BUILDING THE PURPLE FORD

An Affordable Approach to Jointness

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Given the enormity of the U.S. national debt and the pressure to reduce Defense spending, surviving the forthcoming era of austerity will require innovative approaches to Department of Defense (DoD) organization and processes. Some of this innovation may require a reversal of previous efforts intended to improve effectiveness and efficiency within the DoD. Preserving operational capacity must be the top priority in any budget-reduction discussion. Unfortunately, the current approaches advocated within the Pentagon, on the Hill, and by influential Beltway think tanks call for reducing spending by trimming inefficient processes, eliminating end strength, and terminating costly acquisitions programs. The U.S. government should be hesitant to cut one plane, one ship, or one Marine until all options to reduce overhead and to streamline organizations have been fully considered. These options must include critically examining the sacred purple cow of jointness.

As former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates noted in a speech at the American Enterprise Institute in May 2011, "Sustaining this 'tooth' part of the budget—the weapons and the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines who use them—is increasingly difficult given the massive growth of other components of the defense budget, the 'tail' if you will—operations, maintenance, pay and benefits, and other forms of overhead. America's defense enterprise has consumed ever higher level[s] of resources as a matter of routine just to maintain, staff, and administer itself."[1]

Further, the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Admiral Michael Mullen, echoed a similar sentiment in a June 2011 speech to service members warning against taking the "easy choices." He stressed that "when I say all things are on the table, all things are

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on the table." He added, "We need to avoid just making the relatively easy decision to just cash in force structure, we have to go through everything else before we get to that point, because that's why we're here."[2]

For the foreseeable future, and until deficit spending and the national debt are brought under control, Defense spending will remain at the center of any serious federal budget discussion. Given these realities, the fiscal trade space is clear—DoD accepts the cost of inefficiency at the peril of operational capabilities. The Defense Department and Congress must take this opportunity to evaluate the results of previous reform efforts and determine what is working well and what can be improved or eliminated. In the process, policy makers must face the reality that jointness is inherently inefficient.

Jointness represents an inefficient compromise between two schools of thought: on one hand, complete unification of the military, and the other, maintaining a service-centric structure. Joint organizations and processes, many of which were created during periods of practically unconstrained spending during the Cold War and after September 11, 2001, are layered on the existing overhead of the services.

Over the past twenty-five years many practitioners, elected officials, and scholars have written extensively on the positive and negative aspects of Goldwater-Nichols legislation and the extent of its implementation throughout the Department of Defense. However, a gap exists in the current literature—an assessment of the *total cost* of implementing and maintaining the current joint structure. This assessment must include the total cost of military, civilian, and contractor support to joint staff work; facilities; additional work levied across the enterprise to support joint processes; and the cost of developing joint products, exercises, and assessments. That total cost of Goldwater-Nichols implementation should then be compared to the benefits derived from twenty-five years of reform to determine whether the congressional mandate has provided good value for the American taxpayer.

Certainly, jointness has brought many improvements to the U.S. military, such as more thorough operational planning, clearer lines of authority and unity of command during joint operations, and mutually agreed procedures across the services to ensure interoperability. These positive outcomes of reform efforts must be preserved; however, as will be discussed in some detail, other aspects of jointness should be reconsidered or eliminated. This in turn will raise the question: Are there more affordable ways to maintain the benefits of joint reform?

JOINT HISTORY

The current joint construct was codified and institutionalized twenty-five years ago with the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.[3] Goldwater-Nichols, as the act is known, represents the most

recent attempt in a series of compromises on military reform that dates back to the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration.

In the early stages of the Second World War, it was apparent that outdated organizational models prevented effective operational and business integration across the two separate departments of War and Navy.[4] In the spring of 1942, with no charter, executive order, or documentation of any kind, President Roosevelt formed the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a counterpart of the British Chiefs of Staff.[5] This organizational model was designed to integrate land, sea, and air capabilities.

The National Security Reform Act of 1947 was enacted in response to many of the lessons learned during the war. President Harry S. Truman was a strong proponent of the unification of the two departments. During the war, prior to succeeding Roosevelt as president, Truman had served as chairman of the Senate Special Committee to Investigate the National Defense Program. He was appalled at the findings of this committee, the waste and inefficiency of operating separate and uncoordinated military departments.[6] The 1947 act fell short of Truman's desire for complete unification, largely due to the fierce resistance offered by Navy leadership, with support from Navy-friendly members of Congress.

The Secretary of the Navy at the time, James Forrestal, was selected as the first Secretary of Defense. In March 1948, Forrestal assembled the service chiefs in Key West, Florida, to define the functions of the armed forces. As Forrestal noted in his report to President Truman, "there shall be maximum practicable integration of policies and procedures of the Departments and agencies of the National Security Establishment . . . in order to produce an effective, economical and business like organization."[7] The Key West Agreement, as the result of this summit was known, also formalized the unified command structure and stressed the overall theme of eliminating duplication of functions among the services.

Forrestal quickly became frustrated with the lack of authority of his new position and admitted to President Truman that he was having difficulty making the new organization work effectively. Subsequently, in late 1948 a group, known as the Hoover Commission (after its chairman, former president Herbert Hoover), was formed to review the National Security Act, and as a result it was amended in 1949. The amendment rebranded the National Military Establishment as the Department of Defense, strengthened the position of Secretary of Defense, and created the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.[8]

Subsequent amendments in 1953 and 1958 strengthened the position of chairman and attempted to strengthen civilian control of the military. These efforts transformed the Joint Staff from an ineffective corporate system to a more centralized organization. Nevertheless, and despite efforts to consolidate military authority, service parochialism restricted effective integration of military capabilities and prevented consistent advice to civilian authority.[9]

While each of these reform efforts attempted to make DoD more efficient and effective, they did so by increasing the size of headquarters staffs. If authority and control shifted from the services to the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff during this period, there was no reduction in the output of service and military department staffs. In all likelihood, the workload increased for the services as the size of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the JCS staff grew.

