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TOWARD THE VALUED IDEAL OF JOINTNESS  
The Need for Unity of Command in U.S. Armed Forces

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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Abstract of

TOWARD THE VALUED IDEAL OF JOINTNESS:  
THE NEED FOR UNITY OF COMMAND IN U.S. ARMED FORCES

The U.S. Armed Forces concept of jointness is flawed and, contrary to current rhetoric, the struggle to attain it is much more than simply overcoming force of habit and eliminating stovepipes. Such struggles are symptomatic of a larger, systemic problem: lack of unity of command. Promoting the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the five star rank and ceding to him operational and administrative control of all U.S. armed forces would enable him to provide a unifying vision, accruing operational efficiencies through the development of clear and prescriptive doctrine and the growth of shared and complimentary cultures.

The trend during the past half-century has been a steady increase in the power and prestige of the Chairman. Opponents of change fear a continued consolidation of power would result in necessary Service interests taking a back seat to the Chairman's personal preferences. They emphasize that an empowered Chairman would threaten civilian control over the military, suppress Service autonomy, inhibit innovation, and cause armed forces to lose their core competencies.

This thesis concludes that the dissenting views are largely alarmist in nature. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is the only military member in a position to push full implementation of joint initiatives, protect national security interests from Services' cultural biases, and foster a unified, synchronized, and synergized style of warfare.

## TOWARD THE VALUED IDEAL OF JOINTNESS THE NEED FOR UNITY OF COMMAND IN U.S. ARMED FORCES

“Separate ground, sea, and air warfare is gone forever.”  
Dwight D. Eisenhower<sup>1</sup>

### INTRODUCTION

Senior Defense Department officials and military leaders from all services tout “jointness” as the future of warfare, as they expound upon past and planned endeavors to more fully inculcate jointness into the military ethos. Unfortunately, the U.S. Armed Forces’ concept of jointness is flawed and, contrary to current rhetoric, the struggle to attain it is much more than simply overcoming force of habit and eliminating stovepipes. Such struggles are symptomatic of a larger, systemic problem: lack of unity of command. Congress should resolve this problem by promoting the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the five star rank and vesting in him operational and administrative command of all U.S. armed forces.

If you ask five military members to define the term jointness you will likely get five different responses. Confusion persists because leaders do not agree whether jointness is a type of integration or a measure of unification. *Integration* refers to improving procedural and systems compatibility, enabling blending of specialized capabilities of different Services, and enhancing combat effectiveness through their synergy. *Unification* refers to combining available military capability into a single operating force, devoid of Service lines of demarcation.<sup>2</sup> The consequences of the choice of definition are severe within the context of long range force planning. An official definition is lacking and it is not clear which vintage is envisioned by those designing strategy and force structure.

Attempts to become more "joint" are ironic. If senior leadership cannot even define the term, then how can they possibly coordinate their efforts to the accomplishment of its end? The four services have no unified plan and they do not share a vision for the future that would naturally come as the result of unity of command. Promoting the Chairman to the five star rank and ceding to him operational and administrative control of all U.S. Armed Forces would enable him to provide a unifying vision, accruing operational efficiencies through the development of clear and prescriptive doctrine and the growth of shared and complimentary cultures.

## **BACKGROUND**

"Be cautious lest you innocently plant the seeds of a military dictatorship, through tremendous consolidation of authority. Military dictators have made lots of history, and in the end have invariably brought themselves and their countries down in ruins."<sup>3</sup>

Sentiments similar to those quoted above have existed in this country since its inception. Increases in the authority of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs are not without precedent, but mistrust of the military, rooted in experiences under British colonial rule, slowed what many view as necessary progress.

The historical context of defense reorganization and unification goes back to the Civil War when President Lincoln brought into being a "unified command" which eventually won the war. Later, in response to widespread criticism over inefficiency during the Spanish-American War, a staff system was created to "impose order on our military." True to the American tradition of distrust for standing armies, the General Staff Act of 1903 was carefully worded to ensure civilian control of the military by giving the Chief of Staff the power to "supervise" but not to "command." It marked the beginning in a long series of

defense reforms demonstrating distrust of concentrated military power and ensuring decentralized military authority subject to civilian checks.

