

LEADERSHIP IN CRISIS:
SERVICE CHIEFS IN THE POST-VIETNAM WORLD

BY

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APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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ABSTRACT

The core premise of this thesis is that the US military experienced a period of organizational crisis in the 1970s. This situation is, in some ways, similar to the potential crises facing the US military today. Therefore, it is useful to examine how American military leaders dealt with their crises to identify potential solutions for leaders today.

From the end of WWII through the Korean War, the US military developed problems that would affect each service during and after the Vietnam War. The military's *retention* problem decreased numbers in each service. Next, the services' differing perceptions of WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War resulted in increased *parochialism and mission uncertainty*. Also, each service needed *modernization*, but the budget could not support each service's needs. Finally, although *civil-military relations* were improving, each service encountered difficulties in dealing with its civilian superiors.

As CNO, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt's leadership of the Navy following the Vietnam War set precedents for action in the face of adversity. Zumwalt used his unique style of leadership and communication to address the most critical problems he perceived in the Navy. Using this unique style, he often times leapt without considering each consequence and chose to discount some of the advice he did get.

As Chief of Staff of the Army, General Creighton Abrams' best lessons were his empathy with the soldier and his bias towards executive control. His practices and actions concentrated on improving the Army and preventing what he perceived was the misuse of its resources. From Abrams, the primary principle is that a leader must care for his troops, but a leader, especially a CoS, must keep the organization's larger picture in mind.

As Chief of Staff of the USAF, General David Jones led the USAF through the organizational crisis by stressing education, integration, and subjugation. While the problems in the USAF following the Vietnam War were different than those in the USAF today, Jones' principles and beliefs may still prove valuable.

From each leader there were several overall lessons. First, *retention* will almost always fluctuate for the US military. It is not the job of the service leaders to chase the appropriate numbers. The issue of *parochialism and missions* is also going to continue throughout the services. As the political and technological landscape changes, services will tend to focus inwardly to protect their budgets. The right leaders for

the country, such as General Jones, have allowed the needs of the country to drive decisions above the needs of a service. Despite the historical record that indicates the opposite, this should be the rule and not the exception. *Modernization* will continue to be important in the fast-paced world of technological innovation. The Vietnam service chiefs proved that the best technique in a period of uncertainty and economic hardship was to focus on the core missions of each service, while identifying and matching particular strengths of possible future enemies. Finally, the health of *civil-military relations* in the United States will influence the success of the US military in the future. This history has shown that the best way to repair these relationships is through a personal understanding of the other side's argument.

In each chapter and section above, the best results came from a belief in the importance of the men and women within the services and from a loyalty to the needs of the US above a service. Therefore, the decisions for the USAF today should be based on the needs of the US.



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INTRODUCTION

Leadership via Case Study

This thesis is about leadership. It is not, however, a list of good leadership ideas. While a simple list might prove advantageous at times, lists do not lead; leaders lead their people. Leadership is an intensely personal affair, and aspiring leaders cannot learn what they need from a list. Each situation a leader faces will be different than the one before, and desirable traits can quickly become bad habits.¹ A growing leader must practice, observe, reflect, and then adapt his/her leadership to new situations. However, as an organization enters a crisis, the leader may not have the time to observe and reflect.

The question now becomes how best to train leaders of tomorrow to perform during a crisis. While leadership classes can provide axioms or ideas for the students to ponder, a simply stated rule without the proper context will rarely provide more than a vague notion of knowing the enemy, focusing on the people, or being innovative.² Without context to properly analyze these maxims, the lessons ultimately fail to guide growing leaders.³ However, if the lesson can provide context, or the story of its use, the lesson can stay with the student. For the military audience of this thesis, one method of providing context to leadership lessons is warfare case studies.

Case studies involving the military can provide examples of leadership during a crisis. From Pericles to Petraeus, history is replete with examples of political and military leadership in times of a critical change or crisis. However, for the purposes of this thesis, limiting the discussion to the twentieth century will allow for an easier comparison to the world of today.

