

***Nuclear Posture Review Implementing Guidance Task 20  
(Professional Military Education)***

**Joint Staff J-7  
Joint Force Development**

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## **NUCLEAR POSTURE REVIEW IMPLEMENTING GUIDANCE TASK 20 (PME)**

### **I. Background and Scope**

Task #20 of the implementing guidance for the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) directs the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as follows:

*Within 90 days, in coordination with the Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Services and Combatant Commanders, study and recommend methods to enhance and institutionalize professional military education and personnel distribution/assignment processes in order to improve the common understanding of nuclear capabilities and concepts across the force, improve the understanding of plan integration within the cadre of planners, and ensure necessary expertise exists at appropriate planning centers and Geographic Combatant Commanders.*

This document does not address the entirety of Task #20. It focuses on the enhancement of Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) to achieve (a) stronger common understanding of nuclear issues across the force and (b) stronger understanding among planners of how the conventional and nuclear dimensions of possible conflict must be integrated into planning. The personnel issues identified in Task #20 are addressed by a separate study (i.e. "...personnel distribution/assignment processes..." and "...ensure necessary expertise exists at appropriate planning centers and Geographic Combatant Commanders.")

This document recognizes that Professional Military Education relates significant phases in an officer's career to five military educational levels (Pre-commissioning, Primary, Intermediate, Senior, General/Flag Officer). Only the last three levels are included as part of the enclosed recommendations. The Pre-commissioning level is not considered but Services are encouraged to examine the inclusion of relevant NPR topics where appropriate. Similarly, the Primary education level, with specific learning requirements for officers to serve in their military specialties, is under the purview of Service education directives but should also consider adopting the enclosed learning outcome where appropriate. In the remainder of this document, the focus will be on the Intermediate, Senior, and General/Flag Officer education levels of JPME (a portion of the larger PME) for which the Chairman provides direction and regularly reviews to reaffirm their accreditation.

### **II. Rationale**

Task #20 addresses a recognized and pressing need to enhance awareness, knowledge, comprehension and analysis of nuclear policy, planning and operational questions across the joint force. This requirement stems from the assessment of the security environment and the planning, policy and capability directions outlined in the National Security Strategy (NSS), National Defense Strategy (NDS), and NPR. As competition among nations intensifies, so does the risk of conflict, and as the United States has recognized for a number of years, the most likely path to nuclear

confrontation is a regional war that escalates. The risk of escalation will grow if competitors or potential adversaries come to believe that by expanding their nuclear forces and adopting dynamic nuclear doctrines they can achieve coercive advantage against the United States and its allies in a regional contest. The NPR highlights this risk to deterrence stability and identifies steps to mitigate it, including the development of additional nuclear capabilities. The NPR also highlights the emergence of non-nuclear strategic threats that have the potential to cause extreme damage to society at large and to the nation's deterrent forces, declaring that such attacks could lead to a nuclear response.

In relation to earlier periods in the post-Cold War era, the years ahead are likely to feature a more dangerous nuclear threat environment and increased salience of the nuclear dimension of strategy, policy, and plans. Rising military leaders must be fully equipped to succeed under these conditions. If they are not, significant risk could result. The PME system, as it pivots to address the direction outlined in DoD's new strategic framework, must provide the necessary instruction to enable this success.

### **III. Recommendations**

This report makes recommendations in four areas to achieve the intent of Task #20 and lay the foundation for a sustained JPME approach to addressing nuclear topics.

- *Enhanced Common Understanding of Nuclear Capabilities and Concepts* – for all JPME students.
- *Enhanced Understanding of Plan Integration (Conventional-Nuclear)* – for the planning cadre.
- *Guidance to the JPME Providing Institutions* – for College and Program supervisors and faculty
- *Institutionalizing Improvements* – for JPME policy.

#### **A. Enhanced Common Understanding of Nuclear Capabilities and Concepts**

##### **Recommendation A1: Establish a Common Lexicon of Nuclear Concepts, Capabilities and Policy for the JPME Community.**

Programs of instruction must reflect a clear understanding of the topics, terms and issues in the NPR, which can be provided through a primer-type document that establishes a common lexicon. The Joint Staff will examine developing such a document. The doctrine established by Joint Publication 3-72, *Nuclear Operations*, provides a common PME pillar.

