

Joint Publication 3-60



Joint Targeting



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY COMMANDER'S OVERVIEW

- **Discusses the definition, nature, and characteristics of targets**
 - **Describes the joint targeting process and its phases**
 - **Details the roles and responsibilities associated with the joint targeting process**
 - **Addresses specialized concerns relating to targeting procedures in appendices**
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Fundamentals of Targeting

Joint targeting is a fundamental task of the fires function.

The purpose of targeting is to integrate and synchronize fires into joint operations. Targeting is the process of selecting and prioritizing targets and matching the appropriate response to them, considering operational requirements and capabilities. Targeting also supports the process of linking the desired effects of fires to actions and tasks at the joint force component level.

Target defined.

A target is an entity or object considered for possible engagement or action. It may be an area, complex, installation, force, equipment, capability, function, individual, group, system, entity, or behavior identified for possible action to support the commander's objectives, guidance, and intent. Targets relate to objectives at all levels — strategic, operational, and tactical.

Every target has distinct intrinsic or acquired characteristics, the most important of which affect how it is targeted. Generally, these characteristics are categorized as physical, functional, cognitive, and environmental. These characteristics form the basis for target detection, location, identification, and classification for future surveillance, analysis, strike, and assessment.

Time sensitivity.

All potential targets and all targets nominated for attack continually change in importance due to the dynamic nature of the operational environment. When the importance of a target rises to such a level that it poses (or will soon pose) a danger to friendly forces, or it presents a highly lucrative, fleeting opportunity of tactical advantage, the joint force commander (JFC) may designate it as requiring immediate response.

A time-sensitive target is a JFC designated target or target type of such high importance to the accomplishment of the JFC's mission and objectives or one that presents such a significant strategic or operational threat to friendly forces or allies, that the JFC dedicates intelligence collection and attack assets or is willing to divert assets away from other targets in order to find, fix, track, target, engage, and assess such targets.

Joint targeting falls into two categories: deliberate and dynamic.

Deliberate targeting prosecutes planned targets. These are targets that are known to exist in the operational environment with engagement actions scheduled against them to create the effects desired to support achievement of JFC objectives.

Dynamic targeting prosecutes targets of opportunity that are identified too late, or not selected for action in time to be included in deliberate targeting but, when detected or located, meet criteria specific to achieving objectives. When plans change and planned targets must be adjusted, dynamic targeting can also manage those changes.

Principles of targeting.

The joint targeting cycle is designed to provide a means to support the achievement of the JFC's objectives through the use of joint fires and has four principles, which, if adhered to throughout the targeting cycle, should increase the probability of creating desired effects while diminishing undesired or adverse collateral effects. These principles are:

The targeting process is **focused** on achieving the JFC's objectives.

Targeting is concerned with the creation of specific **desired effects** through target engagement.

Joint targeting is a command function that requires the participation of **many disciplines**.

The joint targeting cycle seeks to create effects through target engagement in a **systematic** manner.

Integrating and synchronizing planning, execution, and assessment is pivotal to the success of targeting. Understanding the objectives, intentions, capabilities, and limitations of all actors within the operational environment enables the use of joint, interagency, and multinational means to create effects. Target development and selection are based on what the commander wants to achieve and the measures and indicators used to evaluate their achievement rather than on the ways

and means used to affect the target. In other words, the focus should be on creating the desired effects that support the JFC's objectives rather than simply servicing a list of customary targets or basing targeting decisions on the availability of particular weapons, platforms, or systems.

Joint Force Targeting Cycle

Joint targeting is integral to the joint operation planning process (JOPP) and begins with the planning initiation and mission analysis steps of JOPP. Detailed country assessments and target systems analysis, performed by combatant commanders within their regional responsibilities, set the stage for detailed targeting within the joint targeting cycle.

The joint targeting cycle is an iterative process that is not time-constrained, and steps may occur concurrently, but it provides a helpful framework to describe the steps that must be satisfied to successfully conduct joint targeting. The deliberate and dynamic nature of the joint targeting cycle supports all of the planning horizons of the JOPP ensuring that the targeting process adaptively supports achievement of the commander's objectives as opportunities arise and plans change.

Six phases of the joint targeting cycle.

