THE JCS: EVOLUTIONARY OR REVOLUTIONARY REFORM?

by

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Since World War II, the United States has organized its military establishment in a joint manner, recognizing that in an increasingly dangerous, complex, and interconnected world, single-service warfare is gone forever. The resulting joint military establishment consists of the Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the unified and specified commands. Nonetheless, vestiges of the World War II service-oriented military establishment continue to exist in the form of the military departments.

The shift to jointness has not been an easy one. Since its inception, the joint military establishment has been studied ("to death," in the view of many people), criticized (unfairly, say some), reorganized, and debated. The current round of debate was sparked in 1982 by criticism of the existing organization and recommendations for change by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General David Jones, and the Army Chief of Staff, General Edward Meyer. Those criticisms prompted extensive congressional hearings on the subject of JCS reorganization. The resulting 1984 legislation made only modest changes in the JCS structure. However, the 1985 House bill on JCS reform and the 1985 Senate Armed Services Committee staff report on defense organization indicate that the debate is far from over.

In order to determine what problems exist in the joint military establishment, one must examine its responsibilities. Basically, they are threefold:

- To provide timely and high-quality military advice to the President and the Secretary of Defense (the National Command Authority).
- To conduct joint planning.
- To conduct joint military operations.

The responsibility to provide joint military *advice* is essentially that of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, flowing from Title 10 of the US Code, which designates the Joint Chiefs of Staff (including the Chairman) as "the principal military advisers to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense."[1]

The responsibility for joint *planning* encompasses three areas: strategic planning, war planning, and logistic planning. Strategic planning, a responsibility of the JCS prescribed by Title 10,[2] is designed to set the long-term strategic goals and objectives of the armed forces in order to accomplish the national objectives established by civilian authorities. The primary JCS document for strategic planning is the Joint Strategic Planning Document, which, in theory, is the basis for long-term force planning, programming, and budgeting. War planning is done primarily by the commanders-in-chief (CINCs) of the nine unified and specified commands, in their role as the "warfighters," to meet near-term requirements. The CINCs' war plans describe how the

forces under their operational control might be employed in the event of conflict today. The CINCs receive guidance from the JCS in the formulation of their war plans through the requirements and forces available for planning delineated in the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan. The war plans are reviewed by the JCS, but the amount of JCS influence over them varies. Logistic planning is done by the JCS in support of strategic and war planning.[3]

The responsibility for conducting joint military operations rests primarily with the CINCs, although the preferences of the National Command Authority obviously can and do affect operations. At one extreme, for example, it is well known that targets for bombing missions in North Vietnam during the Vietnam War were selected in the White House. At the other end of the spectrum, it appears that the Commander-in-Chief of the Atlantic Command had considerable freedom in his conduct of the Grenada operation.

Given that these are the responsibilities of the joint military establishment, there are widespread perceptions that these responsibilities are not fulfilled as effectively or efficiently as they should be. This article will examine whether such perceptions are justified, and if so, what changes should be made to improve the joint military establishment. The article will focus on the JCS and the unified commands. The larger question concerning the organization and operation of the entire Defense Department, with its military departments, numerous agencies, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense, is outside the article's scope. Those entities will be considered only as they directly impinge upon the more narrow joint military establishment.

CRITICISMS

Criticisms of the joint military establishment can be grouped according to the three categories of responsibilities outlined earlier—advice, planning, and operations.

Advice. The key criticism, according to former Assistant Defense Secretary Lawrence Korb, is the indisputable inability of the JCS to provide good and timely advice from the deliberative planning process (as opposed to advice in a crisis).[4] Former Defense Secretary James Schlesinger argues that "the existing structure of the JCS, if it does not preclude the best military advice, provides a substantial, though not insurmountable barrier to such advice."[5] Former Undersecretary of the Navy R. James Woolsey has characterized the corporate advice of the Joint Chiefs as "intellectual flab clothed in flaccid prose."[6] Former Undersecretary of Defense Robert Komer has observed, "I was not given much military advice corporately by the JCS because it was perfectly clear to them, as well as to me, that the corporate advice they were able to give would not be terribly useful."[7]

Senior civilian officials do not criticize the capability of the nation's senior military officers to provide good advice on their own. As former Defense Secretary Harold Brown points out, the advice he received from the service Chiefs as individuals was "very wise, very thoughtful."[8] Rather, it is the corporate advice received from the joint structure that is viewed as dismal. Former National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft observes that as long as the military is run at the top by a committee, you "will not get the kind of unalloyed advice that the President needs from the wealth of intelligence and wisdom that resides in the military services."[9] Brown is more specific in stating that while the

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papers and positions produced by the joint system were "perfectly adequate, pedestrian outputs," on important or contentious issues, where service interests were involved, they were "either a useless logrolling exercise, or else downright mischievous by suggesting something that obviously couldn't work."[10] "On procurement," Brown goes on to say, "you always get logrolling. But on operations, you would get a situation where the most important thing would be that nobody's ox got gored, that everybody had a piece of the action and that there was no substantial shift in the previously negotiated responsibilities."[11] The result of the situation Brown describes is pointed out by Schlesinger: "The office of the Secretary of Defense has provided the analysis *cutting across service lines* which the Joint Chiefs of Staff cannot now provide."[12] The point is that "joint" advice will be provided to the Secretary—he needs and demands it. The only questions are what role the JCS will play in its formulation and how much influence they will have.