The general framework of the existing Joint Chiefs of Staff system came about as a result of an ad hoc organization developed by President Roosevelt to assist in the coordination of military efforts with the British defense staff during World War II. Post-war analyses and debate laid the foundation for the National Security Act of 1947, which codified the Joint Chiefs of Staff in a "compromise between those who favored full Service integration and those who feared centralization of military authority."<sup>4</sup>

Revisions to the National Security Act after the Korean War focused on "perennial issues of economics and the inefficiencies" inherent in a joint system which was "tailored to preserve civilian control and prevent centralization of military power."<sup>5</sup> The National Security Act Amendments of 1949 formalized the billet of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Reorganization Plan Number 6 of 1953 strengthened his authority by transferring to him management of the Joint Staff. The Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958 increased his power further by giving him authority to vote on issues confronting the Joint Chiefs. The Department of Defense Authorization Act of 1985, in part, directed the Chairman to act as the spokesman for the commanders of the unified and specified commands on operational requirements.<sup>6</sup> Authors of these revisions recognized the Chairman's key role in coordinating the disparate goals and focusing the distorted visions of Services posturing to spearhead U.S. national security efforts, each viewing its own interests as central to national security.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 established the Chairman as the principal military advisor to the President and tasked him with, among other things, the functions of:

- developing doctrine for the joint employment of the Armed Forces
- performing net assessments to determine the capabilities of the Armed Forces
- formulating policies for joint training
- establishing and maintaining a uniform system of evaluating preparedness.<sup>8</sup>

Clearly the common trend in the past half-century has been an increase in the power and prestige of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. The consensus seems to be that, while strengthening the role of the Chairman, Goldwater-Nichols neither planted the seeds of dictatorship nor solved problems of inefficiency inherent in the military establishment. "Many have argued, however, that the legislation took an important step in the right direction."<sup>9</sup>

#### **CLEAR AND PRESCRIPTIVE DOCTRINE**

"Seek real unity of thought and action, not just a unification of organization which does nothing in itself to reduce the number and complexities of the problems involved."<sup>10</sup>

Doctrine provides a military organization with a common philosophy, language, and purpose.<sup>11</sup> According to Hughes, doctrine must prescribe and govern to unify belief and action.

*Prescription and requirement* are words that stick in the American craw and are virtually expunged from the written doctrine of the U.S. armed services; but doctrine loses its power to the extent that the response to it is optional.<sup>12</sup>

While doctrine that is too "powerful" risks inhibiting initiative, this is largely a problem of teaching operators to invoke doctrine without accepting extremes in interpretation.

If doctrine is constructed and construed so rigidly that initiative is destroyed, then its forcefulness will be channeled too narrowly; the enemy will know what to expect and learn to evade the highly focused combat energy that results. On the other hand, a doctrine that denies its own prescriptive nature must – insofar as the denial is believed by those it affects – be powerless.<sup>13</sup>

Services draw from a body of doctrine derived from a plentitude of sources. It is at the same time general principles, common practices, and detailed procedures. It is whatever the issuing authority wants it to be. Because doctrine is largely “self-defining,” it is almost impossible to attribute to it a universal definition, other than that “*doctrine is what is taught within a group as its corporate beliefs, principles, laws, or faith.* Anything that authoritatively unites thought and action is effectively doctrine.”<sup>14</sup> To affect the quality and focus of his doctrine, a commander must be more than just a signatory whose autograph appears at the bottom of the first page in a publication. He must be fully engaged in shaping belief structures, charting corporate visions, and reinforcing core values of the organization he hopes to unite.

To date, the Chairman has been largely relegated to a signatory role, and he appears to be autographing joint doctrine which is poorly written, not clearly understood, optionally implemented, and parochial in nature. Goldwater-Nichols made the Chairman responsible for publishing joint doctrine but failed to provide him resources necessary for its development. By default, the process for developing joint doctrine has become consensus-based. Staffing shortages have forced the Chairman to subcontract the writing of most joint doctrine to the services, prolonging the time needed to publish it and compromising its integrity with the lowest conceptual common denominators upon which the services do not disagree. The result is often promulgation of imprecise and contradictory doctrinal concepts.<sup>15</sup>

A close look at these joint doctrinal manuals gives a good picture of how watered down our current system forces them to be. These manuals explain how important it is to save the nation, support national policy, give explanations and definitions of terms and provide explicit information on a variety of possible command arrangements. The problem is they never tell how we are supposed to fight – that is what doctrine should do!<sup>16</sup>

Contributing to doctrinal imperfections are the contradictory paradigms in which Services author their publications. The Army sees doctrine as an essential basis of organization and as an “engine of change.” The Navy views doctrine as an impediment to independent operations. In an effort to preserve independence, the Navy defines doctrine as conceptual but not directive. The Air Force subordinates doctrine to its focus on systems characteristics and the Marine Corps treats doctrine as a codification of its essence rather than a body of knowledge to be consulted.<sup>17</sup> These paradigms dramatically affect how each service interprets doctrine and gives each subcontracted publication a service-unique spin.