¹ David A. Levy, James E. Parco, and Fred R. Blass, *The 52nd Floor: Thinking Deeply About Leadership* (CO, Enso Books, 2010), 38.

² Levy, Parco, and Blass, *The 52nd Floor*, 7.

³ Levy, Parco, and Blass, *The 52nd Floor*, 7.

The primary purpose of this thesis is to provide tomorrow's strategic leaders with concepts they might apply to lead during a crisis. Aspiring leaders with little time to read or focus on the specifics may skip to Chapter 5 for the conclusions; the conclusions, however, will have little traction without the context of the case studies. To understand the ideas in the conclusion, an aspiring leader must comprehend the crises that faced each leader in this thesis: how the organizations arrived in the crisis, and how the leaders resolved the crisis.

The thesis will inspire leaders by comparing their situations and solutions to those of the service chiefs immediately following the Vietnam War. The core premise of this thesis is that the US military experienced a period of organizational crisis in the 1970s. This situation is, in some ways, similar to the potential crises facing the US military today. Therefore, it is useful to examine how American military leaders dealt with their crises to identify potential solutions for leaders today.

In Chapter 1, the thesis explores four major problems confronting the services following the Vietnam War: *retention, parochialism and missions, modernization, and civil-military relations*.

In Chapters 2-4, the thesis will examine Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, United States Navy (USN); Chief of Staff (CoS) General Creighton Abrams, United States Army (USA); and CoS General David Jones, United States Air Force (USAF), respectively. Each chapter will briefly examine the professional biographies of one of these officers as they affected their tours as service chief. Next, the chapters will examine their initiatives to adapt their service to the consequences of the Vietnam War. Finally, each chapter will identify some of the more universal and lasting leadership traits revealed by the experiences of these three senior officers.

In Chapter 5, the thesis provides concluding remarks and the lessons that might be learned from the experiences of these leaders. This may help future leaders prepare for the challenges of tomorrow.

Chapter 1

Vietnam - The Beginning of a Crisis

The Vietnam War was arguably the most traumatic experience for the United States in the twentieth century. That is indeed a grim distinction in a span that included two world wars, the assassinations of two presidents and the resignation of another, the Great Depression, the Cold War, racial unrest, and the drug and crime waves.
- Donald M. Goldstein

Introduction – Vietnam: A Crisis?

The purpose of this chapter is to explain why the Vietnam War was the start of an institutional crisis for the US military. First, it is important to understand the shift in the political and military situation following World War II (WWII). With that understanding, the chapter will provide a brief synopsis of the military's experience in Vietnam. Then, the chapter will examine each of the four major problems facing the military and the US as the Vietnam War ended, including why each problem was so critical at that time. These problems were *retention, parochialism and missions, modernization, and civil-military relations*.

Road to Vietnam

Context matters; to fully understand the crisis following the Vietnam War, this discussion must start with the effects of the Cold War on the US military and strategy. In August 1945, the world changed forever. As Lawrence Freedman describes in *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, the effects of the explosion of the atomic bombs over Hiroshima and Nagasaki went well beyond the introduction of a new military piece

of equipment.⁴ According to Freeman, the most prevalent changes included the impossibility of defense against such a weapon, the vulnerability of a nation's ground forces and cities, the value of a surprise attack, and the need for an ability to retaliate, which must be retaliation in-kind.⁵

As a result of these changes to the character of warfare, the victory of the Allies in WWII did not deliver a sense of security, according to historian John Gaddis.⁶ Gaddis argues that the ideologies separating the east from the west remained as polarizing as they had been before the war.⁷ The dictatorship in the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin remained almost barbaric, and reports of espionage between the US and Soviet Union contributed to anti-communist sentiment in the US.⁸ In fact, while the atomic bombs may have ended the great-power wars and brought on what Gaddis has called the long peace, the atomic bomb also reshaped the US's foreign and military policy.⁹