##### **Recommendation A2: Establish Learning Outcomes by JPME Level.**

All students obtain knowledge and skills at each JPME level, building on what they have learned at previous levels. As students advance through higher levels of JPME, they will receive progressively deeper topic exposure and be expected to deal with more complex matters.

Only student learning outcomes are provided below; learning objectives—i.e. curriculum design—are the purview of faculty. These learning outcomes reflect the intent of the NPR, but are provisional. They will be refined as needed by the Military Education Coordination Council (the General/Flag Officer leaders of JPME institutions) into a final narrative appropriate for each Service JPME program, the National Defense University programs, and National Intelligence University. The final learning outcomes will be integrated into the curriculum of each school/program based on its mission, education level, and education methodology.

**A2.1 Pre-commissioning and Primary Levels**

*Learning Outcome.* Students will comprehend basic nuclear policy, strategy and capabilities in both historical and contemporary context.

**A2.2 Intermediate Level**

*Learning Outcome.* Students will comprehend nuclear policy, strategy, capabilities, and deterrence at the operational level of war, and be capable of applying this to the development of operational plans and related policy and planning tasks.

**A2.3 Senior Level**

*Learning Outcome.* Students will comprehend nuclear policy, strategy, capabilities, and deterrence at the strategic level, and be capable of analyzing and synthesizing knowledge to formulate strategy.

**A.2.4 General/Flag Officer Level**

*Learning Outcome.* General and Flag Officers will be capable of evaluating policy, strategy, and operations in the nuclear domain at the highest level of complexity, and in conjunction with other national policies and instruments of power.

**B. Enhanced Understanding of Plan Integration (Conventional-Nuclear)**

**Recommendation B1:** Clarify for JPME Faculty the Integration Requirement Presented in the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review.

The general language in the 2018 NPR on plan integration needs to be “operationalized” for faculty if they are to develop responsive instruction. The Joint Staff will prepare a paper to provide such an explanation. Principal elements are proposed in the text below.

*The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review emphasizes the importance of policymakers, planners and operators understanding how the full range of U.S. capabilities contribute to the deterrence of nuclear and non-nuclear aggression. In particular, it states that U.S. forces will ensure their ability to integrate nuclear and non-nuclear military planning and operations, and that Combatant Commands and Services will plan, train, and exercise to integrate nuclear and non-nuclear forces and operate in the face of adversary nuclear*

*threats and attacks. NPR Implementation Task 20 reflects this imperative, which derives from key factors in the security environment and the evolving character of conflict.*

*In particular, competitors and potential adversaries appear to have adopted doctrines and supporting capabilities that envision the integration of conventional and nuclear operations in a regional conflict. These strategies are premised on the belief that U.S. or U.S.-led conventional campaigns can be deterred, disrupted or defeated by escalating to the limited use of nuclear weapons. Deterring such strategies requires convincing the adversary that limited nuclear escalation will not be effective in decisively degrading U.S. conventional operations, and that the U.S. is able and willing to respond in a way that will impose disproportionate costs.*

*Operational planning must reflect these requirements to deter and, if necessary, respond, and planners must be equipped with the appropriate knowledge and comprehension. This includes, in particular, understanding the requirements to plan for deterrence operations that emphasize the delivery of strategic-level effects intended to alter an adversary leadership's perception of risk. Achieving this may require adapting how existing joint planning processes are executed.*

**Recommendation B2: Establish Learning Outcomes for the Planning Cadre.**

*Learning Outcome.* The planning cadre, considered to be officers in joint planning billets in relevant Combatant Commands and some other joint assignments, will be capable of applying gained knowledge and comprehension of nuclear concepts and capabilities to the joint force, interagency, and coalition planning processes in support of plans and operations. This learning outcome is additive to those outlined above for the Intermediate level of JPME.

**Recommendation B3: Adapt Existing Programs of Instruction at Joint Forces Staff College to Support NPR Plan Integration Objectives**

The Joint and Combined Warfighting School (JCWS) of the National Defense University's Joint Forces Staff College educates officers to plan and execute joint, interagency, and intergovernmental operations. JCWS graduates serve as planners and problem solvers for the Combatant Commands. They actively participate in joint planning efforts and develop theater strategies and operational plans in a complex global operating environment.