Even some of the Chiefs seem to recognize the inadequacies of their institutional advice. Some of the 1982 incumbents complained that "joint advice frequently has no impact."[13] Thus, while some former Chiefs, such as Admiral Holloway, extol the virtues of the fact that the Joint Chiefs are able to reach unanimous decisions on nearly every issue, others, such as Air Force General Lew Allen, characterize those decisions as "mush."[14]

There is an air of self-fulfilling prophecy about the problems of advice. If the JCS provides bad advice, then the Defense Secretary is not likely to listen and will be increasingly less likely to ask for it. This, in turn, as former Army Chief Harold Johnson notes, often forces the members of the JCS to seek unanimity on issues in order to increase their influence by presenting a united military front.[15] Unfortunately, in the quest for unanimity, the quality of the advice can be degraded. This degradation leads to an even greater disinclination on the part of the Defense Secretary to seek joint advice. Further, there are those who argue that divergent views on the part of the Chiefs are necessary and useful, in that they highlight the real issues involved, present civilian leaders with a greater range of options from which to choose, and avoid the problem of lowest-common-denominator advice.

I have argued elsewhere that much of the influence and effectiveness of the JCS rests on the quality of the personal relationships among the Chiefs and their relationships with the Defense Secretary and the President.[16] Indeed, General Vessey, former JCS Chairman, argued much the same thing.[17] Certainly good personal relationships among those parties go a long way in establishing trust, confidence, credibility, and influence—a situation which seems to hold true today with the current players.[18] Personal relationships cannot be legislated or directed, of course, they must be developed. It would appear that they could be developed better if the joint military establishment, as an institution, was perceived as being able to render timely and good advice, regardless of the individuals serving at the time.

Various participants ascribe the inadequacy of advice to structural deficiencies in the system. Some, such as General Meyer, blame the "dual-hat" nature of the system, where Chiefs of the services are also Joint Chiefs. This situation results in an inherent conflict of interest, in this view, since one cannot expect a service Chief to do other than defend the programs and positions of the service he represents; yet, in his role as a Joint Chief, he may be asked to rule against those very programs and positions. This is impossible to do, critics maintain, and the result is that service interests dominate joint interests, and logrolling occurs among the Chiefs wherein they each defend the other's program and fail to make the tough trade-off decisions. Further, such dual-hatting gives one person two full-time jobs, and when time constraints build, the joint responsibility can be given short shrift (despite the presence of service Vice Chiefs, whose position was created to ameliorate this problem). Thus, for example, from 1976 to 1981, only 24 percent of the time were all the members present for a JCS meeting, and 40 percent of the time two or more were absent.[19]

Others counter that dual-hatting is not a counterproductive burden. Former Chief of Naval Operations Thomas Hayward testified that "while I am a naval officer first, I am also well aware of my obligations and responsibilities as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff."[20] Further, General Vessey recounts a situation in which Admiral Watkins, as CNO, approved a Navy program which Vessey, speaking for the CINCs, could not support. Watkins, when made aware of this, then refused to support that program as a member of the JCS.[21] This example demonstrates that good personal relationships can overcome the dichotomous nature of the dual-hat system, but it does not resolve the issue of what is to be done before those relationships are established.

Still others, such as Admiral Holloway, argue that dual-hatting is a benefit, since joint advice is given by the service Chiefs, who are the most knowledgeable individuals on the capabilities and readiness of the units in their service.[22] Thus, according to this view, removing the service Chiefs from the joint arena could result in advice that is outdated, misinformed, or too limited in scope. Further, the point is made that the operational perspective of the joint arena is a benefit to the service Chiefs, helping them shape programs and policies to meet the operational requirements of the CINCs. While this is undoubtedly true, it should be kept firmly in mind that it is the CINC, not the service Chief, who will have to employ military forces, and thus, in any dispute over programs and policies, the CINC's views should be emphasized.

Some, such as Brent Scowcroft, argue that by their nature, committees cannot offer sharp, timely advice. In this view, the service Chiefs could continue to serve as Joint Chiefs if the authority were vested in a single person to force timely and good advice. Others, such as Army Undersecretary James Ambrose, counter that this authority already exists in the person of the Secretary of Defense.[23] But given the tremendous responsibilities of the Secretary and the dozens of subordinates and agencies already reporting to him, it is unlikely that he will have the time or inclination to participate so deeply in JCS deliberations.