Following WWII, the primary political goal of the US was to prevent a conventional struggle from growing out of control, to prevent a nuclear WWII. According to historian Bernard Brodie in *Strategy in the Missile Age*, the US would not engage in a preventative war with nuclear missiles, nor would it lash out offensively based on US interests.¹⁰ This rejection of a preventative war combined with Freedman's impossibility of defense left the US with only one strategy: deterrence. In a strategy of deterrence, the most effective method to deter a nuclear attack was the

⁴ Lawrence Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 15.

⁵ Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 42.

⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York: Penguin (Non-Classics), 2006), 46.

⁷ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, 46.

⁸ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, 46. Gaddis also describes the effects of McCarthyism, a term used to describe accusations of disloyalty without the proper evidence. This term was based on anti-communist actions of Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin in the 1950s.

⁹ Campbell Craig, *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War* (New York: Columbia UP, 1998), 162. Gaddis. *The Cold War: A New History*. 46.

¹⁰ Bernard Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1959), 176, 234, 259.

threat of a nuclear counter-attack.¹¹

To communicate the idea of deterrence as an effective nuclear strategy, US administrations constructed several different policies. These policies included the Eisenhower administration's (1953-1961) Massive Retaliation, which threatened the use of nuclear weapons in response to hostile acts by the Soviet Union against the vital national interests of the US. The Kennedy and Johnson administrations (1961-1969) replaced Massive Retaliation with Flexible Response, which entailed a full range of military responses, from anti-insurgency interventions to strategic nuclear war.¹²

Among these myriad of policies, a core strategy of deterrence was based on maintaining the ability to retaliate. Based on Campbell Craig's *Destroying the Village*, it is clear that Eisenhower believed the use of nuclear weapons would escalate any conflict to such an extreme that any political goals would be moot.¹³ Therefore, the US strategy was always centered on defense, rather than offense. As Brodie argues: "*The known ability to defend our retaliatory force constitutes the only unilaterally attainable situation that provides potentially a perfect defense of our home land. Conversely, a conspicuous inability or unreadiness [sic] to defend our retaliatory force must tend to provoke the opponent to destroy it; in other words, it tempts him to an aggression he might not otherwise contemplate.*"¹⁴ The dominant US strategy of deterrence and the focus on nuclear, or non-conventional, warfare affected each service as well.

As strategic nuclear capability dominated US strategy toward the Soviet Union, each service faced changes to its force structure and budget. Figure 1 presents each service's budget in then-year dollars, and Figure 2 illustrates the same budgets with constant 2010 dollars, which allows for a comparison of budgetary change year-to-year without

¹¹ Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*. 37.

¹² Craig, *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War*, 106.

¹³ Craig, *Destroying the Village: Eisenhower and Thermonuclear War*, 162.

¹⁴ Brodie, *Strategy in the Missile Age*, 185.

inflation.