A new reform movement began in the 1980s, for several underlying reasons. The first was a series of ineffective military operations: numerous episodes during the Vietnam War; the seizure by the North Koreans in 1968 of USS *Pueblo* (AGER 2); the retaking in 1975 of the containership SS *Mayaguez* from the Khmer Rouge, which had seized and then abandoned it; EAGLE CLAW, the 1980 attempt to rescue hostages seized by the Iranians in 1979; the 1983 Beirut barracks bombing; and URGENT FURY, the 1983 invasion of Grenada. These military failures had several characteristics in common: poor military advice to civilian leadership, lack of unity of command, and inability of services to operate effectively in a joint environment.[10]

An issue raised by these operations, particularly EAGLE CLAW and URGENT FURY, was the desire, rather than operational necessity, for military operations to be conducted by more than one service. EAGLE CLAW was a high-risk, complicated operation that pushed the limits of U.S. military capabilities at the time. While many factors contributed to its failure, including simple bad luck, the urge to involve all the services may have been part of the operational problem.

The only rotary-wing platform capable of flying this mission was the Navy's RH-53D Sea Stallion. Unfortunately, their pilots were not trained for this type of special-operations mission. Although the U.S. Air Force had a cadre of over a hundred special-operations-qualified pilots of the similar HH-53, most possessing combat experience in Vietnam, Marine Corps pilots were selected for the mission.[11] Many participants, including the ground commander, later speculated that Marines were chosen by the head of the Joint Staff's Operations Directorate, Lieutenant General Phillip Shutter, U.S. Marine Corps, simply to ensure that each service was represented in the operation.[12] The failure of the rotary-wing assault phase of EAGLE CLAW significantly contributed to the disaster at Desert One and the ultimate decision to abort the mission, after the loss of eight service members and national embarrassment.

URGENT FURY, the seizure of the small, lightly defended island of Grenada, was clearly an operation ideally suited for a Marine amphibious assault. But the desire for jointness added an unnecessary level of complexity to the operation. As Secretary of the Navy John Lehman later noted in his memoirs, not one of the 1,700-man Joint Staff wanted to upset Defense reformers, and so, though sufficient Navy and Marine Corps assets were available for the task at hand, the

prevailing doctrine was "it must be joint and it must be unified."[13] Major Mark Adkin writes in his work *Urgent Fury* that during "the planning stages, it quickly became apparent to all services they must be in on the action. URGENT FURY would increase the prestige of the armed forces, so none of them could afford to miss out."[14] Similarly, as Norman Freidman, who recently addressed this issue, observes, "Goldwater-Nichols produces a good deal of inefficiency by practically guaranteeing any significant operation must be conducted jointly."[15] URGENT FURY was ultimately successful; however, its problems with joint-force integration are well documented.

The second source of 1980s Defense reform was, collectively, several instances of mismanaged acquisition and wasteful spending that garnered national media attention in the 1970s and early 1980s. Horror stories of $436 hammers, $600 toilet seats, and $7,622 coffee brewers emerged and outraged the public as well as members of Congress. In light of the outcomes of military operations and the misuse of tax dollars, it was difficult to maintain support for military spending, even in the Ronald Reagan–era buildup during the Cold War.[16]

In a closed session of the House Armed Service Committee in February 1982, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones, U.S. Air Force, told Congress that the system was broken and that despite his best efforts he was not able to reform it—congressional action was needed. This testimony was ultimately the catalyst for bringing about the Goldwater-Nichols reform, though it would take nearly five years to garner enough support in Congress, the Pentagon, and the White House to pass the watershed legislation.[17]

In order to rectify the problems that had plagued the military since Vietnam, Congress targeted eight areas of reform in the Goldwater-Nichols legislation:[18]

- Reorganizing DoD and strengthening civilian authority
- Improving the military advice provided to the president, National Security Council, and Secretary of Defense
- Placing clear responsibility on the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands for the accomplishment of missions assigned to those commands
- Ensuring that the authority of commanders of unified and specified combatant commands was fully commensurate with the responsibility of those commanders for the accomplishment of missions assigned to those commands
- Increasing attention to strategy formulation and contingency planning
- Providing for the more efficient use of Defense resources
- Improving joint officer management policies

- Otherwise enhancing the effectiveness of military operations and improving DoD management and administration.

In 1996, a decade after the passage of Goldwater-Nichols and soon after a decisive victory in Kuwait and Iraq, the new chairman, General John Shalikashvili, issued a white paper, *Joint Vision 2010,* that reaffirmed the military's commitment to jointness. *Joint Vision 2010* identified jointness as an imperative and declared that to achieve integration while conducting military operations, "we must be fully Joint—institutionally, organizationally, intellectually, and technically."[19] *Joint Vision 2010* stimulated joint growth that continued unabated until the closure of U.S. Joint Forces Command in 2011.

JOINT EFFECTIVENESS

Since the passage of Goldwater-Nichols, this watershed legislation has received mixed reviews from experts throughout the national-security enterprise. Many have felt that Goldwater-Nichols did not go far enough in reforming the Defense Department and called for future,"beyond Goldwater-Nichols" initiatives.[20] Others have argued that the entire concept of jointness was flawed, counterproductive, or unnecessary.[21] The fact remains, building and maintaining a joint force is expensive, but because jointness is often spoken of as if it were a military religion, in practice it is rarely seriously challenged. The military services appear to have accepted the current joint system as a fact of life and are attempting to make the best of it.

Within the first decade after the passage of Goldwater-Nichols, the United States engaged in joint military operations in Panama and Iraq. Advocates of Goldwater-Nichols pointed to these decisive victories as measures of success for jointness and Goldwater-Nichols. Such military leaders as General Norman Schwarzkopf and General Colin Powell observed that Goldwater-Nichols was an enabler for successful military operations during the first Gulf war. Generals Shalikashvili and Hugh Shelton, U.S. Army, both attributed significant improvements in operational planning to Goldwater-Nichols.[22]

However, the success of these two operations cannot be attributed entirely to Goldwater-Nichols reform. Few considered the quality of the adversary or the effect of transitioning to an all-volunteer force while evaluating Goldwater-Nichols. The United States enjoyed significant military superiority over each of these opponents, and many of the military problems that had appeared in Vietnam—such as fragging, crimes against civilians, and rampant drug use—had been significantly reduced in the all-volunteer force before these two operations were conducted.[23]

In 2001, James Locher III, a congressional staffer active in the passage of Goldwater-Nichols, assessed what has worked with Goldwater-Nichols and what

areas needed improvement.[24] He argued that clarification of the mission responsibilities of unified commanders and increase in the authority of the unified commanders were both worthy of the top rating, A. Another area that received an A was military advice provided to civilian leadership. It is difficult to believe that this top rating would be given today, considering the events of the past decade.