Still others, such as General Jones, have argued that the Chairman of the JCS can be the single person with this authority, and accordingly that the Chairman should be designated as the principal military adviser to the National Command Authority. As noted by Admiral Harry Train, former Commander-in-Chief, Atlantic Command, and Director of the Joint Staff, "It has become more acceptable [for the chairman to express his individual views] as the years have gone by. We have evolved into that. Ten years ago it was accepted less than it is today."[24] Indeed, that seems to be the current situation. Secretary Weinberger has testified, "I also have the Chairman's personal advice, not just as leader of the Joint Chiefs, but in his own right as the Nation's senior serving military officer."[25] The apparently good relationship that the new JCS Chairman, Admiral William Crowe, Jr., enjoys with the President and with Weinberger seems to indicate that this situation will continue.[26] Nonetheless, previous Chairmen have seemed reluctant to exercise that right, even though Title 10 clearly includes the Chairman as a member of the JCS and designates the JCS as the "principal military advisers."[27] Making the Chairman the sole principal military adviser would not only clarify his ability to offer advice in his own right, but indeed would require him to do so.

Finally, there are those who lay the blame for poor advice directly at the door of the Joint Staff. Since the law stipulates that "the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff manages the Joint Staff and its Director, *on behalf of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*," the staff's products reflect the committee nature of that system.[28] Vice Admiral Thor Hanson, former Director of the Joint Staff, has testified that "the job was very frustrating because I was directing a staff that worked for a committee, not an individual," and that this fact "was made very clear to me . . . on a daily basis."[29] This situation has led some people, like former Pacific Command CINC

Admiral Robert Long, to conclude that "on some occasions the chairman has been reluctant . . . to specifically task the [Joint Staff] and to direct it." He "would recommend clarification of that so that clearly the chairman does have some direct authority over the Joint Staff."[30]

Planning. Criticism of the fulfillment of the planning responsibility can be divided into strategic planning, contingency planning, and war planning.

Schlesinger observes that the Joint Chiefs, as currently organized and as they now function, do not participate in a meaningful way in the development of long-range strategy for our military forces.[31] Elliot Richardson claims that "there has been a tendency of civilian components of the government to take over . . . strategic planning functions, partly because they weren't being carried out adequately by the Joint Chiefs of Staff."[32] Ambrose cites as evidence of this inadequacy the fact that the JCS has been recommending the same number of Army divisions for the past 25 years, independent of shifts in US interests and the threats to those interests. Further, he claims that he "can't find any sound basis" for the recommendation.[33]

In the area of military strategy, the JCS has taken a step in the right direction by working to develop a global war plan and war-gaming that plan with the CINCs' war plans to identify deficiencies. But a military strategy and a global war plan are not the same thing. The former is developed from the top down, that is, from national strategy. The latter is formulated from the bottom up, from the CINCs' war plans. The increased involvement of the CINCs is useful in determining requirements to meet the threat, but since they orient on the present, such involvement is less useful in the development and formulation of military strategy.[34]

A further reason cited for the inadequacy of JCS strategic planning is that there is no connection in reality between the Joint Strategic Planning Document (JSPD) and the force programming and budgeting done by the services. Some critics conclude that "because it is not limited by likely budget totals, the JSPD is widely disregarded as unrealistic and, therefore, as relatively unimportant to the [planning, programming, and budgeting] system."[35] This assessment should come as no surprise, since the JSPD projects ten years into the future, where it is impossible to accurately determine available resources. Further, the JSPD cannot set effective programming goals since the defense program projects only five years ahead.

Additionally, unless a military strategy is tied explicitly to force programming, it will have limited utility. The creation of the Strategic Plans and Resource Analysis Agency was intended to provide the Chairman with a capability (albeit limited) to address this problem. But its subsequent subjugation to the corporate body of the JCS makes it as susceptible as any other part of the Joint Staff to logrolling and watered-down analysis. Joint programs are currently managed by a single service designated as the executive agent for the program (with C^3 a notable exception, since the JCS has a directorate coordinating those programs). As a result, joint programs often fail to meet joint requirements. The Joint Requirements and Management Board, composed of the Vice Chiefs and the Director of the Joint Staff, was established in 1984 in an attempt to set joint requirements first and then identify joint programs to meet those requirements. Although the board's initial efforts at identifying joint requirements for current joint programs have been successful, it is doubtful, given the membership, that the board can devote the time and effort necessary to identify all future joint requirements and oversee their execution.

