saying since the last US/Russian arms control agreement was signed, that:

*“The NPR has no requirement for accounting and compliance. It is not a binding agreement like START. Further the Moscow Treaty does not have any compliance-related language in it. In fact, the 1700 – 2200 limit only applies for one day 31 December 2012.”*<sup>20</sup>

**ENDS**

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<sup>17</sup> See page 84 for a comment by USN

<sup>18</sup> See page 83 of 147

<sup>19</sup> See page 1 of 147

<sup>20</sup> See pages 20 & 21 of 147