Army lieutenant colonel Paul Yingling identifies in an article, "A Failure of Generalship," systemic problems with today's senior military leaders and notes no significant improvement in ability to advise civilian leaders or effectiveness during military operations from the Vietnam era to the latest Iraqi experience.[25] Specifically, Yingling believes, "the intellectual and moral failures common to America's general officer corps in Vietnam and Iraq constitute a crisis in American generalship. Any explanation that fixes culpability on individuals is insufficient. No one leader, civilian or military, caused failure in Vietnam or Iraq. Different military and civilian leaders in the two conflicts produced similar results. In both conflicts, the general officer corps designed to advise policymakers, prepare forces and conduct operations failed to perform its intended functions."

Similarly, Marine Corps lieutenant general Greg Newbold notes, "Flaws in our civilians is one thing; the failure of the Pentagon's military leaders is quite another. Those are men who know the hard consequences of war but, with few exceptions, acted timidly when their voices urgently needed to be heard. When they knew the plan was flawed, saw intelligence distorted to justify a rationale for war [with Iraq], or witnessed arrogant micromanagement that at times crippled the military's effectiveness, many leaders who wore the uniform chose inaction. A few of the most senior officers actually supported the logic for war."[26] Did the culture of jointness and the desire to speak with one military voice contribute to the fact that dissenting opinions regarding going to war did not reach senior civilian leadership?

Another area of reform awarded an A rating by Locher was improvement to operational effectiveness. It is important here to distinguish between military *efficiency* and *effectiveness.* Goldwater-Nichols certainly improved the operational efficiency of the U.S. military, by reducing friction among U.S. military forces, establishing common processes and doctrine, and establishing clear missions and responsibilities. However, military effectiveness should be measured only by outcomes.

Again, considering the state of military operations since that assessment, the A rating is questionable. U.S. military effectiveness certainly must be questioned for doing little to prevent or deter the terrorist attacks of September 11. While there is ample blame to be shared throughout the federal government, the Department of Defense is charged with defending the nation. It is too soon to judge the effectiveness of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, but they may very well end on a par with military effectiveness in Vietnam.

Even before recent conflicts began, the value of Goldwater-Nichols reform on operational effectiveness was questioned. Naval War College professor Mackubin Owens describes the operational improvements realized from Goldwater-Nichols as marginal but believes that the unintended consequences of the act may well create problems that outweigh any benefits.[27]

The Goldwater-Nichols objective of strengthening civilian authority received a mediocre grade of B-minus. Locher argued that many of the problems that still existed could be overcome through continuing Goldwater-Nichols reform efforts. Others argue to the contrary. Some contend that Goldwater-Nichols undermined the long-standing civilian control of the military by elevating the position of chairman almost to the level of his nominal boss, the Secretary of Defense.[28] There seems to be little improvement in this area over the past decade. As Dr. Owens recently noted, "Thanks to the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, the military is united in an unprecedented way. Whereas in the past the armed services often were at odds over roles, missions, budgets, and weapons systems, today they can work together to shape, oppose, evade, or thwart the choices civilians make."[29]

After fifteen years of close observation, Locher assessed that not all of the objectives of Goldwater-Nichols reform were working as well as envisioned. Strategy making and contingency planning received a grade of C, and officer joint management received a C-plus. Defense management and administration—what Locher described as a "choking bureaucracy"—received a D rating, and the efficient use of resources received a "barely acceptable" rating of D. Locher's assessment focused on the success of the objectives; he did not include a cost-benefit analysis to determine the fiscal implications of this reform effort.

There is little to suggest any improvement with these latter two objectives since Locher's 2001 assessment. In fact, it has been argued that the situation has worsened. As former secretary Gates noted in his May 2010 speech at the Eisenhower Library, "Almost a decade ago, Secretary Rumsfeld lamented that there were 17 levels of staff between him and a line officer. The Defense Business Board recently estimated that in some cases the gap between me and an action officer may be as high as 30 layers."[30] There is no evidence to suggest that any layers have been removed since those comments were made two years ago, although what Admiral Mullen has described as the easy choice of reducing military end strength is well under way.

Joint efforts to ensure the efficient use of resources have largely been failures. Since 2001, new and cumbersome processes have been established to achieve this objective. After nearly a decade it is difficult to find evidence that joint involvement in the acquisition or requirements process has made a significant improvement. The Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC) and the Joint

Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) are the cornerstones of the chairman's effort to ensure more efficient use of Defense resources. Each of these initiatives drives costs upward through increased staffing and additional administrative requirements needed to navigate through the processes.

However, as a recent study from the Institute for Defense Analysis notes, over the past decade JCIDS has not altered any solution originally proposed by a military service, nor does it appear that the process has added value to the front end of the acquisition process for the programs examined.[31] In the same period, the Department of Defense has spent over forty-six billion dollars on canceled defense programs.[32] While this amount cannot be directly attributed to failures of JCIDS, clearly twenty-five years of Goldwater-Nichols efforts to resolve this problem have had little success.