Other criticisms of the joint military establishment's ability to plan focus on contingency and war planning. Komer claims that in his review of nonnuclear contingency plans, he was particularly disturbed that "the contingency plans were too generalized, depended on the availability of resources and units which were sometimes notional, that is, they didn't exist, and involved a great deal of

overlapping use of resources that would probably not be available in two places simultaneously."[36]

One CINC has stated that "the CINCs sometimes get fuzzy guidance from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The CINCs recognize that JCS guidance must be based on OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] guidance that may itself tend to lack specifics; but it is virtually impossible for a military commander to deal with a military mission that depends on guidance objectives such as 'deter' or 'dissuade.' "[37]

These problems are compounded by the fact that the CINCs have the responsibility for executing the plans, but they do not totally control the resources to do so. The forces assigned to unified commands are assigned only for "operational control" and essentially belong to the services' component commands within the unified command.[38] (Additionally, forces not assigned to unified commands remain "for all purposes" in the military departments.[39]) The result, notes General Paul Gorman, former CINC of the Southern Command, is that "program elements [submitted by component commanders] are not always handled within the services with the priority that we CINCs serving in the field would like to see."[40] Recent changes involving the CINCs more in the resource allocation process may alleviate some of these problems. But the fact remains that the CINCs have no program authority and cannot directly shape the forces they will have to lead to war. Admiral Crowe, while serving as Pacific Command CINC, concluded that despite these changes, the unified commander's "influence in the resource allocation process is not yet commensurate with [his] responsibilities."[41]

Joint Operations. Generally, criticisms of joint operations seem to fall into three groups: transition to wartime, military doctrine, and command and control. General Meyer argues that our peacetime organization is not conducive to war-fighting and thus, should war occur, we will be forced to shift to a more effective ad hoc wartime organization. General Goodpaster testified that indeed such a transition took place during the Vietnam conflict.[42] Fortunately, the threat in that case was not severe enough to cause irreparable damage to the United States. In some circumstances, however, such a transition could reduce our ability to provide a timely military response and could prove to be the decisive factor in the war. Indeed, Secretary Weinberger testified that "placing the chairman in the chain of command is a necessary step to provide smoother functioning of our command system during the transition to war."[43] Further, Vessey testified that such a command channel was already in place and "works well."[44]

Those who argue that current military doctrine is inadequate for supporting joint operations point to the fact that doctrine is typically service-oriented, not joint-oriented, since the services are charged with the responsibility for training their forces. General Gorman states that doctrine "is peculiarly the province of each service which is charged with developing the service peculiar material and training, but the situation can arise, *and has*, in which joint concepts, requirements, and ideas are slighted by services in discharging those responsibilities."[45]

Not all criticisms of military doctrine focus on service dominance, however. Over the past few years the Army has been working to develop a joint military doctrine called AirLand Battle, defining how the Army and the Air Force would fight future wars in a mutually supporting way. Nonetheless, General Bernard Rogers, Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, commander of the theater in which such a joint doctrine would prove most effective, has rejected AirLand Battle and instead persuaded NATO to adopt as military doctrine a slightly different approach known as Follow-on Forces Attack (FOFA). The two doctrines seek to achieve victory in Europe by different means. General Glenn K. Otis, CINC US Army, Europe, who is also the NATO Central Army Group commander, seems to have sidestepped part of this problem by directing his corps commanders to use AirLand Battle as their operational doctrine, even though he

must follow FOFA.[46] But by doing so, other problems in the theater may arise if adjacent army groups (and supporting air forces) are not following the same doctrine.[47]

A 1982 JCS pilot program directed the CINCs for the first time to work on joint doctrine in areas such as second-echelon attack, theater air defense, and sea-lane defense. That program is not yet complete, but as long as the services hold the primary responsibility for doctrinal development (the Joint Chiefs do have responsibility for developing certain types of doctrine) we are likely to see more CINC vs. service disputes such as we have seen on FOFA and AirLand Battle. These problems are compounded by the fact that until recently there was not a central agency in the JCS for the development and coordination of joint doctrine. The Policy Division, J5, has recently been designated as the agency on the Joint Staff for "management of joint-related matters." Nevertheless, it is not clear that the Policy Division has sufficient resources to adequately fulfill this responsibility.

Finally, there are those who focus on cumbersome and ineffective command and control as degrading our capability to conduct joint operations. This perspective has two aspects. First, the unified commands are not truly joint, but rather more like a loose confederation of single-service forces. Thus, the service component commands are not responsible to the CINCs either in doctrinal terms or in resource terms. General Rogers points out that "the service views are well represented . . . [but] the cross-service or joint views have a smaller constituency and limited formality of expression."[48] As a result, joint operations can degenerate into a series of individual service actions, lacking cohesiveness and integration.

Second, the service-dominated, committee nature of the JCS can result in each service demanding a "piece of the action," as Schlesinger has pointed out, and therefore less efficient operations can result. For example, the air war in Vietnam was conducted by four different forces: the Air Force, the Navy, the Army, and the Marine Corps. By implication, an integrated, combined command structure could have avoided such a situation. As Lieutenant General John Cushman concludes, "because the military services and departments are the strong and enduring institutions of the military establishment, the JCS have long been failing the field commands in their harmonizing functions."[49]