The ultimate goal of joint doctrine should be its incorporation to the extent achieved by the Australian Defense Force (ADF). They have “come to accept joint doctrine as a very useful means to achieve the often illusive goal of jointness,” and have established as a principle of their joint doctrine the translation of strategic concepts into operational directives, detailing the methods by which their services can support Australian national strategy. Thus, ADF joint doctrine provides the methods by which the services can support Australian national strategy and is fully accepted and integrated into their method of warfare.<sup>18</sup> Widespread criticism of the joint doctrine development process, however, coupled with the contradicting views of the purposes and uses of doctrine held by the Services, tend to cause them to feel unbound by joint doctrine and frustrates the attainment of doctrine’s ultimate goal. Furthermore, the Chairman is not vested with command authority and the

Joint Staff is specifically prohibited from exercising executive authority, so the extent to which they can direct doctrinal incorporation is limited.<sup>19</sup>

Drastic and immediate improvement in the quality of our doctrine and its level of acceptance are imperative because “joint doctrine is the foundation for effective joint training and therefore the basis of joint readiness.”<sup>20</sup> The Chairman must be empowered to create doctrine formed from sound principles, not lowest common denominators. He must sanction Joint Forces Command’s doctrinal and organizational innovations, even if contrary to service paradigms.<sup>21</sup> He must enforce doctrinal “acceptance” through a program of joint training and assessment, and he must establish joint training standards to which deploying forces are held. “Long range and highly lethal precision guided munitions – launched from an assortment of ground, naval, and air platforms – will continue to blur the lines separating land, sea, and air warfare. The United States can no longer afford the inefficiencies of a system that brings forces together for the first time on the battlefield.”<sup>22</sup>

#### **SHARED AND COMPLIMENTARY CULTURE**

“...we may well ask whether history has ever known a great general who was not ambitious; whether, indeed, such a figure is conceivable.”  
Carl Von Clausewitz<sup>23</sup>

Culture and doctrine are inextricably linked. Culture affects how you interpret doctrine; it establishes the paradigm in which you work, and the paradigm tints your vision and filters your judgement. Furthermore, culture itself is a very potent form of doctrine. Hughes contends that “doctrine is anything, whether or not it calls itself doctrine, that serves to unify action. Such unlabelled doctrine can be very powerful, often having more sweeping effects than do officially promulgated practices.”<sup>24</sup>

Defining experiences of World War II provided the genesis of existing culture. “That conflict – the greatest in history – created doctrinal and organizational foundations that ran broad and deep in the services, giving them institutionalized visions of warfare that decisively shaped how they looked at war.”<sup>25</sup> The Navy formed a rich culture revering independence and tradition. Its history of command at sea inspired a deep appreciation for the “Captain’s” ultimate authority and responsibility. The Navy is generally inflexible to change and its yearning for independence makes it shy away from opportunities to promote jointness.<sup>26</sup> The Air Force has a short history defined best by devotion to technology. It measures its success more in terms of quality of forces than of quantity.<sup>27</sup> While sure of its relevance in the defense of our national security, the Air Force still feels compelled to defend its legitimacy as a separate Service.<sup>28</sup> The Army is best characterized as a service-oriented organization. Its concept of itself is best summed up by the phrase, “Duty, Honor, Country.”<sup>29</sup> The Army knows it is dependent upon its sister services to properly wage war, and therefore it is more receptive to the concept of jointness.<sup>30</sup>

Each service, then, brings these distinct approaches and unique views to the joint fight. What is often interpreted as parochial behavior may also be characterized as “an operating style based on a professional milieu of values, traditions, and experiences that made each service the best at what it did.” The persistence of service-unique perspectives, however, can no longer be tolerated with a wink, a grin, and a comment that it is “only natural.”<sup>31</sup>

For those willing to look closely there were warning signals. *Service Visions* featured eye-catching layouts but were remarkably thin and sketchy. With brief nods to the *National Security Strategy* and *Joint Vision 2010*, they expressed service positions with scant mention of sister services. Though technology and the threat now focused all services on land targets, the actual mechanics of targeting, airspace deconfliction, theater ballistic missile defense, theater logistical architecture, intelligence dissemination, and a hundred other battlefield processes evaded precise definition and resolution ...

