

JADE HELM 15 Fact Sheet

Chairman Mac Thornberry

1. What is JADE HELM 15?

JADE HELM 15 is an interagency training exercise in unconventional warfare that will be led by US Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) with Special Operations Forces from all four services. It will be conducted between July 15 and September 15, 2015.

2. What is unconventional warfare?

The Free Dictionary defines it as “a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominantly conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerrilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery.”

3. Who is participating in this exercise?

Special operations troops from the US Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, as well as various interagency partners will participate in JADE HELM 15. About 1,200 U.S. service members are expected to be part of the exercise in Texas to include the units being trained, support personnel, and personnel who are role-playing as an enemy force.

4. Where will it be conducted?

The exercise will take place in states across the southwestern United States, including Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and Utah. Exercise activities will be conducted on military bases, federal, state, and private lands. All land use will be pre-coordinated with federal, state, municipal officials, as well as private land owners, and the majority of the exercise will take place in remote areas with little impact on the public.

These states have challenging, varied, and realistic terrain and distances for participants. They replicate many of the areas that special operators find themselves in overseas. As such, this training helps develop our special operators’ ability to conduct their missions anywhere, anytime to protect our nation.

5. Why was Texas selected for the exercise?

Texans are well known for their support and appreciation of our nation’s military. They understand that our dedicated service members deserve the most realistic, challenging training so they can accomplish their missions and return home safely to their families.

Texas' unique environment also provides diverse terrain for participants to navigate, preparing them for the demanding, unpredictable locations in which they must conduct missions.

6. Why was Texas labeled as hostile?

Special operations troops must be prepared to deploy around the world, whether they are assisting with humanitarian relief missions in Nepal or conducting clandestine operations in hostile countries. Their missions span the spectrum of friendly, neutral, and hostile countries – and their training must challenge them to do the same.

The JADE HELM 15 exercise identified various areas as friendly, neutral, or hostile in its planning documents. In fact, most domestic military exercises do the same. These designations allow participants to analyze and plan their training missions in various environments politically unstable, complex scenarios.

Identifying Texas as “hostile” has nothing to do with Texans themselves. In fact, Texas has a proud military heritage with over 1.6 million veterans calling Texas their home. Its communities also support 13 major military installations and their assigned service members.

7. Why is JADE HELM important? What is Realistic Military Training (RMT)?

Special Operations Forces are some of the most highly-trained, experienced military professionals. Our nation calls upon them to solve our most complex, high-risk challenges. Providing Realistic Military Training (RMT) is critical to special operators' success, and JADE HELM 15 is a valuable addition to their preparation for whatever we call upon them to do.

The Department of Defense has a strict RMT process that is designed to ensure proper coordination between the Department and local authorities prior to conducting training outside federally-owned property. That process includes risk assessments, medical and communications plans, memorandums of understanding, legal reviews, and prior coordination with local, state, and federal law enforcement.

8. Why does the JADE HELM logo say “Master the Human Domain”?

Unconventional warfare includes operations among foreign civilian populations, which presents unique challenges in the “human domain” for our special operators. These challenges are not limited to combat but also include working with civilian populations, training indigenous forces, coordinating with local governments to provide humanitarian support, and more. This is why JADE HELM utilizes military members and volunteer civilians as role players to train and interact with participants in a diverse set of realistic scenarios.

9. Have there been similar exercises in the past?

Military training exercises like JADE HELM 15 have been conducted in the U.S. for over 40 years. JADE HELM 15 is modeled after ROBIN SAGE, the training exercise that began in 1974 for Army Special Forces candidates seeking to earn a Green Beret. ROBIN SAGE encompasses 15 counties in North Carolina and

includes hundreds of service members as participants and role players. Special Forces candidates not only conduct training missions, including assaults and key-leader engagements, but they also live, eat and sleep in those civilian areas.

Other large scale military training exercises have taken place in the southeast United States, including South Carolina where the Marine Special Operations Regiment's training exercise known as "Operation Derna Bridge" takes place across several counties. Additionally, large-scale amphibious landings have been simulated by the Navy and Marine Corps off the coast of Georgia and parts of Florida in a training exercise known as "Bold Alligator."

ROBIN SAGE and these other large training exercises have proven very valuable for the training of our service members. JADE HELM 15 contributes to those training objectives for special operators across all services and the interagency.

10. What can local communities expect?

The most noticeable effects will be moderate increases in vehicular traffic and military aircraft. JADE HELM 15 will attempt to minimize the disruption and inconvenience to the local community and its members. Local law enforcement will also help notify community members of upcoming exercise activities to keep everyone informed.

While many exercise activities will take place on military installations, private land (with the permission of the land owner), and in remote areas, it is also possible that communities could see a noticeable military presence including service members and military equipment. Much of this temporary, increased presence will consist of the exercise planners, evaluators, and role players that are critical to the success and logistics of the exercise.

11. Why is local law enforcement involved?

All training that occurs outside of military bases will be coordinated ahead of time with the appropriate officials. There will be daily communication between the Department of Defense and local law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety of exercise participants and civilians alike, as well as to minimize the impact on local communities.

12. What about the theories including martial law, confiscation of guns, detainment of civilians, or closing of Walmart stores?

JADE HELM 15 has spurred a number of myths and conspiracy theories. This training exercise is not a military takeover, nor will it infringe upon our constitutional rights or civil liberties. The United States military is sworn to uphold the Constitution. We know that our service members wear their uniforms with honor, and they are committed to the freedom of our country and the rights of its citizens.

We must also remember that our military has conducted unconventional warfare exercises like JADE HELM 15 for over 40 years. Countless special operators owe their skill, and possibly their lives, to these critical training opportunities.