The comments of General James E. Cartwright, USMC, provide an interesting insight into these joint processes. Testifying before the Senate in 2009 as a nominee for the position of vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Cartwright optimistically said of JCIDS, "We've just completed a major update to the JCIDS process and will continue to evaluate the need for further changes. This included changes to align the JCIDS process with the recent changes to the DoD Acquisition process. But more importantly we streamlined the process to reduce non-value-added administration and improve visibility and access for all stakeholders."[33] After being confirmed as vice chairman, General Cartwright served as head of the JROC and was deeply involved with the JCIDS process. After only two years in this position, he concluded, "JCIDS has outlived its usefulness. It has been gamed to death, we're going to throw it away. . . . JCIDS in fact has been used to obstruct the fielding of some technologies. If you don't want to get something done, you can just burden it down with studies."[34]

If there are few positive outcomes from these costly joint processes, even they may have a negative effect on the military's ability to support national defense. Former Secretary of the Navy Richard Danzig recently observed that diversity of thought and opinions within an organization are valuable tools for countering uncertainty. Genuine competition, the antithesis of jointness, offers the best probability of survival in an unpredictable world.[35] But as it is, because consensus is needed to develop or modify joint concepts or doctrine, outputs are often void of controversial issues and reduced to mutually acceptable terms. Often much is lost in this joint staffing process. As Lieutenant General Paul Van Riper, USMC, noted in a letter to the Commandant of the Marine Corps, "[The JCIDS] process has led to the creation of an excess of concepts most of which—in my view—are devoid of meaningful content. My greatest concern is that as these concepts migrate into the curricula of professional military schools they will undermine a

coherent body of doctrine creating confusion within the officer corps. . . . Rather than a method to drive change, the joint concepts seem to serve as a means to slow innovation."[36]

Cooperation and integration of capabilities on the battlefield are desirable outcomes, but in fact joint management often yields collusion among military leaders, stifles innovation and proposals, or produces advice to civilian leadership based on the lowest common denominator.[37] Finally, it does not always make sense for services to work together on issues. There are many cases in which the different needs of the services legitimately drive disparate approaches to the acquisition of military technology.[38]

NAVAL IMPLICATIONS

All the services have been affected by Goldwater-Nichols reform, but the three naval services have been particularly impacted by the current joint culture. In a 2010 U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* article, Commander Bryan McGrath, U.S. Navy (Retired), details the difficulty encountered while developing the much-needed maritime strategy ultimately issued in 2007. As he notes, many Washington insiders felt the services had "no business" creating this type of document, that strategies are created elsewhere. Others attempted to make the strategy more joint by "mentioning all of the important contributions of the other services that bolster sea power." Further, he concludes, "Goldwater-Nichols eviscerated the idea of aggressive service advocacy to eliminate excess service rivalry. It has done so in such a value-neutral way that even a salutary instance of service advocacy would be attacked and destroyed as divisive."[39]

Given the current fiscal imperative facing the naval service, recent discussions regarding the need for the Navy to regain its innovative culture have been prevalent.[40] In a recent presentation at the Potomac Institute, an Army War College professor, Dr. Williamson Murray, described the Navy's efforts during the interwar period from 1920–40 as making those years one of the most important periods in U.S. military history. He pointed also to the accomplishments of the Navy's General Board in developing the innovative leaders and new concepts and equipment that ultimately produced victory over Japan.

As mentioned previously, Goldwater-Nichols spawned a series of joint processes to ensure the efficient use of defense resources. Unfortunately, these processes substantially inhibit innovation. As Danzig notes, JCIDS overlaps with the cumbersome Defense Acquisition Process and the Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution System. This inefficient triad results in decision making measured in years and decades, compared to similar weeks or months in the private sector.[41] This delay is significant given the rapid advancements in computing, robotics, and unmanned systems. The result of these processes is that the military may have lost a competitive advantage to the nation's competitors.

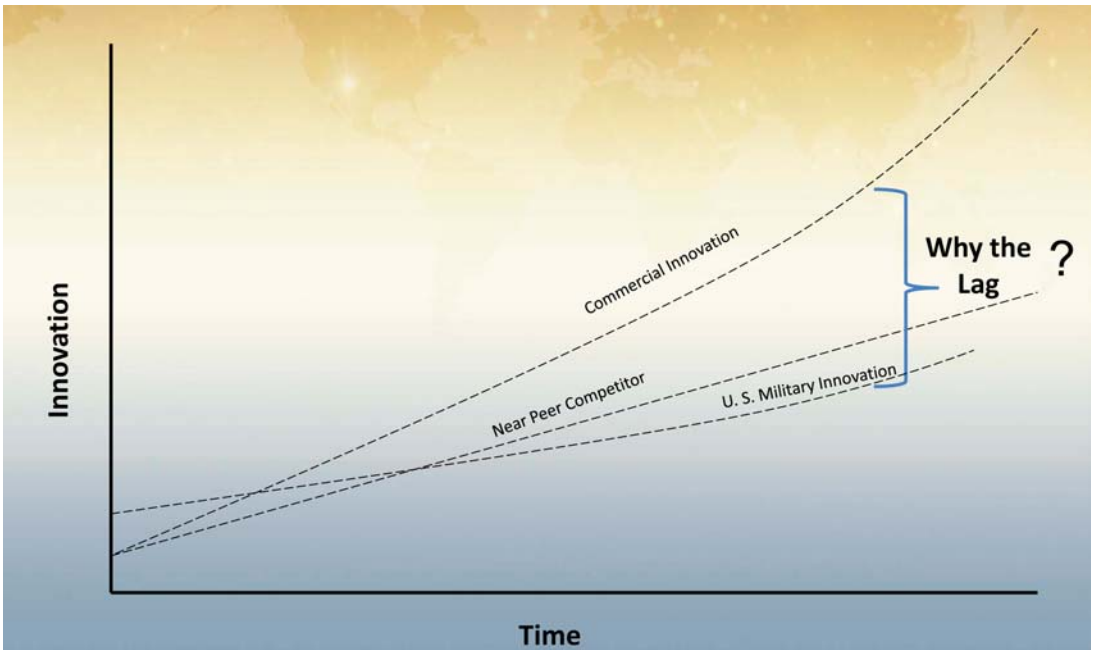
Would the General Board be as successful in today's process-driven structure? (See figure 1.)