OBSTACLES TO REFORM

The 1958 reforms were the last major change to the joint military establishment—although President Eisenhower clearly saw them as only the first step in an evolutionary process.[50] Over the past five years a number of DOD actions have sought specifically to involve the joint military establishment more effectively in the resource allocation process. The Chairman has been made a member of the Defense Resources Board, where final trade-offs are made between competing service programs. He also has been made a member of the Defense Systems Acquisition Review Council. The CINCs now provide information to the Defense Resources Board concerning their high-priority needs, and the services must explain how they are meeting those needs (or why not).[51] The Strategic Plans and Resource Analysis Agency was established under the Director of the Joint Staff to "assist the Joint Chiefs of Staff in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities to review the major material and personnel requirements of the Armed Forces in accordance with strategic and logistic plans."[52]

Finally, the Fiscal Year 1985 Defense Authorization Act appointed the Chairman as the "spokesman" for the CINCs on "operational requirements" and raised the tenure of Joint Staff officers from three to four years. The three-year cap on the Director's tour was lifted, and provisions were made for the Chairman to select Joint Staff officers from the "most outstanding" officers of each service. Additionally, the Chairman was given the authority to determine when issues on the joint agenda would be decided. Congress did not agree,

despite the advocacy of the Defense Secretary and the Chairman, to placing the CJCS in the chain of command.

Assuming that further changes should be made to increase the effectiveness of the joint military establishment, what obstacles stand in the way of enacting such changes? Barriers can be identified in at least five organizations—the Congress, the White House, OSD, the military departments, and the JCS.

Congress. It is somewhat ironic that the institution pushing the hardest for reform is also an obstacle to reform, but such is the case. There are two sources of this inconsistency. To many observers, the issue breaks along partisan lines, with the Democratic House trying to force change through an opposing Republican Senate. On the other hand, there is strong bipartisan support for reform in the House, and Senators Nunn and Goldwater have formed a bipartisan task force in the Senate Armed Services Committee to investigate reform issues. The report of this task force, calling for sweeping reorganization of the Defense Department, was issued in October 1985.

There is also an inherent congressional interest in keeping the services from further integration. Many members of Congress would rather have the military departments maintain their individual power. Such fragmentation allows legislators to influence the separate services, play one against the other, and profit politically by supporting programs that benefit particular congressional constituencies. Despite this inherent interest, however, many congressmen and senators seem to have submerged their particular interests in favor of support for JCS reform initiatives.

The House passed a bill in 1985 to reform the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Among other things, the bill would: make the JCS Chairman the "principal military adviser" to the National Command Authority; allow the National Command Authority to direct that the chain of command run through the JCS Chairman; appoint the JCS Chairman as the "supervisor" (as well as the "spokesman") of the CINCs; extend the Chairman's term to four years; create a Deputy Chairman position; place the Joint Staff under the Chairman; eliminate the cap of 400 officers on the Joint Staff; and require the JCS Chairman or his Deputy to attend and participate in National Security Council meetings.

It is not clear what approach Congress will eventually decide upon, JCS reform or reform of the entire Defense Department. JCS reform, the focus of the House bill, is probably easier, since it would tread on fewer bureaucratic toes. But there are indications that many in the Senate genuinely feel that JCS reform without DOD reform is only marginally significant. Until the House and Senate views are reconciled, it is doubtful that any major changes will be enacted.

The White House. Apparently neither the President nor his advisers have assigned a high priority to reform. As the last major reform in 1958 was a presidential initiative, it seems unlikely that reform proposals will go very far without presidential support. During the first Reagan term, White House thinking seemed to be that reform was "Cap's problem" and should remain so, leaving the presidential image untarnished. But the pressures for reform continued, and in June 1985 the President appointed a commission to study weapon procurement and organizational reform. Chaired by former Deputy Defense Secretary David Packard, the commission includes such notables as Frank Carlucci, Brent Scowcroft, James Holloway, and R. James Woolsey. The commission is expected to make its recommendations on organizational reforms in 1986.[53]

Office of the Secretary of Defense. In general, Defense Secretaries will oppose changes that diminish their authority. Additionally, Defense Secretaries institutionally oppose legislated changes to OSD, viewing such changes as an infringement on their executive authority.

Secretary Weinberger has remained relatively uninvolved and uninterested in major reform. Apparently, he feels that it is far more important to devote his efforts to passage of each year's defense budget and that supporting reform efforts would make the budget more vulnerable to congressional

reductions. Further, it appears that the Secretary feels that major reform is not necessary, as the changes of the past four years have been sufficient to resolve any shortcomings. Finally, it would be extremely difficult for Secretary Weinberger to start championing major reform at this late date, as it could be taken by some people as an admission that he had ignored or failed to correct known deficiencies.

As a result, OSD has remained reactive in the reform debate, rather than initiating proposals for change. As late as November 1985, Secretary Weinberger opposed major changes in both OSD and JCS. In December 1985, after appearing again before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the Secretary reversed his position on JCS reform, basically endorsing (with provisos) the reform proposals contained in the 1985 House bill on JCS reform.[54] This reversal apparently was the result of the Secretary's reluctance to antagonize the Senate Republican leadership as well as reflecting a shift in the JCS position which occurred after Admiral Crowe was appointed Chairman.