As the weapons which could attack operational and tactical land targets proliferate in every service, each component fights to retain battlefield control of its systems in accordance with service doctrine and culture.<sup>32</sup>

“According to Inside the Navy, ‘none of the service chiefs can agree on what Joint Vision 2010 should look like.’”<sup>33</sup>

Allowed to incubate, institutional attitudes will both persist and replicate. Ambitious Service Chiefs are inclined to promote personal agenda that have made them successful. It is human nature. Through overt acts and subtle persuasion, they reward members who support their views and inspire others to “toe the line.”

One of the first acts of new leaders is typically to bring into the organization individuals who will act to strengthen and reinforce the values on which the leader’s organizational vision is based. Leaders also try to identify key persons in the organization who share their values and who can then become part of the leader’s cadre or inner circle, acting to support the leader’s values and vision. Of course, it is equally important to remove persons who, by their actions, demonstrate values that are seriously incompatible with those being inculcated as the basis of the leader’s vision and the organization’s culture. The new leader will, finally, implement a general selection process that, insofar as possible, will help to ensure that new members of the organization will share these values.<sup>34</sup>

In his book *Sacred Vessels*, O’Connell describes the historical ineffectiveness of the battleship as a weapon, and how through force of culture it was elevated to the position of centerpiece of U.S. naval strategy despite its inadequacies. Admiral Dewey, former Admiral of the Navy and President of the General Board (of strategy and naval construction) built this culture throughout his tenure by “subtle but pervasive influence which suppressed innovation and pushed forward his fault-laden strategy.”<sup>35</sup> Even after his death, Dewey “lived on through the medium of the General Board” because he had carefully screened every applicant to ensure its members supported his philosophy.<sup>36</sup>

These pervasive attitudes and cultures, left unchallenged, will continue under their own inertia to challenge jointness and threaten national security. There is considerable evidence that the qualities of U.S. military forces are determined more by service cultural preferences than by the "threat"<sup>37</sup> A competing observation is that services do not dismiss threats, but rather misinterpret them because the view from their paradigm is distorted.<sup>38</sup> Either way, "to the extent that such visions promote myopia about war and are used as springboards for institutional independence and dominance, they are at least contentious, if not counterproductive, to national security."<sup>39</sup>

Therein lies the challenge for a newly empowered Chairman. "Experts in organizational development cite culture as one of the high priority targets for effecting real change in programs. Change becomes permanent when the culture changes and the new ways are accepted as the right ways."<sup>40</sup> The Chairman must aggressively foster a military culture which embraces "unity" and "working for the greater good" as core values. Until that culture permeates the armed forces, he must play the role of objective bystander. He must recognize when Service cultural biases are dominating sound judgment and act to stop subjugation of national security interests by emotion.

## DISSENTING VIEWS

"Firms that are relatively successful over long periods of time, say ten years or more, will be characterized by maintaining top driven strategic intent while simultaneously maintaining bottoms-up driven internal experimentation and selection processes."<sup>41</sup>

In general, opponents of change argue that necessary service interests would take a back seat to the Chairman's personal preferences if his power were increased. They emphasize the following objections:

- giving the Chairman command of all U.S. Armed Forces is a serious threat to our traditions of civilian control over the military
- unification of power with the Chairman will suppress Service autonomy, inhibit innovation, and cause strategic myopia
- movements toward unification threaten the effectiveness of our forces through homogeneity
- movements toward unification threaten the flexibility of our forces through overspecialization.

Each of these points deserves more detailed analysis.