Retired Marine lieutenant colonel Frank Hoffman has recently outlined the importance of adaptation in developing good strategy: He notes, "A good strategist recognizes that assumptions are not written in stone, and that strategy is really an iterative and continuously renewable process. It is not about writing a glossy document—it's about constantly adapting to new circumstances."[42] While this approach is certainly the correct one, given the uncertainty of the global security environment, this adaptive strategy cannot be effectively supported by the current acquisition and budget-formulation processes. If we attempted what Hoffman recommends in today's regulatory environment, the results would be costly "requirements creep" and cancellations of even more acquisition programs.

OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF GOLDWATER-NICHOLS

The vast majority of officers serving in the military today have spent their entire careers under the joint rubric. If Goldwater-Nichols has been as successful in reforming the military as many senior leaders claim, jointness should by now be fully engrained in the military culture. Therefore, fewer organizations and processes should be needed to compel jointness. After twenty-five years of reform, DoD should now transition from reforming to maintaining jointness, where appropriate.

FIGURE 1



Source: Office of Naval Research.

Whether one agrees with the outcomes of Goldwater-Nichols reform or the extent to which jointness has been implemented, there is little doubt that jointness will, and should, remain part of the U.S. military culture for the foreseeable future. Can more affordable solutions be identified to maintain its positive aspects?

As one defense scholar, Dr. T. X. Hammes, notes, defense strategy for the forthcoming era of austerity must achieve coherence among the ends, ways, and means.[43] When examining existing programs, organizations, and processes, DoD must identify the *ends* it must attain and identify innovative *ways* to accommodate shrinking *means*. Similarly, the department must consider the "buy Fords, not Ferraris" approach that has been advocated by Commander Henry Hendrix for the Navy.[44] Hendrix contends that the service should focus its investments in affordable capabilities with practical features rather than those with expensive but often unnecessary options. This approach must be adopted by the Department of Defense writ large, to include its suborganizations and processes.

The following options should be considered by policy makers and defense reformers alike, as representing the "Ford" approach to maintaining the beneficial aspects of jointness.

Leverage Joint Training and Education to Maintain the Joint Culture

Each military department maintains its own Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) infrastructure as a central component of initial officer accession. The four services currently maintain over 480 ROTC units across the country, serving an even greater number of colleges and universities. As can be expected, there is a great deal of overlap. For instance, there are twenty-four ROTC units in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania alone, and many of the larger universities have three ROTC units on a single campus.

At institutions where more than one service is now represented, the units should be combined into a joint ROTC unit. Curriculum could be altered so that topics relevant to all military officers are provided to students in the first two years and service-specific education and training in the final two. Exposure to different service perspectives on common topics would be a valuable learning experience for students. Students could apply for selection to the services of their choice after two years, at which point they could make informed decisions. This would create a joint environment at the onset of their military careers. Similarly, the service academies could modify their curricula to increase the joint or interagency exposure of their students.[45]

Starting officers out with a joint rather than service perspective may help reduce the service parochialism fostered by the current system. Providing all officers a joint perspective at the start of their careers would be more effective than attempting to reform established service-centric acculturation in midcareer. This

recommendation could not only inculcate jointness into the officer corps but realize cost savings.[46]

However, much larger savings could be realized in a joint-officer development concept that eliminated the requirement for all officers to complete joint duty prior to selection to flag or general-officer rank. Rather than focusing on individual officers, Congress should require a certain percentage of each service's officer corps to maintain current joint qualifications. Changing the present requirement may also stimulate larger personnel reform initiatives within the Navy.

As Yingling argues, there are systemic problems affecting the development of senior officers. This is particularly so in the Navy. Is the current system simply demanding too much professional diversity in officers' career paths? Is it realistic to expect a naval officer to become an expert in a technical field and warfare specialty, complete successful tours at staff and command positions, perform joint duty, and remain current in professional military education, all within twenty years?

The current system takes a cookie-cutter approach to all officers and assumes this varied expertise must be obtained in two-or-three-year periods. Regardless of performance in a billet, officers are transferred to offer opportunities for the next in line. If officers are performing well, why not leave them in their positions longer? At some point the demand for quality performance in a billet must trump frequent rotation for the sole purpose of officer development.

The current outdated personnel system not only does a disservice to the officer corps but is unnecessarily costly as well. This professional diversity requires frequent transfers, and the cost of these movements is significant.[47] Additionally, where officers are required to maintain operational skills that are prone to atrophy, such as in the naval aviation community, the requirement to serve in joint and other duties may have a negative effect on performance, losing a sizable training investment.[48]

As Admiral James Stavridis and Captain Mark Hagerott argue, the Navy's officer corps is out of balance and reflects platform-centric approaches dating back to the Cold War.[49] They propose separate career tracks aligned to technical operations; to joint, interagency, and international operations; or to general/hybrid operations. If this concept were supported by Congress, only the officers on track for flag and general-officer positions on joint staffs would need to maintain joint qualifications.

Joint professional military education is a critical component of this proposed officer development strategy. However, a certain degree of institutional resistance in the Navy, brought on by the numerous competing demands on the officer corps, inhibits effective officer education. Dr. Joan Johnson-Freese of the Naval War College highlights numerous issues with the current professional military education system. In particular, "Navy students regularly report that they were

discouraged from attending a war college in residence by their detailers or superiors, and warned that to do so would be detrimental to their careers. To say this disdain for education among their superiors affects their attitude in class would be understatement."[50]

As a former commandant of the Army War College, Major General Robert Scales, has noted, services begin to find potential flag and general officers in the grades of major and lieutenant commander.[51] It is at this point in an officer's career path that decisions should be made on future potential and best career paths. Once these determinations have been made, graduate education programs could be aligned to career paths rather than the haphazard approach currently in place.

Entry-level officer accession programs embedded with education in joint matters, as well as more effective use of joint professional military education, could better shape an officer's career path and be more fiscally responsible than the current approach. In 2005, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff issued his vision for joint officer development, with the stated objective of producing the largest pool of fully qualified, inherently joint officers at the O-6 (colonel and Navy captain) level for promotion to flag and general officer.[52]

Reduce Joint Billets and Organizations

The politically savvy architects of Goldwater-Nichols understood that in order for this new reform effort to take hold, the legislation would need to contain some form of incentive to inspire military officers to take a renewed interest in joint matters. This incentive took the form of the requirement to complete joint duty for flag/general-officer promotion consideration.

