

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

Regarding the PRISM Vol 6. No.3 article “Special Operations Doctrine: Is it Needed?” by Charles T. Cleveland, James B. Linder, and Ronald Dempsey, I am struck by the curious absence of reference to the long established and mature body of Joint Special Operations doctrine. The authors write as if there was no special operations doctrine until Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3–05 came along in 2012. They opine as to the various reasons for this, including accusing “...the general military doctrine community (of holding) a myopic view of U.S. Special Operations Capabilities.” In truth, their contention is not factually correct.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff first issued bespoke doctrine for special operations in October 1992 (specifically joint publication (JP) 3–05, “Doctrine for Joint Special Operations”). JP 3–05 subsequently was revised and re-issued several times (April 1998, December 2003, April 2011, July 2014), with a new edition in work now. JP 3–05 is, and has been, written by special operators under the lead agency of U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), and under the sponsorship of the Joint Staff J3’s Deputy Director for Special Operations. Next, the authors do not note that USSOCOM issued its own doctrine for special operations, commencing with “USSOCOM Publication 1” in August 2011. Further, there was other tactics, techniques, and procedures level joint special operations doctrine available to the force—JP

3–05.1, “Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Joint Special Operations Task Force Operations” (December 2001, updated April 2007 and folded into JP 3–05 in 2014), and JP 3–05.2, “Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Special Operations Targeting and Mission Planning,” effective 21 May 2003, (an update of a similarly named Joint Doctrine from 1993). JP 3–05.2 was also subsequently folded into JP 3–05 and into JP 3–60 (Joint Targeting). There are other joint doctrine publications that touch upon special operations core activities—Counterterrorism, (JP 3–26), Unconventional Warfare (JP 3–05.1), Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (JP 3–40), Foreign Internal Defense (JP 3–22), Counterinsurgency (JP 3–24), Military Information Support Operations (JP 3–13.2), Security Force Assistance (Joint Doctrine Note 1–13, being folded into a new JP on Security Cooperation (JP 3–20), and a new JP on Countering Threat Networks (JP 3–25) published in December 2016. This long list hardly constitutes a doctrinal vacuum; nor does it suggest any myopia of the general doctrine community on the topic. The article should have at least considered this foundational doctrine before it moved on to its other points. (As an aside, the Army was involved in the production and review of the JPs listed above, and it is almost certainly 100 percent true that special operations soldiers helped write each joint publication.)

ADP 3–05 did not fill a void as much as join a vibrant and mature special operations

doctrine community as an Army consideration of the matter...a point that is somewhat lost in the article as constituted. A better title of the article might have focused the reader to the perspectives of the authors—that of Army special operators sharing their thoughts of the need for Army special operations doctrine.

Respectfully,
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Dear Editor:

In reference to a recent critique of the article “Special Operations Doctrine: Is It Needed,” by Jerome M. Lynes (12/21/16), we acknowledge the existence of Joint Special Operations doctrine. Upon reflection, we could title the article “Special Operations Doctrine: *It Is Needed!*” The intent of this article was to capture, share, and address recent accomplishments in Army Special Operations Force (ARSOF) concepts, doctrine, organizational lessons learned, and new ideas. The learning curve from more than a decade of war led to our belief that there was a clear need for the Army to articulate ARSOF as a core competency. Released in 2012, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3–05, *Special Operations*, filled this void—it identified the greater Army’s responsibilities to understand ARSOF capabilities throughout the full spectrum of conflict.

Clearly articulated within Mr. Lynes’s critique, the U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) and the Special Operations Center of Excellence (SOCoE) fully participate in and serve as principal authors of Joint concepts and doctrine, through the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Our Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Regimental Commandants, and our Joint and Army Doctrine Division are involved in the development of Interagency, Joint, NATO, and Army doctrine. In fact, we annually review an estimated 250 NATO, Joint, and Army Publications. This is in addition to our ARSOF and Army Future concept publications.

As addressed in the article some of our major achievements in concepts and doctrine

are: ADP 3–05; Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 3–05 (*Special Operations*); the U.S. Army Functional Concept for Engagement, Human Domain; resurrection of the Gray Zone; ARSOF 2022; USASOC Strategy 2035; and the recognition of Special Operations as an Army Core Competency in the U.S. Army Operating Concept, *Win in a Complex World*. Through our new SOF elements located throughout the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and the eight Army Centers of Excellence, we have tremendous inclusion in TRADOC and the Army Capabilities Integration Center’s planning teams for their initiatives (Capabilities Integration Enterprise Forum, How the Army Fights, Dense Urban Terrain, etc.). All of these undertakings are in concert with, and in support of joint doctrine.

These clear examples of ARSOF and the Army’s desire to increase interoperability, integration, and interdependence among conventional and special operations forces serve as a testament to the immediate value ADP 3–05 added to the Army enterprise.

Respectfully,
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Operations Command from 2012–15
MG James B. Linder,
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John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center
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