

Joint Publication 3-60



Joint Targeting



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY COMMANDER'S OVERVIEW

- **Provides an understanding of Targets and Targeting**
 - **Explains the Joint Targeting Cycle**
 - **Addresses Joint Force Targeting Duties and Responsibilities**
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Understanding Targets and Targeting

Targeting is the process of selecting and prioritizing targets and matching the appropriate response to them, considering operational requirements and capabilities.

Joint targeting is a fundamental task of the fires function that encompasses many disciplines and requires participation from all joint force staff elements and components, along with various nonmilitary agencies. The primary purpose of joint targeting is to integrate and synchronize all weapon systems and capabilities.

Target Description

Targets should be logically and causally tied to objectives at all levels—strategic, operational, and tactical.

A target is an entity (person, place, or thing) considered for possible engagement or action to alter or neutralize the function it performs for the adversary. A target's operational importance is determined by conducting an assessment to determine if engaging the target is consistent with planned operations and will help achieve the commander's objective(s) and the end state.

Characteristics of Targets

The purpose of targeting is to integrate and synchronize fires into joint operations by utilizing available capabilities to generate a specific lethal or nonlethal effect on a target.

Every target has distinct intrinsic or acquired characteristics that form the basis for target detection, location, identification, and classification for ongoing and future surveillance, analysis, engagement, and assessment. Physical, functional, cognitive, environmental, and temporal are broad categories that help define the characteristics of a target.

Targeting systematically analyzes and prioritizes targets and matches appropriate lethal and nonlethal actions to those targets to create specific desired effects that achieve the joint force commander's (JFC's) objectives, accounting for operational requirements, capabilities, and the results of previous assessments. The emphasis of targeting is on identifying resources (targets) the enemy can

least afford to lose or that provide him with the greatest advantage (high-value target [HVT]), then further identifying the subset of those targets which must be acquired and engaged to achieve friendly success (high-payoff target [HPT]). Targeting links the desired effects to actions and tasks.

Principles of Targeting

Adherence to these four principles throughout the targeting cycle should create desired effects while diminishing undesired collateral effects.

Focused. The function of targeting is to efficiently achieve the JFC's objectives through target engagement within the parameters set by the concept of operations (CONOPS), the operational limitations within the plans and orders (to include fragmentary orders), the rules of engagement (ROE), the law of war, and agreements concerning the sovereignty of national territories. Every target nominated should contribute to attaining the JFC's objectives.

Effects-Based. The art of targeting seeks to create desired effects with the least risk and least expenditure of time and resources.

Interdisciplinary. Joint targeting entails participation from all elements of the JFC's staff, component commanders' staffs, other agencies, departments, organizations, and multinational partners.

Systematic. The joint targeting cycle is designed to create effects in a systematic manner. It is a rational and iterative process that methodically analyzes, prioritizes, and assigns assets against targets systematically.

Prioritization and Special Considerations

Planning and execution of all joint and component targeting should be in accordance with the priorities established by the JFC. The JFC's guidance should describe the objectives to be achieved and the relative priority of each. **Sensitive targets** refer to those targets for which planned actions warrant President or the Secretary of Defense review and approval. An **HVT** is a target that the enemy

Certain targets may require special care or caution in treatment because attacking them improperly could lead to adverse consequences.

commander requires for the successful completion of the mission. An **HPT** is one whose loss to the enemy will significantly contribute to the success of the friendly course of action (COA). A **time-sensitive target** (TST) is a JFC-validated target or set of targets of such high importance to the accomplishment of the JFC's mission and objectives, or that presents such a significant strategic or operational threat to friendly forces or allies, that the JFC dedicates intelligence collection and engagement assets, or is willing to divert assets away from other targets in order to find, fix, track, target, engage, and assess it. Component commanders may nominate targets to the JFC for consideration as TSTs. If they meet TST criteria, but are not approved as TSTs by the JFC, these **component-critical targets** may still require dynamic execution with cross-component coordination and assistance in a time-compressed fashion.