Examination of the Joint Duty Assignment List for fiscal year 2011 reveals that across the DoD, 13,070 billets were classified as joint billets.[53] Of the 13,070 only 758, or 5.8 percent, were classified as critical billets. One must question whether each of the 12,312 noncritical joint billets existed out of necessity or had been created simply to facilitate joint officer development. The cost of maintaining this infrastructure is significant.[54]

The requirement for joint duty was an important part of the reform effort, and to support this mandate, ample billets needed to be available to manage the throughput of military officers from each service. If the requirement for all officers to complete joint duty were rescinded, joint billet structure, or even organizations, could be reduced.

The joint force witnessed in 2011 the closure of U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), whereby several joint organizations were deemed unnecessary, while others were merged under the Joint Staff. This occurred in the midst of two ongoing conflicts, and there have been no noticeable negative effects to ongoing combat operations involving the joint force. It is too early to determine whether there will be any negative effects from the closure of JFCOM. Even though many

of its functions are still being performed, eliminating the command's overhead saved the Defense Department two billion dollars.[55]

One approach to reducing joint billets and achieving substantial cost savings is to rethink the military organization for the operational level of war. Currently the military has nine combatant commands to manage both functions and geographic regions. This approach dates back to World War II and is based on the need that emerged then to establish special commands to integrate war-fighting functions in geographic areas. The requirement for such organizations must be placed in context; at the time, the Navy and Army were separate, cabinet-level departments; joint operations during this period would be considered interagency operations today.

"Unified" (that is, involving the forces of more than one service) commands of this kind of the post–World War II era evolved into the combatant-command organizational model of today. Both the National Security Act of 1947 and Goldwater-Nichols stressed the operational importance of a unified command structure to coordinate all military operations in a geographic area and to ensure unity of command under civilian control. With the changes in the global security environment since the end of World War II, however, some question whether these organizational models are still valid or effective. As Ambassador Edward Marks has observed, "In today's world, military engagement programs with other countries can only be seen as part of the overall engagement activity of the U. S. government. The . . . 'nexus' of security challenges—terrorism, narcotics, smuggling, international criminal networks, etc.—can no longer be managed as single agency programs but must be integrated into 'whole of government' programs. Unfortunately the character of the geographic commands militates against effective whole-of-government engagement programs and therefore coherent foreign policy."[56]

Many proposals exist for creating the interagency equivalent of a combatant commander, inclusive of the DoD, that would answer directly to the National Security Council.[57] While these initiatives have merit and need further investigation, it is likely the Department of Defense would still need an organization to integrate military capabilities and provide unified command in a geographic area.

Currently joint commanders are empowered to an extent heretofore never seen. This not only increases the number of decision makers involved in operational and resourcing issues but makes it difficult to reverse negative trends or correct mistakes.[58] The current organizational functional alignment enables the combatant commanders to generate requirements; the services, for the most part, must program and budget on the basis of these requirements. This creates a rift between the services, which are focused on long-term service health, and the combatant commanders, who are focused on their two-year tours of joint duty.

It also hinders strategic investment and long-term research and development.[59] While the current organizational model of combatant commanders may be (questionably) effective, they are (unquestionably) expensive to maintain.

Examination of the Joint Duty Assignment List of 2010 shows a substantial number of joint billets are apportioned to the combatant commands—nearly 7,400 billets, or 62 percent. In 2010 the Defense Business Board found that the ten unified combatant commands had between them over ninety-six thousand military, civilian, and contractor staff members and annual budgets totaling over $16.5 billion.[60] For comparison, in 1988 the "specified" (i.e., single-service functional commands), unified, and supporting commands had a combined staff of slightly under sixty thousand personnel.[61] During this same period of headquarters growth, total active-duty end strength decreased from 2.1 million to 1.4 million.[62]

The Department of Defense can reorganize the combatant commands by transferring the missions and authorities of each of the six geographic combatant commanders to designated "service executive agents." For example, the U.S. Pacific Command's roles and missions would be assumed by the U.S. Pacific Fleet Command. As General Schwarzkopf noted after the first Gulf war, "Goldwater-Nichols established very, very clear lines of command authority and responsibilities for subordinate commanders, and that meant a much more effective fighting force."[63]

These same clear lines of authority could be established for each service executive agent. Unlike during World War II, the command relationships of *supported* and *supporting* commands are now well understood and frequently used, and they could be applied to the new organization.

While this dual-hatting of responsibility may appear to impose overwhelming tasks, military leaders are often placed in positions of command authority over diverse missions. For example, today the commanding general of Marine Forces Command also commands Fleet Marine Forces Atlantic, U.S. Marine Corps Bases Atlantic, and U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe.