*Losing civilian control.* This argument is fairly straight-forward and has been common to defense reorganization discussions throughout history. "Those who oppose change today caution against creating a 'single entity,' accountable to no one and reflecting the philosophy of one person. Opponents of change fear this entity could become strong enough to outweigh the civilian control so carefully crafted into [the] Constitution and all subsequent legislation."<sup>42</sup>

To contemplate the perceived threat to civilian control, one must understand how civilian authority is exercised in today's environment. The President exercises control by appointing officers and assigning them responsibilities. The President promotes officers to higher grades, subject to ratification by the Senate. The President has complete freedom in choosing any officer for particular duty or command without regard to seniority, and he also has the power to remove them at will. Congress exercises control over the military through fiscal constraints, and the Secretary of Defense exerts civilian control through a variety of operational and administrative means. In addition to these governmental safeguards, civilian control is reinforced by what McClelland calls the "knowledge-opinion complex," comprised of non-government organizations such as public interest lobbies, the press, think tanks and universities whose public analysis of military decision-making leaves few stones unturned.

Civilian control also limits the power and influence of the military through legislation that precludes powerful alliances from being formed within the Joint Chiefs of Staff. For example, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is appointed by the President, but he must be confirmed by the Senate. His term of office is only two years, and he may only be re-appointed for one additional two-year term unless a state of war exists. Service Chiefs are only appointed for one four-year term. Members of the Joint Staff are limited to service for a period of three years, except during war, and may not generally be reassigned to the Joint Staff within three years of their departure. To reinforce the integrity of this system of civilian controls, the National Security Act stipulates that a regular officer of the Armed Forces cannot become the Secretary or a Deputy Secretary of Defense until at least ten years has passed since his relief from active duty.<sup>43</sup>

Let us assume the worst case possible which could potentially violate existing civilian-military controls: an Armed Forces Chief of Staff with a strong personality, a cause, and the resources of the JCS at his disposal, who is at odds with a weak Secretary of Defense. In order to influence a [contentious] decision or policy, the Armed Forces Chief of Staff would have to dominate several DoD agencies and the OSD staff, which would simultaneously be providing data and advice on the topic. This cause would likely come under the close scrutiny of the 'knowledge-opinion complex'. If we grant that all this takes place in favor of an Armed Forces Chief of Staff, the Office of the Presidency with its vast array of competing advisory channels (State, NSC, CIA, OMB) still must be convinced of the legitimacy of the cause. Even if the Executive Branch were persuaded, the balance of powers inherent in our government would require that the cause also persuade the combined houses of Congress, both of which have expanded sources of information, sensitivity to public opinion, and constituency influences. This gauntlet of obstacles makes it highly improbable, even in this extreme, to envision that an Armed Forces Chief of Staff would be in any better position to subvert the existing civil-military relationship.<sup>44</sup>

Admiral Crowe summed this up best when he "stated his belief that civilian control of the military was an established practice and not subject to any reasonable doubt."<sup>45</sup>

*Suppressing Service autonomy and limiting innovation.* Those who oppose change claim that a more powerful Chairman would suppress services' autonomy, inhibiting strategic and technological innovation and endangering national security. A similar, related opinion is that, in an attempt to unify the armed forces, a more powerful Chairman would eliminate the technological and strategic diversity is required to hedge against faulty policy.

No large organization can function to its full capabilities without both unity and autonomy. In my opinion, if the Chief of Staff is a strong and ambitious man, he will, subject to the President, be in complete control of military policy, strategy, the military budget, and of everything else in the department that he wants to control. There are some pretty sound reasons against control of our military policy, strategy, and budget by a supreme military commander. It raises rather important considerations. It might destroy the proper balance between our land, sea, and air forces. It might remove flexibility. It might end creative competition. It might destroy morale. It would be very likely to result in an overemphasis of one military arm, perhaps even of one weapon. This leads to Maginot line psychology. Experience teaches that in military matters it is safer to bet across the board than to lay all your money on one horse to win.<sup>46</sup>

"No one service can be expected to effectively address the complete spectrum of military operations in every medium." Danger lies in the creation of a single template upon which all force structure and doctrine is built, to the exclusion of innovation and diversity. The world is governed by uncertainty. "No one person can predict the future and no one strategy can prepare for it." In an effort to channel the collective efforts of all armed forces, the Chairman may inhibit progress with unnecessary restrictions and risk catastrophe if his singular focus fails.<sup>47</sup>

A similar argument pertains to the realm of research and development. It is widely agreed in scientific circles that more research approaches are better than fewer because an abundance of approaches mitigates the effects of failed experiments and dead-end theories.<sup>48</sup> A reduction in the number and scale of research and development efforts also reduces the

possibility of advances due to “serendipity.”<sup>49</sup> As the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces (CORM) concluded in its report, “Service competition has delivered innovative systems and technologies. The key is to manage such competition to ensure that it is not wasteful.”<sup>50</sup>

Certainly Service autonomy must be retained. Few would deny that Services’ administrative functions are in need of better coordination, but most would also agree that Services’ support systems are “sufficiently large and dissimilar enough to justify separate and distinct administration.”<sup>51</sup> Doing the Services’ jobs for them is neither desirable nor feasible because of the scope, size, and complexity of the organizations.