Targeting and Joint Operation Planning

Target development and selection are based on the JFC's desired end state rather than on the available ways and means to achieve them. In other words, the focus should be on creating the desired target effects that accomplish targeting-related tasks and objectives in support of the JFCs objectives, rather than simply servicing a list of targets or basing targeting decisions on the availability of particular weapons, platforms, or systems. Joint operation planning is the mechanism by which a JFC translates national military objectives into viable plans and orders for conducting military operations. The joint targeting process occurs within this context.

The Joint Targeting Cycle

General Activities

The joint targeting cycle supports the joint force commander's (JFC's) joint operation planning and execution with a comprehensive, iterative, and logical methodology for

Joint targeting is an integral part of joint operation planning and continues through publication of the campaign or contingency plan, operation order, or fragmentary order. Detailed joint intelligence preparation of the operational environment and country assessments, performed by JFCs within their operational areas (OAs), set the stage for detailed targeting within the joint targeting cycle.

employing the ways and means to create desired effects that support achievement of objectives.

Once actions are taken against targets, the commander and staff assess the effectiveness of the actions. If there is no evidence that the desired effects were created, reengagement of the target may be necessary, or another method selected to create the desired effects.

Categories of Targeting

The **targeting** process can be generally grouped into two categories: deliberate and dynamic.

Deliberate targeting normally supports the joint force's *future plans* effort, which is overseen by the plans directorate of a joint staff (J-5). (Normally, the future operations directorate focuses on 24 hours out to 72 hours. This is a critical linkage during targeting execution.)

Dynamic targeting is normally employed in *current operations planning* because the nature and time frame associated with current operations (usually the current 24-hour period) typically requires more immediate responsiveness than is achieved in deliberate targeting.

Categories of Targets

Targets may be described as two different categories: planned targets and targets of opportunity. Each has two separate subcategories:

Planned targets are known to exist in the operational environment with engagement actions scheduled against them. Planned targets may be further divided into scheduled targets and on-call targets. **Scheduled targets** are prosecuted at a specific time. **On-call targets** have actions planned, but not for a specific delivery time.

Targets of opportunity refer to targets that meet the criteria to achieve objectives but were not selected for action during the current joint targeting cycle. Targets of opportunity can be divided into two subgroups: unplanned targets and unanticipated targets. **Unplanned targets** are known targets and are included on a target list, but not selected for engagement because the target was not nominated, was nominated but did not make the joint integrated prioritized target list (JIPTL), or was not expected

to be available for engagement within the target cycle. However, changes to the target status (priority, access, permissions) could result in the need (or opportunity) to engage the target during the current cycle. **Unanticipated targets** are unknown or not expected to be present in the operational environment. These targets are not included on a target list and an evaluation of the target is needed to determine engagement requirements and timing.

The Joint Targeting Cycle

The joint targeting cycle is a six phase iterative process: end state and commander's objectives, target development and prioritization, capabilities analysis, commander's decision and force assignment, mission planning and force execution, and assessment.

Joint Targeting Cycle Phase 1— The End State and Commander's Objectives

Understanding the military end state and the commander's intent, centers of gravity, objectives, desired effects, and required tasks developed during operational planning provides the initial impetus for the targeting process. Understanding the JFC's guidance, CONOPS, and intent is the most important and first activity of joint targeting because they document the set of outcomes relevant to the present situation and set the course for all that follows. Objectives are the basis for developing the desired effects and scope of target development, and are coordinated among strategists, planners, and intelligence analysts for approval by the commander.

Joint Targeting Cycle Phase 2— Target Development and Prioritization

Target development is the analysis, assessment, and documentation processes to identify and characterize potential targets that, when successfully engaged, support the achievement of the commander's objectives. Phase 2 is comprised of three steps: target system analysis; entity-level target development; and target list management.