Military Departments. Both the military and civilian components of the military departments have reasons for opposing further reform. Both value the amount of autonomy they are given (which has increased under the Reagan Administration) and fear that reform may threaten it. Indeed, some people, such as Assistant Air Force Secretary Tidal McCoy, argue that even more authority and autonomy should be granted to the service Secretaries.[55]

Others, such as Navy Secretary John Lehman, argue that JCS reform proposals, such as putting the JCS Chairman in the chain of command, would "dilute and diminish the authority of the Secretary of Defense."[56] But if the Chairman was still subordinated to the Defense Secretary, it is not clear how such a condition could occur.

Civilian control of the military is often thrown up by civilians in the service secretariats as being threatened by reform proposals. But former Defense Secretaries Laird, Richardson, Schlesinger, and Brown characterize such arguments as "bugaboos raised by the Secretary of the Navy" and as a "red herring."[57] Further, six former Defense Secretaries have stated that "by improving the quality of military advice, stronger joint military institutions should reinforce, not usurp, the ability of civilian leaders to manage the Department of Defense."[58] If Defense Secretaries are not worried about civilian control as a result of reform, why should the service Secretaries? It may be that, as Schlesinger wryly notes, "the worry about the general staff is that it will dominate the Navy, not civilians. Let the civilians fend for themselves."[59] Further, as Harold Brown observes, "the civilian control we are most concerned about is operational control over the application of military force and the service secretary doesn't play a part in that."[60]

The military services also oppose reform that would threaten their responsibility and authority to man, equip, train, and maintain the force and their additional authority over the component commanders.[61] It would appear that the services most opposed to reform are those, such as the Navy, which traditionally have viewed their authority and responsibility as being adequate to meet their service interests, which are the most strategically independent, and which have the most autonomy.[62]

Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Joint Chiefs themselves can be an obstacle to reform. As service Chiefs, they are opposed to changes that might threaten their control over the services or exclude them from the joint arena.

Additionally, the Chiefs and Chairman are spending a great deal of time with the Defense Secretary and President and, evidently, feel that their meetings and discussions are useful and influential in the formulation of national policy. Their fear is that JCS reform might jeopardize the fine working relationships that have been established.

The Chairman, as the only JCS member without a service constituency, has a somewhat different perspective than the Joint Chiefs. While in the abstract any Chairman might encourage or initiate changes that would enhance his authority to impose a joint

perspective on advice and policy, in practice it is not that easy. The Chairman faces a leadership constraint. To the degree that the Chairman takes the lead in proposing or endorsing change, he is that much more likely to harm the personal relationships between himself and the Chiefs, in which is vested much of his ability to lead the JCS. It is a question of balancing near-term costs with long-term benefits. The Chairman must walk this fine line, using his powers of personal persuasion to bring the Chiefs along slowly through incremental changes and institutionalization of evolved existing practices.

By using this approach, General Vessey was able to garner the support of the Joint Chiefs for the reforms that were put in place over the last five years. Yet there were real limits to how far he could or would go. In 1985, toward the end of his term, he was still reporting JCS opposition to designating the JCS Chairman as the principal military adviser, appointing a Deputy to the Chairman, and subordinating the Joint Staff to the Chairman. On the other hand, according to Vessey, the JCS supported removing the cap of 400 officers for the Joint Staff, as well as placing the Chairman in the chain of command and designating him as the supervisor of the CINCs.[63]

Admiral Crowe, as the new Chairman, was evidently able to persuade the Joint Chiefs to go even further. In their December 1985 testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, the JCS supported making the Chairman the principal military adviser, appointing a Deputy Chairman, and giving the Chairman limited ability to oversee the Joint Staff.[64] This shift by the Joint Chiefs was probably intended to demonstrate their willingness to accept some changes in an effort to head off the Senate committee's staff report proposal to abolish the JCS and replace it with a Joint Military Advisory Council.[65]

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is doubtful that any major reform will take place, absent a military disaster that generates public demand for change. Although some feel that the Beirut bombing incident, the Grenada operation, or the current budget deficit can be translated into substitutes for a military disaster, such optimism seems misplaced. Thus, the first guideline for reform is that it must be incremental if it is to be adopted.

The second guideline is that a consensus supporting a particular proposal should be generated among the four major actors—the White House, Congress, OSD, and JCS. Failure to do so could jeopardize adoption of the proposal. For the sake of appearances, OSD and JCS should be seen as the initiators of the proposal, with White House support and congressional concurrence.

The third guideline is that the incremental changes should, as far as possible, institutionalize or modify existing practices. This approach assures that changes will be supportable.

The final guideline is that change should be brought about, to the extent possible, internally or by DOD directive rather than by legislation. This approach provides future flexibility for further changes, should the situation warrant, and avoids possible constitutional problems posed by congressional action in areas belonging to the President in his role as Commander-in-Chief.