The larger corporations, such as General Motors, United States Steel, and du Pont all recognize this law of diminishing returns, and decentralize such functions through the creation of autonomous subdivisions, subsidiaries, and associated companies, which are coordinated and controlled relatively loosely through a small top central agency.<sup>52</sup>

The Chairman should not routinely “issue rudder orders” to the Services. Instead, he must be able to provide broad, unifying, yet prescriptive direction. Any law ceding command to the Chairman should also legislate safeguards that would guarantee Service autonomy except where, to some standard of certainty, intervention is required by the Chairman. This may best be accomplished by requiring Congressional or Secretarial notification of all such acts of intervention. Service autonomy is best protected through carefully crafted legislation.

*Reducing Effectiveness through Homogeneity.* Those who object to an “Armed Forces Chief of Staff” often fear homogenization of armed forces’ strategies, tactics and materiel. Service core competencies, unique expertise developed through years of refinement, may be lost in the process of becoming too “joint” as forces begin to look and act alike. This problem may be imagined in military educational institutions, where courses in

the integrated employment of joint capabilities compete against Service core educational objectives for their "slice of the curriculum pie." If our system of professional military education becomes too common, then the armed forces could be criticized for "majoring in minors."<sup>53</sup> An extreme quest for jointness could cause the elimination of healthy diversity.

Remember that effective jointness means blending the distinct colors of the services into a rainbow of synergistic military effectiveness. It does not suggest pouring them into a single jar and mixing them until they lose their individual properties and come out as a colorless paste. The essence of jointness is the flexible blending of service individualities.<sup>54</sup>

Dissenters conclude that promoting the Chairman risks a merging of Service acquisition programs, force structures, and philosophies that could cause the military to lose the strength that is based on the complementary effects of separate Service core competencies.<sup>55</sup>

*Reducing Flexibility through Overspecialization.* Those feeling trepidation over homogeneity envision a Chairman who is inclined to array his forces based upon Service competency. In an effort to preserve both competency and jointness, he would make all Services look and act the same. Those who argue the hazards of overspecialization make the opposite assumption. They foresee a Chairman who is inclined to achieve jointness by arraying forces based upon function. In the extreme, this would eliminate redundancy by consolidating, for instance, all aircraft in the Air Force. A subtle but just as dangerous approach would be, as an example, consolidating the responsibility for fighting the deep battle in the Air Force.<sup>56</sup> In the end, both approaches tie the hands of commanders during crisis response. The force nearest to the crisis would not be likely to have, organic to its organization, the array of capabilities required to mount an initial response. Any substantive military action would require assembling forces with unique specializations from various commands to provide an adequate combined-arms capability and support structure.

They add, "the availability of similar but specialized capabilities allows the combatant commander to tailor a military response to any contingency, regardless of geographic location." Forces with complementary capabilities expand the quantity and diversity of crisis response options available to commanders. This point was not lost upon Congress. It legislated within Goldwater-Nichols that the Chairman "submit a report not less than once every three years, recommending such changes in the assignment of functions that he considers necessary to achieve maximum effectiveness of the armed forces. The law specifies that in preparing such a report, [he] shall consider not duplication of effort, but only the *unnecessary* duplication of effort among the armed forces."<sup>57</sup>

Critics contend that services, in pursuit of their own agendas, develop and maintain duplicative capabilities. But this criticism is not so much a problem with the approach as it is a misunderstanding of the problem. This misunderstanding is the result of what might be called an accountant's approach to military operations and force planning. The real issue is not whether the Navy and Air Force are being wasteful by purchasing different airframes, but whether there is a strategic requirement for both land-based and carrier-based aviation. The real issue is not whether some Army equipment is duplicated by the Marines, but whether there is a strategic requirement for the capabilities of a Marine Corps as well as an Army.<sup>58</sup>

Neither the extreme of homogeneity nor the extreme of overspecialization is reasonably likely to occur. First, the need for separate administration of the Services is a widely accepted view that was addressed previously in this document. Service Secretaries and Chiefs of Staff will continue to administer their organizations, regardless of the Chairman's rank, and will guarantee that their Service's interests are considered during policy discussions. Second, neither Congress nor Service Secretaries are bound by any allegiance to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and their ability to object loudly and emphatically to contentious proposals would not be lessened through his promotion. Third, some reasonable measure of homogeneity and specialization may actually produce efficiencies and economies

that are necessary within the armed forces. The task, then, is to compare promised improvements with assumed risks and make educated force structure decisions.