Joint Targeting Cycle Phase 3— Capabilities Analysis

This phase of the joint targeting cycle involves evaluating all available capabilities against targets' critical elements to determine the appropriate options available to the commander for target engagement while highlighting the best possible

solution under given circumstances. Capabilities analysis is comprised of four steps: target vulnerability analysis, capabilities assignment, feasibility assessment, and effects estimate.

*Joint Targeting Cycle Phase 4—
Commander’s Decision and
Force Assignment*

The **force assignment** process integrates previous phases of joint targeting and fuses capabilities analysis with available forces, sensors, and weapons systems. The process of resourcing JIPTL targets with available forces or systems and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets lies at the heart of force assignment. This process links theoretical planning to actual operations. Once the JFC has approved the JIPTL, either entirely or in part, tasking orders are prepared and released to the executing components and forces. The **commander’s decision** in phase 4 is to either approve the draft JIPTL, approve targets to be added to or removed from the JIPTL, or approves a particular way or ways of engaging a particular target or targets.

*Joint Targeting Cycle Phase 5—
Mission Planning and Force
Execution*

Upon receipt of tasking orders, detailed planning must be performed for the execution of operations. During execution, the operational environment changes as a result of actions from the joint force, adversary, and other actors. The joint targeting process monitors these changes in order to allow commanders to decisively use joint force capabilities to seize and maintain the initiative.

*Joint Targeting Cycle Phase 6—
Targeting Assessment*

The targeting assessment phase is a continuous process that assesses the effectiveness of the activities that occurred during the first five phases of the joint targeting cycle. The targeting assessment process helps the commander and staff determine if the ends, ways, and means of joint targeting have resulted in progress toward accomplishing a task, creating an effect, or achieving an objective.

*Time-Sensitive Target (TST)
Considerations*

The JFC’s objectives and guidance shape the basic procedural framework for components to expedite engagement of TSTs. Additionally, the JFC establishes guidance on procedures for coordination, deconfliction, and synchronization

Generally, TSTs are engaged using dynamic targeting, so the command and control arrangements should include the rapid identification and communication capabilities required for expedited decision making.

among components. Once this guidance is issued, the components establish planned and reactive procedures for engaging the prioritized TSTs. A critical aspect of successful TST engagement is to understand the level of risk acceptable to the JFC. Items to be considered in the risk assessment include risk to civilians, friendly forces, and noncombatants; possible collateral damage; and the disruption incurred by diverting assets from their deliberately planned missions.

The Relationship Between Targeting and Effects

It is important that desired and undesired effects be clearly communicated as far down as necessary to ensure these effects are created or avoided respectively.

From the targeting perspective, an effect is a change in the physical or behavioral state of a target system, a target system component, a target, or a target element that results from an action, a set of actions, or another effect. A desired effect can be thought of as a condition that can support achieving an associated objective, while an undesired effect is a condition that can inhibit progress toward an objective

Joint Force Targeting Duties and Responsibilities

Joint Targeting Integration and Oversight

The JFC's primary targeting responsibility lies in establishing the objectives that component commanders will achieve throughout the operational environment with their forces (assigned, attached, and supporting). With the advice of subordinate component commanders, JFCs set priorities, provide clear targeting guidance, and determine the weight of effort to be provided to various operations. Throughout the targeting process, JFC and component commanders should establish safeguards to reduce the possibility of friendly fire. Joint standards and methods for estimating collateral damage potential provide mitigation techniques and assist commanders with weighing collateral risk against military necessity and assessing proportionality within the framework of the military decision-making process.

Joint Force Targeting Responsibilities

The JFC has the responsibility to conduct planning, coordination, and deconfliction associated with joint targeting. Joint targeting coordination responsibilities for the JFC include:

- Establish parameters for successful targeting within the JFC's OA by promulgating intent, objectives, guidance, sequencing, and priorities.
- Direct the formation, composition, and specific responsibilities of a joint fires element (JFE) and joint targeting coordination board (JTCB) (if required).
- Approve or delegate approval of the JIPTL developed from component and staff nominations.

