

Joint Chiefs Vision Changes Military Education Philosophy

By Jim Garamone, DoD News 03 June 2020



Joint military and international students attend U.S. Naval War College in Newport R.I. Photo by Navy Chief Petty Officer James Foehl

The document — signed by all eight members of the Joint Chiefs — will have far-reaching implications for officer education. It is titled "Developing Today's Joint Officers for Tomorrow's Ways of War," and it was published May 1.

The aim is "the development of strategically minded joint warfighters, who think critically and can creatively apply military power to inform national strategy, conduct globally integrated operations and fight under conditions of disruptive change," the document states.

The vision and guidance is an outgrowth of the National Defense Strategy, which took effect in 2018. That document stated: "[Professional military education] has stagnated, focused more on the accomplishment of mandatory credit at the expense of lethality and ingenuity. We will emphasize intellectual leadership and military professionalism in the art and science of warfighting, deepening our knowledge of history while embracing new technology and techniques to counter competitors."

Professional military education will stress independence of action. The chiefs also see the program as a way to build trust and interoperability across the joint force and with allied and partner nations.

Throughout the document, the chiefs emphasize the need to closely tie professional military education to the assignment process of the services. Change is needed in the services' talent management systems, they said. "Our vision is for a fully aligned PME and talent management system that identifies, develops, and utilizes strategically minded, critically thinking and creative joint warfighters skilled in the art of war and the practical and ethical application of lethal military power," the chiefs state in the document.

This is not change for change's sake, the chiefs said, noting that the shifting nature of war demands a new approach. Senior officers need to manage the continuous integration of national instruments of power and influence in support of national objectives, the chiefs said, and they need to manage the unprecedented degree of global integration.