Clearly, resources are insufficient to allow each of the services to maintain its current force structure, modernize, sustain combat readiness, and perform all required missions. Thus we must reduce duplication and become more efficient. We must do what corporations have done over the past decade – restructure for a changed world, focus on core competencies, and shed overhead that does not add value.<sup>59</sup>

Fourth, vesting command authority in the Chairman would give him little additional leverage for affecting Service organizational structures because the Secretary of Defense “has sole and ultimate power within the Department of Defense on any matter on which the Secretary chooses to act.”<sup>60</sup> Promoting the Chairman to five stars will neither weaken the Secretary’s authority nor make him more likely to play loose with it.

## CONCLUSIONS

“Any new strategy, no matter how brilliant or responsive, no matter how much agreement the formulators have about it, will stand a good chance of not being implemented fully – or sometimes not at all – without someone with power pushing it.”<sup>61</sup>

In 1982, the Joint Chiefs began a very deliberate review of possible changes to the existing JCS system because the impetus for defense reform could no longer be ignored.

They established five criteria for judging reform proposals:

- Would the change improve the nation’s ability to wage war?
- Would the change ensure that the President and the Secretary of Defense receive better and more timely advice?
- Would the change ensure that the requirements of the CINCs would be better met?
- Would the change affect civilian control of the military?<sup>62</sup>

Using these criteria as the standard, an assessment of the proposal to empower the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs results in the following observations. Certainly a unifying vision and

qualitative improvements in doctrine and training would improve the nation's ability to wage war. Certainly focusing program acquisitions and force structures on national security demands instead of service cultural biases would better meet the CINCs requirements. Nothing in this thesis would alter the quality or timeliness of the Chairman's advice, and the concern over retaining civilian control of the military should have been assuaged in the previous analysis. In 1983, the Joint Chiefs agreed. As a result of their deliberations, they also recommended placing the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in the national military chain of command.<sup>63</sup>

In conclusion, unity of command provides a common vision and focus from which joint doctrine and shared culture are derived.

Only if there is this unity of structure, headed by an individual with power of decision, can we achieve action where there is now inaction, concerted policy where there is now disjointed policy, and economy of manpower, resources, and money where there is now waste of them all. Any organization which does not facilitate prompt decision and prompt action thereon, totally ignores scientific development and the nature of modern war. The military security of the United States is a single objective. Accomplishment of this single objective with the greatest economy and efficiency demands unity of direction.<sup>64</sup>