Joint Targeting Coordination Board

Targeting coordination tasks are normally accomplished through the JFC established JTCB or like body. The JFC normally appoints the deputy JFC or a component commander to chair the JTCB to provide the appropriate level of experience and focus. When a JTCB is not established and the JFC decides not to delegate targeting oversight authority to a deputy or subordinate commander, the JFC may perform this task at the joint force headquarters, with the assistance of the operations directorate of a joint staff (J-3). The JFC ensures that this is a joint effort involving applicable subordinate commands, other agencies, and multinational partners, as appropriate. The JTCB normally facilitates and coordinates joint force targeting activities with the components' schemes of maneuver to ensure that the JFC's priorities are met.

Joint Fires Element

The JFC may approve the formation of a JFE within the J-3. The JFE is an integrating staff element that synchronizes and coordinates fires planning and coordination on behalf of the JFC and should be physically located near the joint task force joint operations center, colocated with the information operations cell if possible.

Joint Targeting Working Group

The joint targeting working group (JTWG) supports the JTCB by conducting initial collection, consolidation, and prioritization of targets and synchronization of target planning and coordination on behalf of the JFC. The JTWG is an action officer level venue, chaired by the JFE chief, operations

directorate of a joint staff (J-2) (chief of targets), or similar representative, and meets as required to consolidate and prioritize the draft JIPTL and discuss targeting integration and synchronization issues raised by the JFC, staff, planning teams, and the JFC's major subordinate commands.

Joint Force Staff Responsibilities

Intelligence Directorate. The J-2 has the primary responsibility for prioritization of intelligence collection efforts, analysis, validation, and assessment for all joint operations. In addition, the J-2 provides a major input to the J-3 and J-5 in the form of adversary COA assessments critical to the joint target prioritization process and identification of HVTs and HPTs.

Operations Directorate. The J-3 assists the commander in the direction and control of operations, including the planning, monitoring, and completion of specific operations. In this capacity, the directorate is the lead for coordinating, integrating, and executing operations throughout the OA.

Staff Judge Advocate (SJA). The SJA advises the JFC and other staff members on applicable international and domestic laws, legal custom and practice, multilateral and bilateral agreements with host nations, law of war issues, compliance and interpretation of the ROE, and other pertinent issues involved in joint target recommendations and decisions.

Component Commander Responsibilities

With regard to joint targeting, the components' responsibilities normally include the following:

- Conduct target development.
- Nominate potential targets for inclusion in the joint target list and restricted target list.
- Nominate targets for inclusion on the JFC's TST list and maintain their own lists of HPTs.
- Provide timely and accurate reporting to the JFE in support of joint operations assessment.

- Coordinate components' deliberate and dynamic targeting via established procedures.

Federated Targeting Support

The Joint Staff intelligence directorate of a joint staff normally ensures that federated targeting support requirements are addressed in contingency plans and orders and will assist in the dissemination of targeting support-related information between the federated partners and the supported JFC.

A federated target development and assessment process can provide reachback support to the JFC and component commanders during the joint targeting cycle. Under a collaborative federated architecture, the supported JFC works in conjunction with the National Joint Operations and Intelligence Center and the Joint Staff J-2 using the intelligence planning process to establish federated targeting support partners and assessment reporting responsibilities between combatant commands in accordance with the supported combatant commander's requirements. Many organizations provide critical support to joint targeting. Federation establishes partnerships and leverages appropriate expertise, allowing access to more actionable information than would otherwise be available to JFCs and their staffs. It also provides for an efficient division of labor and maximizes resources. Federation provides commands conducting operations access to organizations and individuals that are experts in their respective analytic areas.

CONCLUSION

This publication provides doctrine for the planning, coordination, and execution of joint targeting.