Phase 1 – End state and commander's objectives

Phase 2 – Target development and prioritization

Phase 3 – Capabilities analysis

Phase 4 – Commander's decision and force assignment

Phase 5 – Mission planning and force execution

Phase 6 – Assessment

Phases 1 through 4 of the joint targeting cycle collectively produce the commander's guidance for all targeting, whether deliberate or dynamic. Lessons learned from recent operations have demonstrated the need for a distinct focus on dynamic targeting during phase 5. Targeting in phase 5 consists of five steps:

Find. During this step, possible targets are detected and classified for further prosecution.

Fix. The fix step of dynamic targeting includes actions to determine the location (fix) of the potential target.

Track. During this step, the target is observed and its activity and movement are monitored.

Target. During this step the decision is made to engage the target in some manner to create desired effects and the means to do so are selected and coordinated.

Engage. In this step, action is taken against the target.

Phase 6 - Assessment. The assessment phase is common to both deliberate and dynamic targeting of the joint targeting cycle and examines the results of the target engagement.

The joint targeting process does not end when hostilities cease. During the transition phase of post conflict operations there is normally a critical need to collect all available information that feeds all forms of assessment. This data collection effort is essential to evaluate the full extent of target physical, functional, and cognitive effects; determine the true effectiveness of employed delivery systems and munitions; and critique and improve the assessment, analysis, and reporting process.

Joint Force Targeting Duties and Responsibilities

The joint targeting process cuts across traditional functional and organizational boundaries.

The joint targeting cycle supports the JFC's joint operation planning and execution with a comprehensive, iterative, logical methodology for employing joint targeting ways and means to create desired effects that support achievement of objectives. The JFC's primary targeting responsibility lies in establishing the objectives that component commanders will achieve through application of air, land, maritime, space, and special operations forces capabilities. 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. Joint force and component commanders identify high-value and high-payoff targets for acquisition, collection, and attack or influence, employing their forces in accordance with the JFC's guidance.

Joint force commander responsibilities.

The JFC has the responsibility to conduct planning, coordination, and deconfliction associated with joint targeting. This task is normally accomplished through the joint targeting coordination board (JTCB) or like body. The JFC normally appoints the deputy JFC or a

component commander to chair the JTCB. 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.

The JTCB's focus is to develop broad targeting priorities and other targeting guidance in accordance with the JFC's objectives as they relate operationally. The JTCB must be flexible to address targeting issues, but should not become over involved in tactical-level decision making. Briefings conducted at the JTCB should focus on ensuring that intelligence, operations (by all components and applicable staff elements), fires, and maneuver are on track, coordinated, and synchronized. In order to function as effectively and efficiently as possible, the JTCB requires a focused agenda to guide the daily conduct of business.

Joint force staff responsibilities.

The intelligence directorate of a joint staff (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 staff in the form of adversary course of action assessments critical to the joint target prioritization process and identification of high-value and high-payoff targets.

The operations directorate of a joint staff (J-3) is the lead for planning and coordinating operations throughout the operational area. The J-3 assists the commander in the discharge of assigned responsibility for the direction and control of operations, including the planning, monitoring, and completion of specific operations. In this capacity, the directorate plans, coordinates, and integrates operations. The flexibility and range of forces require close coordination and integration for effective unity of effort.

The logistics directorate of a joint staff (J-4) identifies logistic issues unique or specific to targeting. Of particular interest, the J-4 compares the operational logistic plans to developing target lists to ensure protection of infrastructure and/or supplies required to support current and future operations.

The plans directorate of a joint staff performs the long-range or future joint planning responsibilities. Planning is conducted by various organizations in conjunction with appropriate staff elements.

The staff judge advocate 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 armed

conflict high issues, and other pertinent issues involved in joint target recommendations and decisions.

Component commander responsibilities normally include target development, nominating targets for JFC consideration, maintaining their own lists of high-value and high-payoff targets, providing appropriate representation to the JTCCB when established, consolidating and nominating deconflicted and prioritized targets, providing timely and accurate reporting to the in support of joint operations assessment, and providing tactical and operational assessment to the joint fires element for incorporation into the JFC's overall assessment efforts.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of targeting is to integrate and synchronize fires into joint operations. Integrating and synchronizing planning, execution, and assessment is pivotal to the success of targeting. The deliberate and dynamic nature of the joint targeting cycle supports all of the planning horizons of the JOPP ensuring that the targeting process adaptively supports achievement of the commander's objectives as opportunities arise and plans change.