

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF
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PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION AND THE NATIONAL DEFENSE
STRATEGY HEARING

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Introduction

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Speier, Ranking Member Gallagher, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. I too appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss Professional Military Education (PME). I am privileged to lead the Joint Force Development Directorate, Joint Staff J-7, for Chairman Milley. We work across the Department of Defense and with Allies and Partners to train, educate, develop, design, and adapt the Joint Force. Our goal is overmatch in the continuum of conflict under conditions of accelerating change in the character of war. In working to set conditions for the Joint Force of 2030, professional military education is critical to ensure the Joint Force can deter and respond to future national security challenges.

The resources provided by Congress have enabled the Joint Force to meet the current challenges and put us on a trajectory to be able to produce highly-skilled, agile, and capable warfighters into the future. Education is a force multiplier and will continue to be a focal point for Joint Force development as we continue to align the force to the 2022 National Defense Strategy.

The PME Enterprise and Continuum

Professional military education is foundational for the development of our joint warfighters, refining their ability to think critically and to conceive, design, and implement strategies and campaigns in support of our elected leaders and national strategy. The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 established the goal of improving the quality, experience, and education of joint officers. It instituted the joint professional military education and joint qualification for officers, provided authority for the Secretary of Defense, with the advice of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), to review JPME programs, and review service schools' curricula to improve the focus on joint matters. Concluding in 1990, the Skelton Panel recommended, and Congress enacted, a two-phase joint professional military education system which has evolved into the system we have today.

The current CJCS *Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP)* outlines a five-phase continuum for officer education delivered by the Department's 29 JPME programs. At the individual level, these phases progress from Pre-Commissioning, through Primary, Intermediate, Senior, and General/Flag Officer programs. While the Pre-commissioning and Primary phases of education

are executed by the Services, they are informed by CJCS joint learning areas to instill joint education early in an officer's development. All phases are fully informed by the National Security Strategy, the National Defense Strategy, and the National Military Strategy.

- Intermediate level education occurs through Service staff colleges and prepares field grade officers of all Services to assume positions of higher responsibility and includes JPME I outcomes.
- Senior-level education occurs within Service war colleges and the National Defense University (NDU) and prepares officers to develop and implement military strategies with an emphasis on Joint operations and includes JPME II outcomes.
- General/Flag Officer education occurs in the Capstone course taught at NDU, and prepares O-7s and above for executive leadership in joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational environments and includes statutory requirements for the third phase of JPME.

To benefit from the diverse service cultures and expertise, service and domain-specific constructs are included in Service staff and war colleges; this ensures our Joint forces maintain a level of expertise in these areas. An officer's military education only ends at separation from military service. These educational phases are complemented by joint and service experience and other training throughout an officer's career, creating a continuum of learning.

JPME Transformation

We have been continuing to transform and adapt PME to meet the demands of the strategic environment. The 2018 National Defense Strategy identified the imperative of gaining and sustaining intellectual overmatch over our adversaries and competitors. To meet this challenge, the Joint Chiefs of Staff collectively published the *JCS Vision and Guidance for Professional Military Education and Talent Management*. This document recognizes the rapidly changing character of war and conflict in the 21st century. It emphasizes the need to align Professional Military Education (PME) and Talent Management (TM) with the changes in the operational environment to adapt and develop strategically-minded joint Warfighters able to plan and execute globally integrated operations.

The Joint Staff then published an updated *Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP)*, which directs that Services ensure programs prepare officers to "...conduct joint warfighting, at the operational to strategic levels, as all domain, globally integrated warfare, including the ability to integrate allied and partner contributions." It also directs leaders of PME programs to adopt an outcomes-based approach as the way in which programs will be assessed and receive feedback to ensure relevance in the rapidly changing global environment.

These policy and governance changes set the foundation for the transformation of our joint professional military education system. The Services have been fully supportive and we are seeing a renewed focus on warfighting and flexible and relevant curricula across the war colleges.

The Future of Joint Professional Military Education – Vision End-States

Our joint professional military education curriculum in our Joint and Service staff and war colleges is continuing to be transformed and adapted to meet the warfighter skills necessary to execute the JCS *Vision and Guidance* and achieve intellectual overmatch. The desired end state is that our PME enterprise produces joint warfighting leaders who can: discern the military dimensions of national security challenges and recommend viable military, globally integrated options; anticipate and lead rapid innovation and adaptation under conditions of great power competition and disruptive change in technology; conduct joint warfighting at the operational to strategic levels including integrating ally and partner contributions; and are able to adapt strategy through campaigns and complex operations. The JCS *Vision and Guidance* also recognizes that talent management policies and procedures must reinforce the PME end-states, and provide officers opportunities to refine their existing knowledge and develop increasingly agile intellectual skills.

While significant progress has been made, there is more work to be done. Effecting this transformation across a federated enterprise of PME programs has taken continued effort and engagement. We endeavor to learn from our past performance and continuously improve the education that we are providing to our joint warfighters. We continue to refine data and metrics to assess our return on investment and effectiveness of our PME enterprise. Each JPME program has begun its transition to the outcomes-based military education, which in the future will provide more detailed and standardized metrics on student learning outcomes,

inform the talent management process, and provide feedback to faculty and program leaders so that they can better refine their curricula to meet the warfighters' requirements.

Conclusion

Professional military education is a force multiplier and critical element for Joint Force Development and operationalizing the 2022 NDS. While the transformation of our military education system is underway, we are working to continue to improve our Joint and Service staff and war colleges so their graduates can continue to expand our capabilities and strengths relative to our adversaries and meet the desired end states outlined in the JCS *Vision and Guidance*. Your continued support has helped to accelerate this transformation and we welcome your feedback.