

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW: JIFCO CELEBRATES ITS NEW MISSION AND NAME

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The Dept. of Defense’s new Joint Intermediate Force Capabilities Office (JIFCO) and Lt Gen George W. Smith, Jr., Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies, and Operations, celebrated the most significant update to the Dept. of Defense’s Non-Lethal Weapons (NLW) Program’s mission in two decades during a socially-distanced rededication ceremony on Marine Corps Base Quantico in December.

The unveiling of the JIFCO’s new building sign commemorated the significant revisions of the program’s mission and vision, as well as the renaming of the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate to the JIFCO by General David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps and Executive Agent for NLW. The Commandant revamped the program’s mandate to facilitate the development and fielding of Intermediate Force Capabilities (IFCs)—scalable armaments that can deliver effects short of lethal force.



Lt Gen George W. Smith, Jr. (left); Deputy Commandant for Plans, Policies, and Operations, and Douglas J. Jerothe, Deputy Director, Joint Intermediate Force Capabilities Office (JIFCO) unveil the JIFCO’s new sign during a rededication ceremony at MCB-Quantico. The event marked the Commandant’s significant revisions to the DOD Non-Lethal Weapons Program’s mission and vision, as well as the renaming of the Joint Non-Lethal Weapons Directorate to the JIFCO (Photo courtesy: JIFCO)

“This is about more than just unveiling a sign,” said Lt Gen Smith, who also serves as chairman of the program’s Joint Integrated Product Team. “This is about a small organization punching well above its weight class to change the mindset of the entire Department of Defense. You are bending the thought process within the Department.” He also acknowledged that IFCs provide the Joint Force with a means to counter our adversaries’ efforts to exploit the gap between presence and kinetic solutions.

The Program’s new mission—to develop and field IFCs between presence and lethal effects in support of the Joint Force, further enables the Services and strategic partners to successfully compete across the competition continuum. General Berger illustrates the utility of these proportional and compelling capabilities further in his 2020 Executive Agent’s Planning Guidance for the DOD NLW Program. The document emphasizes that IFCs allow commanders to engage adversaries operating among civilian populations or within sensitive sites more discriminately and quickly. The non-lethal subset of these weapons, munitions, and devices can also generate effects that limit collateral damage, reduce risk to civilians, and may reduce opportunities for adversary propaganda.

The DOD NLW Program has come a long way since its inception over 20 years ago. In 1995, U.S. Marine Corps Lt Gen Anthony Zinni was responsible with protecting the final withdrawal of United Nations forces from Somalia. He understood that he needed a more elegant

solution than the binary response of lethal force or no force/mere presence to accomplish his mission. Lt Gen Zinni's vision on the utility of NLW in military operations and aggressive support in fielding these unique capabilities contributed to the establishment of the Joint Force's focal point for NLW research, development, and fielding.

Traditional NLW have given way to unprecedented advancements, which provide greater stand-off, duration, versatility, and selectivity. New technologies, such as directed energy, are integrated into a variety of manned, unmanned, and autonomous platforms to deliver tailored safe and compelling effects in full-spectrum, multi-domain operations. Modern non-lethal weapons, devices, and munitions will provide the "intermediate force" that can fill the gap between mere presence and lethal effects. Moreover, they are useful beyond law enforcement, security missions, and crowd control.

Directed energy vehicle- and vessel-stoppers, long-range ocular interrupters, active denial technology, and other safe and effective IFCs are relevant across the entire range of military operations—including irregular warfare. Their deep "magazines", potential for lower costs-per-shot, and shrinking size, weight, cooling, and cost (SWAP-C²) profiles enable to Joint Force and our allies to compete, deter, and win across the full range of military operations.

For more information about Intermediate Force Capabilities, visit <https://jnlwp.defense.gov/> or contact the JIFCO at JIFCOInfo@usmc.mil.

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