With these guidelines in mind, the following changes should be made to improve the joint military establishment:

- *Designate the Chairman as the "Senior Military Adviser."* Since Title 10 already makes the Chairman the "senior serving military officer" and a "military adviser," combining those two titles would serve to clarify his prerogative to offer advice in his own right. Further, it would seem to avoid concerns that the Chiefs would lose some of their advisory capacity, as proposals to make the Chairman the "principal military adviser" conceivably could do. This change should be effected through legislation.
- *Direct that the Joint Staff report to the Chairman.* This change would clarify the Chairman's ability to task the Joint Staff, as granted in Title 10, without eliminating the ability of the other Chiefs to task the staff to

work on joint issues. The current legislative language prescribing the relationship of the Joint Staff (and the Director) should be eliminated. The new relationship should be established by DOD.

- *Direct that the service Chiefs rotate as Acting Chairman.* The acting chairmanship should be rotated quarterly and the Acting Chairman should be directed to arrange his schedule so as to be available to the National Command Authority in the Chairman's absence. Such a procedure would insure active participation by the Chiefs in the joint arena and give them the added incentive and opportunity to "think joint." Additionally, it would foster a sense of teamwork among the Joint Chiefs and reduce the perceived need for a Deputy Chairman. Such a change codifies existing practice and should be implemented by DOD.

- *Develop a five-year Joint Strategic Planning Document.* Such a document could be usefully integrated as the strategic guidance portion of the Defense Guidance. The draft version should be sent to the CINCs for comment, in order to increase their capability to shape the next year's resources and future forces. This approach also would preclude heavy involvement by the CINCs in the planning, programming, and budgeting process, allowing them to focus on warfighting. This change would further help the CINCs by letting them register their views before the services develop their programs, rather than after the fact as is currently the case. By focusing attention on realistic planning horizons, this approach should resolve some of the disjunctions that exist between strategy and force structure. The current ten-year Joint Strategic Planning Document should be retained to establish long-term strategic goals and objectives.

- *Develop a near-term joint military strategy.* The JCS should develop a global, joint military strategy. The CINCs' war plans should then be reviewed to insure that they conform to the strategic goals and objectives. The process should assist in identifying force shortfalls and guiding future programs. This change can be made by DOD directive.

- *Establish a Joint Doctrine Division in J5, JCS.* As General Vessey has said, "The foundation of joint [war] planning is joint doctrine."[66] Further, doctrine drives training, and the JCS is charged to "formulate policies for joint training." Clearly the JCS can do so more effectively if it has control over joint doctrine, rather than allowing the services to develop it. The services should continue to develop service-unique doctrine. This change can be made internally by the JCS, although legislation may be required to allocate additional manpower spaces to JCS.

- *Establish a Joint Requirements and Programs Directorate in JCS.* This directorate would identify evolving joint requirements, develop programs to meet those requirements, and manage the programs. Such an approach would commit more resources than currently available to joint programs and would eliminate problems engendered by services acting as executive agents for joint programs. The JCS would be given programming and budgeting authority for joint programs. This change can be implemented by DOD.

- *Submit component command budget requirements through the CINCs to JCS.* This change would provide the CINCs more input in the shaping of service budgets and programs, rather than reacting to completed programs. This change can be implemented by DOD directive.

- *Establish a CINC contingency fund.* This change was attempted in fiscal years 1983 and 1984 in the form of a CINCs' Operations and Maintenance Fund, but was not approved by Congress. The fund could be as high as 100 million dollars, and would be dispensed by the JCS to cover immediate shortfalls in the unified commands (particularly in readiness items) that occur due to unanticipated changes in the nature of the threat or unplanned deficiencies in the DOD budget. This change would require congressional action.

- *Place the JCS Chairman in the chain of command.* Implementing this change would codify existing practice. As Admiral McDonald, Atlantic Command CINC, put it,

"In effect he is right now and in all practicality, we are working that way, it is just not codified."[67] Rather than Congress legislating this, however, what is needed is for Congress to remove the language in the law that seems to preclude such an arrangement. The President and the Secretary of Defense can then execute by direction their constitutionally based prerogative to determine how the chain of command should be structured. The decision can be implemented by DOD directive 5100.0.

The above changes are admittedly incremental and in many cases merely codify existing practices. Yet they are necessary if the joint military establishment is to continue to improve its contribution to our national security. Further, they will provide the foundation for additional incremental changes warranted by time and circumstances.