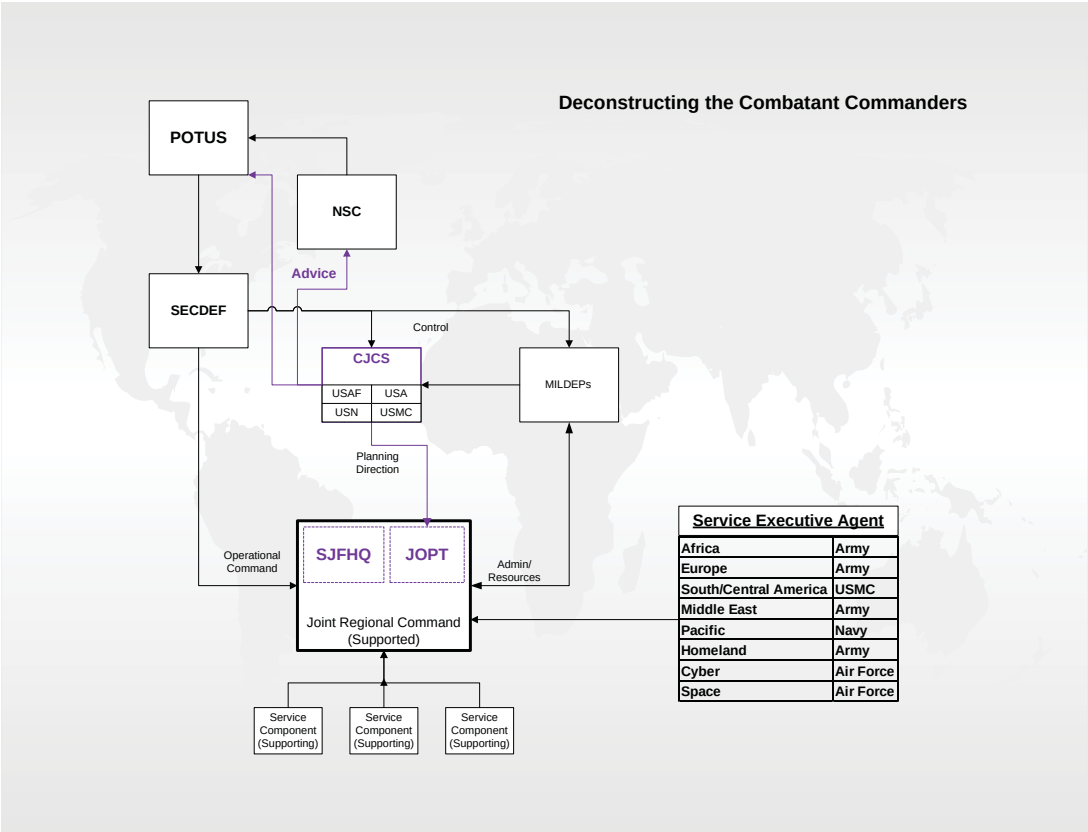
The command organization for each of the service commands selected to fill this kind of role would need to be slightly modified. First, each service commander would need a Deputy Commander for Joint Operations from a service other than that of the commander. Second, each service command would need to maintain a Standing Joint Forces Headquarters element. Finally, a robust Joint (or interagency) Operational Planning Team would be embedded within the organization. The Joint Operational Planning Team would be led by a one-star—that is, a brigadier general or rear admiral (lower half)—from another service who would serve as the team leader but would have a dual reporting requirement to both the service commander and the Joint Staff.

To support this new model, services should eliminate individual service component commands and support the new organizations from a centralized Forces Command—for example, Marine Forces Command and U.S. Fleet Forces Command (see figure 2).[64]

The three functional combatant commanders should also be reevaluated. U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has been largely efficient and effective since its inception, and its current organization structure should not be altered. However, an examination of roles and responsibilities of the current stakeholders in special operations—OSD Office of Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, the Joint Staff, and USSOCOM—may yield more streamlined organizations.

When the U.S. Transportation Command was established in 1987, the task of moving large forces and volumes of materiel to areas of conflict around the globe was one that only the U.S. military could manage. Today, however, global distribution of goods and material is the norm throughout the commercial world. Lieutenant General Claude V. Christianson, U.S. Army (Retired), argued recently

FIGURE 2



there is an inherent link between the Defense Logistics Agency (the supplier) and Transportation Command (the distributer) and that the creation of a global logistics organization should be considered.[65] These two defense organizations should be merged to create that more effective organization.

Is the global management of logistics an inherently military function, or could this function be accomplished more efficiently by greater use of civilian personnel? A 2011 Congressional Budget Office study noted military compensation was significantly higher than that of federal employees with the same education and experience.[66] Eliminating the four-star command infrastructure and many of the military billets in the logistics arena would provide considerable savings, as the two-billion-dollar savings from the closure of JFCOM suggests.

The U.S. Strategic Command appears to be the catchall combatant commander. It is difficult to find the commonality behind maintaining strategic weapons, countering the threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and performing cyberspace and information operations. The functions of Strategic Command should be deconstructed and a flatter arrangement put in place. For example, the WMD mission could be wholly transferred to the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, and cyberspace (or the entire electromagnetic spectrum) should be the equivalent of a geographic combatant commander, with the responsibility given to the Air Force. Some strategic functions could be managed by the Joint Staff.

By transforming the current combatant-command structure, the Defense Department could also eliminate several four-star and many lesser flag and general-officer billets. DoD is currently maintaining a historically high number of flag and general-officer billets, compared to military end strength. Robert Gates identified this issue as an efficiency initiative in 2010, and several groups, such as the Project on Government Oversight, have testified before Congress on the problem of "star creep."[67] That is, the number of flag and general officers has increased, while the size of the total force has decreased. Eliminating up to a third of the total admirals and generals would provide a significant cost savings.[68] More than that, however, it would send a clear message that the military is serious about operating as efficiently as possible during this era of fiscal austerity.

Reduce the Roles and Missions of the Joint Staff

If the previous two concepts were implemented, the expanded roles and missions of the Joint Staff could also be reduced or eliminated. In the twenty-five years since the passage of Goldwater-Nichols, the Joint Staff has grown significantly in size and influence, often at the peril of the military departments and services.

As the Defense Business Board has pointed out, since 2000, over fifty thousand civilian or military billets have been added to the staffs of OSD, the Joint Staff, the combatant commanders, and Defense agencies—as well as an unknown number of contractor personnel. In the notional organizational structure there are over

twenty-nine layers of bureaucracy between an action officer on a service staff and the Secretary of Defense.[69] This should be a lucrative target area for those looking for ways to improve DoD efficiency.

The Joint Staff should be focused on strategic issues affecting global military operations. One recent analysis notes that

> the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff shall be responsible for the following:
>
> Strategic Direction. Assisting the President and the Secretary of Defense in providing for the strategic direction of the armed forces.
>
> Strategic Planning.
>
> - Preparing strategic plans, including plans which conform with resource levels . . .
> - Preparing joint logistic and mobility plans to support those strategic plans . . .
>
> Contingency Planning; Preparedness.
>
> - Providing for the preparation and review of contingency plans . . .
> - Preparing joint logistic and mobility plans to support those contingency plans.[70]

In addition to these functions, the Joint Staff must continue to perform the previous JFCOM functions deemed essential—for example, developing joint doctrine, scheduling and evaluating joint exercises, and managing joint interoperability.