Thorough preparation for this environment requires instruction in the nuclear dimension of regional conflict and the demands likely to be made on the planning process to account for the possibility of adversary nuclear escalation. The JCWS curricula provides opportunities to incorporate suitable instruction within existing learning areas and objectives and course structure. Courses in Foundations of Unified Action, Theater Campaign Planning, Contingency Planning, and Planning in Crisis, and the Elective program, provide a ready framework into which teaching modules or lessons

can be inserted that focus on questions related to nuclear deterrence, nuclear forces and operations, and conventional-nuclear plan integration.

Similarly, Joint Advanced Warfighting School (JAWS) graduates are immediately assigned to Combatant Command planner positions. The JAWS curricula also offers opportunities to incorporate suitable instruction within existing learning areas and objectives and course structure.

JCWS and JAWS faculty will develop appropriate instructional materials and methods and adapt application of the Joint Planning Process to the unique planning problems posed by nuclear escalation. Joint Staff, Combatant Command and Service experts will provide assistance.

Service PME programs have parallel programs of instruction tailored to planning functions that likewise could be adapted to ensure delivery of needed content.

### **C. Guidance to the JPME Providing Institutions**

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 1800.01 Officer Professional Military Education Policy is undergoing fundamental change. No longer will it explicitly direct the Joint Learning Objectives that JPME programs must teach. Rather, each school will have program-level outcomes that students must attain to graduate and receive JPME credit. The schools will have the flexibility to develop curricula and assessment tools as they deem appropriate. This move to “outcomes-based education” and away from higher echelon direction of content, is in line with best education practices.

Each school will have initial requirements from which to develop its program outcomes. Those requirements may be from U.S.C. Title 10, Service direction, Secretary / Chairman guidance, school mission, etc. The schools are given freedom to construct their programs as appropriate to achieve their program outcomes and assess student attainment of those outcomes. Additional review and assessment is conducted through the Chairman’s accreditation process.

Established methods of instruction are well-suited to achieve the outcomes required to meet the intent of Task #20. These include student reading and research, formal and informal faculty lectures, guest lectures, guided seminar discussions, case studies, practical exercises, and field research studies. The challenge is related to content and curriculum development – to ensure that the NPR learning outcomes are integrated appropriately into the curriculum and that faculty are equipped to provide the necessary instruction on topics that have may not been a recent focus area of JPME. To meet this challenge, the following recommendations are made.

**Recommendation C1: Provide a Chairman Guidance Memo to JPME Institutions.**

The specific guidance to JPME programs regarding NPR Task #20 will be a Chairman's memo directing that the learning outcomes be integrated into the appropriate level of JPME in congruence with the mission of the school and program. Services should be encouraged to include these topics at the Pre-commissioning and Primary levels of education. Curricula development and teaching methods will be at the purview of the programs' leadership and faculty.

**Recommendation C2: Make available to JPME faculty a range of resources to assist in the development of instructional material and faculty preparation.**

The Joint Staff will designate a point of contact to develop a work plan and coordinate this activity. Resources include materials and access to expertise.

*Materials* may include primers, model curricula, lesson plans, reading lists, reports, TTX and wargame summaries, and films. As an example, faculty and students would benefit from having a concise summary of what the 2018 Nuclear Posture Review establishes as national policy and the practical implications for the Joint Force.

*Expertise* can be: a subject matter expert reach-back network; a guest lecture cadre (recognized SMEs available to visit schools); orientation sessions/classes for faculty; a Distinguished Visitor program to deliver lectures and meet with faculty.

**D. Institutionalizing Improvements**

Fully meeting the requirements of Task #20 requires taking steps to institutionalize needed adaptations to JPME.

**Recommendation D1: Establish Policy Guidance**

Ensure that CJCSI 1800.01, *Officer Professional Military Education Policy*, when revised, references the guidance that mandates the inclusion of NPR learning outcomes directly addressing nuclear capabilities, concepts, and policies in support of national deterrence and defense requirements.

**Recommendation D2: Conduct Oversight**

Ensure that the Program for Accreditation of Joint Education is capable of providing necessary review of JPME programs in the Task #20 areas of interest. These regularly scheduled J-7 led oversight reviews will reaffirm the Chairman's accreditation of these programs and ensure the NPR learning outcomes are being assessed and achieved.