In the U.S. armed forces, unity is most naturally achieved in the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He is the only military member uniquely positioned to push full implementation of joint initiatives, protect national security interests from Services' cultural biases, and foster a unified, synchronized, and synergized method of warfare.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Peter W. Chiarelli, "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols," JFQ, Autumn 1993, 74.
- <sup>2</sup> Mackubin T. Owens, "The Use and Abuse of Jointness," Marine Corps Gazette, November 1997, 51.
- <sup>3</sup> Congress, Senate, Committee on Naval Affairs, Unification of the Armed Forces, Hearing before the Committee on Naval Affairs, 79<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., 9 May 1946, 150.
- <sup>4</sup> Darrell Jenks, "The RMA and the Post Goldwater-Nichols World," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 1995), 2-4.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.
- <sup>6</sup> Richard J. Blanchfield, "Goldwater-Nichols (Defense Reorganization) Help or Hindrance," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 1988), 3-4.
- <sup>7</sup> Richard D. Hooker, "Joint Campaigning in 2010," JFQ, Autumn/Winter 1998-1999, 40-47.
- <sup>8</sup> Robert B. Adolph and others, "Why Goldwater-Nichols Didn't Go Far Enough," JFQ, Spring 1995, 48-53.
- <sup>9</sup> Jenks, 8.
- <sup>10</sup> Congress, 150.
- <sup>11</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces (Joint Pub 1) (Washington, D.C.: November 11, 1991), 5.
- <sup>12</sup> Wayne P. Hughes, "The Power of Doctrine," Naval War College Review, Summer 1995, 10.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.
- <sup>15</sup> Adolph, 49.
- <sup>16</sup> William C. Smith, "The United States Needs Joint War-Fighting Doctrine," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA: 1988), 23.
- <sup>17</sup> Douglas C. Lovelace and Thomas-Durell Young, Strategic Plans, Joint Doctrine, and Antipodean Insights (Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, 1995), 7-10.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 11-12.
- <sup>20</sup> Adolph, 49.
- <sup>21</sup> Robert W. Critchlow and others, "Joint Experimentation: A Necessity for Future War," JFQ, Autumn/Winter 1998-1999, 21.
- <sup>22</sup> John J. Sheehan, "Next Steps in Joint Force Integration," JFQ, Autumn 1996, 41-42.
- <sup>23</sup> Carl V. Clausewitz, On War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 105.
- <sup>24</sup> Hughes, 14-15.
- <sup>25</sup> Hooker, 42.
- <sup>26</sup> Carl H. Builder, The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 18-19.
- <sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-21.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 27-28.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 19-22.
- <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.
- <sup>31</sup> Hooker, 43.
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.
- <sup>33</sup> William E. Turcotte, "Service Rivalry Overshadowed," Airpower Journal, Fall 1996, 33.
- <sup>34</sup> James G. Hunt and Robert L. Phillips, Strategic Leadership: A Multiorganizational-Level Perspective (Westport: Quorum Books, 1992), 148.
- <sup>35</sup> Robert L. O'Connell, Sacred Vessels: The Cult of the Battleship and the Rise of the U.S. Navy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 135.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.
- <sup>37</sup> Builder, 6.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.
- <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.
- <sup>40</sup> David M. Casmus, "Organizational Culture and the Imperatives for Implementing Joint Vision 2010," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA: 1997), 4.
- <sup>41</sup> Hunt, 212.

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- <sup>42</sup> Louis J. Moses, The Call for JCS Reform (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1985), 4-5.
- <sup>43</sup> Michael D. McClelland and Donald G. Even, "An Armed Forces Chief of Staff: Would it Enhance or Detract from Civilian Control," (Unpublished Research Paper, National War College, Washington, D.C.: 1983), 14-21.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.
- <sup>45</sup> Robert C. Owsley, "Goldwater-Nichols Almost Got It Right: A Fifth Star for the Chairman," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI: 1997), 5.
- <sup>46</sup> Congress, 167-172.
- <sup>47</sup> Mackubin T. Owens, "Organizing for Failure: Is the Rush Toward Jointness Going Off Track," Armed Forces Journal International, June 1998, 12.
- <sup>48</sup> Congress, 138.
- <sup>49</sup> Richard G. Ross, "A Paradigm in Defense Organization: Unification of the Canadian Armed Forces," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army Logistics Management Center, Fort Lee, VA: 1968), 58.
- <sup>50</sup> John P. White, "Defense Organization Today," JFQ, Autumn 1996, 19.
- <sup>51</sup> Ronald Jacobs, "Unification of the Armed Forces," (Unpublished Research Paper, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS: 1997), 58.
- <sup>52</sup> Congress, 201.
- <sup>53</sup> Howard D. Graves and Don M. Snider, "Emergence of the Joint Officer," JFQ, Autumn 1996, 56.
- <sup>54</sup> White, 21.
- <sup>55</sup> Critchlow, 22.
- <sup>56</sup> Douglas E. Utley, "The Area of Operations – Fighting One Campaign." JFQ, Autumn/Winter 1998-1999, 34.
- <sup>57</sup> Jacobs, 53.
- <sup>58</sup> Owens, "The Use and Abuse of Jointness," 54-55.
- <sup>59</sup> Sheehan, 46.
- <sup>60</sup> James R. Locher, "Taking Stock of Goldwater-Nichols," JFQ, Autumn 1996, 11.
- <sup>61</sup> Owsley, 8.
- <sup>62</sup> Moses, 49.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.
- <sup>64</sup> James Forrestal, "Summary of Studies on Unification of the Armed Forces Following Adjournment of the Seventy-Ninth Congress," (Unpublished Notes, Office of the Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D.C.: 1947), 1D.

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