The Honorable Michael Donley argued ten years after the passage of Goldwater-Nichols that reform efforts since 1947 had already greatly lessened the influence of the civilian leadership within the military departments. He held that because of the shift of responsibilities to OSD and the Joint Staff, their spans of control had so broadened as to suboptimize the entire Defense Department. Military departments, he concluded, should take on a greater role in integration and focus more on balancing operational requirements with strategic investment decisions.[71]

As stated previously, one of the main criticisms of Goldwater-Nichols has been the weakening of civilian control over the military. By reducing the scope of Joint Staff influence in nonoperational matters, civilian leadership within the military departments could be made more effective and a proper balance of civilian control achieved.

It can be argued that the inefficiencies that appalled Truman during World War II are now significantly worse, and more costly. This is true despite several major reform efforts intended to improve the performance of the Department of Defense. As a key player in the congressional effort to create and pass Goldwater-Nichols, James Locher, concluded in 2001, "Defense organization is important; it deserves continuous and innovative attention. Congress came to the department's rescue

in 1986, but today the Pentagon's organizational problems are again stacking up, and at an ever faster pace."[72]

National security expert Dr. Eliot Cohen saw over a decade ago that the leadership structure of the military had been molded by Goldwater-Nichols; that is equally the case today, if not more so. The military's structure represents outdated visions—a command structure conceived in 1943 and a personnel system begun in the 1970s. "Given the flaws [in Goldwater-Nichols], the time is now ripe for a revision of the Goldwater-Nichols Act."[73] Unfortunately, the decadelong response to the September 11th attacks makes it apparent that little action was taken on his recommendations. His assessment has even more merit in the current fiscal environment than when Cohen wrote. Fiscal austerity should serve to force consideration of long-overdue reforms.

The current "easy choice" of reducing end strength to survive the forthcoming budget reductions should be considered only after all means of reducing unnecessary overhead have been exhausted. Before a single ship, plane, or Marine is cut from our existing force structure, policy makers within the Department of Defense and on Capitol Hill must look at the results of previous reform efforts and repeal specific elements that no longer provide value or are simply unaffordable. A more modest, "Ford-like" approach to maintaining the benefits of jointness would be an excellent place to start.

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40. The Navy Warfare Development Command recently held a two-day seminar in Norfolk, Virginia. Copies of the briefings and material are available at https://www.nwdc.navy.mil/Pages/InnovationSyposium.aspx.
41. Danzig, *Driving in the Dark,* p. 19.
42. Frank Hoffman, "Crafting a 'Good' Strategy," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* (April 2012), p. 62. Hoffman attributes the first of the quoted sentences to Williamson Murray, *War, Strategy and Military Effectiveness* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2010), pp. 136–37, 164–66.
43. Thomas Hammes, "Limited Means Strategy: What to Do When the Cupboard Is Bare," *Infinity Journal,* no. 3 (Summer 2011), pp. 8–10.

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45. Mark Hagerott, "Rebalancing the Naval Officer Corps," in *Keeping the Edge: Revitalizing America's Military Officer Corps,* ed., John A. Nagl and Brian M. Burton (Washington, D.C.: Center for a New American Security, 2010), p. 45. See also James Stavridis and Mark Hagerott, "The Heart of an Officer: Joint, Interagency, and International Operations and Navy Career Development," *Naval War College Review* 62, no. 2 (Spring 2009), pp. 27–41.

46. Assume a small staff of military and civilian personnel is required at each unit—eight, for the purpose of this analysis. If three units are present at each of the larger universities, perhaps the total staff for the four services could be reduced by 50 percent; twelve personnel would be needed to staff a joint unit. The cost savings per joint-unit conversion would be approximately $1.4 million per year, based on annual cash compensation of $120,000. If this were applied to the largest fifty universities, the cost savings could reach $360 million across the Future Years Defense Program (i.e., by the department's financial program as approved by the secretary). Cost savings would be higher if indirect compensation and permanent-change-of-station (PCS) costs were factored in. While $360 million may appear to be an insignificant amount in context of the entire Defense budget, it is important to consider the trade-offs occurring for maintaining inefficient practices. On the basis solely of cash compensation, this change would result in keeping 2,800 lance corporals, or roughly three infantry battalions, on active duty each year.

47. On the strength of a 1996 study by the General Accounting Office (as the Government Accountability Office was then known), and adjusted for inflation, the Navy could save nearly a billion dollars per year by extending tour lengths. See *Military Personnel Reassignments: Services Are Exploring Opportunities to Reduce Relocation Costs,* Report to the Chairman, Subcommittee on Military Personnel, Committee on National Security, House of Representatives, GAO/NSAID-96-84 (Washington, D.C.: February 1996), available at www.gao.gov/.

48. John Lehman, "Is the Naval Aviation Culture Dead?," U.S. Naval Institute *Proceedings* (September 2011).

49. Stavridis and Hagerott, "Heart of an Officer."

50. Joan Johnson-Freese, "Reform of Military Education: Twenty-Five Years Later," *Orbis* 56, no. 1 (Winter 2012), p. 148.

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52. Scott Carpenter, "The Joint Officer: A Professional Specialist," *Joint Force Quarterly,* no. 63 (4th Quarter 2011), p. 126.

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54. Using a modest figure of $130,000 for cash compensation for each officer filling these noncritical billets, the total is $1.6 billion per year, or $4.8 billion to complete a standard three-year tour. The cost of gaining the joint experience is significantly higher when deferred compensation, joint education and training, and PCS costs are factored in.

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59. Cohen, "Defending America in the Twenty-First Century."

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71. Michael Donley, "Prospects for the Military Departments," *Joint Force Quarterly,* no. 13 (Autumn 1996), p. 61.

72. Locher, "Taking Stock of Goldwater-Nichols," p. 113.

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