NOTES

1. US Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Organization, Structure and Decisionmaking Procedures of the Department of Defense*, 98th Cong., 1983 (hereinafter referred to as *SASC Hearings, 1983*), p. 236.
2. 10 *US Code* Section 141.
3. Ibid.
4. Interview with Assistant Secretary of Defense Lawrence Korb, Washington, D.C., 18 January 1985.
5. *SASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 187.
6. US Congress, House of Representatives, Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Reorganization Proposals for the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 97th Cong., 1982, p. 575 (hereinafter referred to as *HASC Hearings, 1982*).
7. Ibid., p. 556.
8. *SASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 534.
9. Ibid, p. 495.
10. Ibid., p. 534.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 185. (Emphasis added.)
13. Report for the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff by the Chairman's Special Study Group, *The Organization and Functions of the JCS*, April 1982.
14. *HASC Hearings, 1982*, pp. 181, 244.
15. Ibid., p. 286.
16. Jeffrey S. McKitrick, "Arms Control and the Joint Chiefs of Staff," *Parameters*, 14 (Autumn 1984), 71.
17. US Congress, House of Representatives, Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Reorganization Proposals for the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 98th Cong., 1983 (hereinafter referred to as *HASC Hearings, 1983*).
18. See Richard Halloran, "A Commanding Voice for the Military," *The New York Times Magazine*, 15 July 1984.
19. *The Organization and Functions of the JCS*, p. 25.
20. *HASC Hearings, 1982*, p. 101.
21. *HASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 67.
22. *HASC Hearings, 1982*, p. 213.
23. Interview with Undersecretary of the Army James Ambrose, Washington, D.C., 22 January 1985.
24. *HASC Hearings, 1982*, p. 795.
25. *SASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 6.
26. Benjamin Schemmer, "Scuttlebutt on the 1985 Sweepstakes to Pick the Next JCS Chairman," *Armed Forces Journal*, 123 (August 1985), 23.
27. 10 *US Code* Section 141.
28. 10 *US Code* Section 143. (Emphasis added.)
29. *HASC Hearings, 1982*, pp. 678, 683.
30. Ibid., p. 841.
31. *SASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 193.
32. Ibid., p. 130.
33. Interview with Ambrose, 22 January 1985.
34. *HASC Hearings, 1983*, pp. 82-83.
35. US Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, unpublished staff report on the *Organization and Decision-Making Procedures of the Department of Defense*, 24 April 1984 (hereinafter referred to as *SASC Staff Report, 1984).*
36. *HASC Hearings, 1982*, p. 564.
37. *The Organization and Functions of the JCS*, p. 34.
38. 10 *US Code* Section 124. Title 10 says "operational command," but JCS Publication 1 says "operational command" is the same as "operational control."
39. Ibid.
40. *SASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 285.
41. Message from CINC Pacific Command to JCS, Subject: Congressional Review of DOD Organization, dated 4 February 1985.
42. *HASC Hearings, 1982*, p. 465.
43. *SASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 46.
44. *HASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 64.
45. *SASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 283. (Emphasis added.)
46. Interview with Colonel Don Snider, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, HQ, US Army, Washington, D.C., 3 January 1985.
47. See James Blackwell, "Conventional Doctrine: Integrating Alliance Forces," in *Conventional Deterrence: Alternatives for European Defense*, ed. James Golden, et al. (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1984).
48. *SASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 278.
49. John Cushman, *Command and Control of Theater Forces: Adequacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Center for Policy Research, Harvard Univ., April 1983), pp. 1-11 and 1-12.
50. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, p. 253.
51. Memorandum from the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Subject: Enhancement of the CINC's Role in the PPBS, dated 14 November 1984.
52. Memorandum from the Director of the Joint Staff, Subject: Establishing the Strategic Plans and Resource Analysis Agency (SPRAA), dated 3 January 1984, and *Charter of the Strategic Plans and Resource Analysis Agency*, undated.
53. "Commission to Study Defense Management," *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 22 July 1985, p. 31.
54. Letter from Secretary Weinberger to Senator Goldwater, 2 December 1985.
55. Interview with Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Tidal McCoy, Washington, D.C., 23 January 1985.
56. *SASC Hearings, 1983*, pp. 222-23.
57. Melvin Laird, American Enterprise Institute Conference, Washington, D.C., 4 December 1984; Elliot Richardson, *HASC Hearings, 1982*, p. 693; James Schlesinger, *SASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 205; Harold Brown, *HASC Hearings, 1982*, p. 112.

58. *Toward a More Effective Defense* (Washington: Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, February 1985), p. vi.

59. *SASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 205.

60. Ibid., p. 529.

61. *HASC Hearings, 1982*, p. 557.

62. Paul Gorman, "Toward a Stronger Defense Establishment," in *The Defense Reform Debate*, ed. Asa Clark et al. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984), pp. 287-97.

63. Letter from General Vessey to Congressman Nichols, dated 21 June 1985, reprinted in US Congress, House of Representatives, Investigations Subcommittee of the Committee on Armed Services, *Hearings, Reorganization Proposals for the Joint Chiefs of Staff—1985*, 99th Cong., pp. 9-11.

64. P. J. Budahn, "Top Leaders Accept Changes in the Joint Chiefs," *Air Force Times*, 16 December 1985, p. 4.

65. US Congress, Senate, Committee on Armed Services, staff report on *Defense Organization: The Need for Change*, 16 October 1985, pp. 240-43.

66. *HASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 84.

67. *HASC Hearings, 1983*, p. 303.