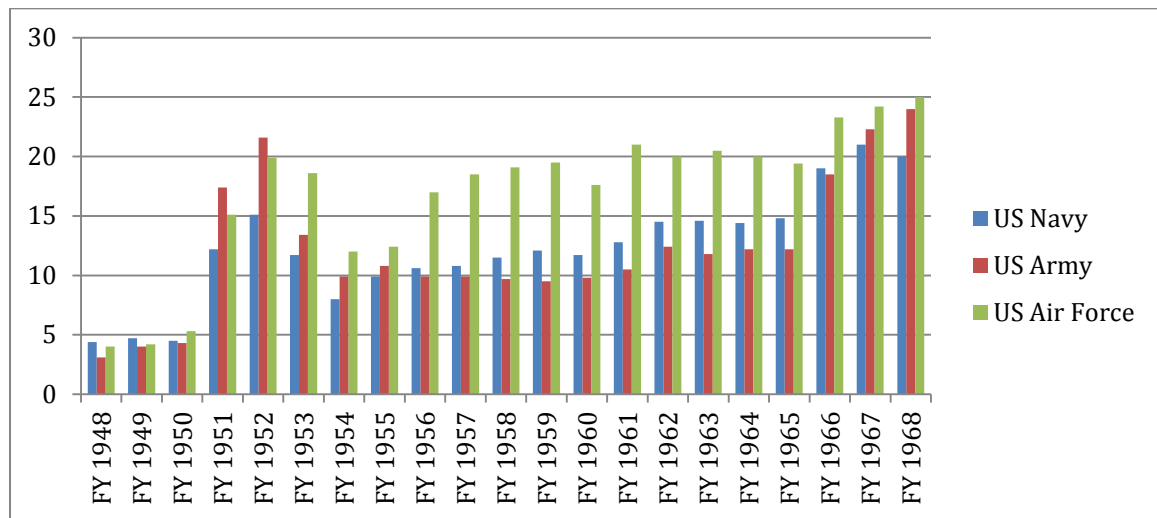


Figure 1. 1948-1968 Services' Budgets in Then-Year Dollars

Source: "Green Book," Comptroller, Office of the Sec of Defense 2010.

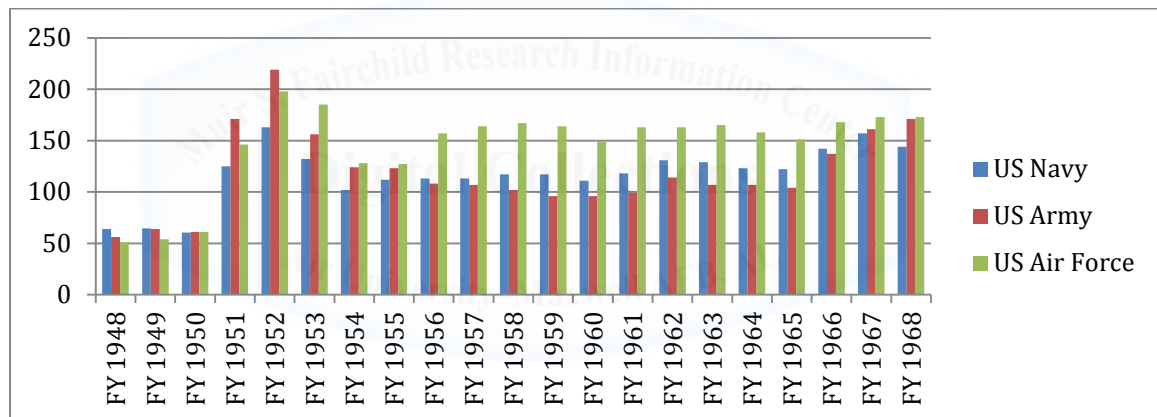


Figure 2. 1948-1968 Services' Budgets in 2010 Dollars

Source: "Green Book," Comptroller, Office of the Sec of Defense 2010.

The USAF saw the largest overall increase, while the Army's budget decreased the most and the Navy's budget remained fairly even. From 1955 to 1965, the USAF's budget dwarfed the other services'. The USAF's increase was based on it becoming the leading service for its contributions to the nuclear strategy through their strategic bombers and ballistic missiles. At the end of 1947, the USAF had 319 B-29s,

although only 32 to 35 were capable of carrying nuclear weapons.¹⁵ In 1958, this number had increased to 881 nuclear-capable aircraft on ground alert and 63 nuclear-equipped ballistic missiles. That balance shifted by 1967 to 219 bombers and 928 ballistic missiles.¹⁶ The USAF then had control over two portions of the nation's nuclear triad, nuclear bombers and nuclear-equipped ballistic missiles, while the third portion, the submarine-launched ballistic missile, was under the Navy.

The Navy was able to maintain a relatively constant budget over this time, but it did not experience the increases of the USAF. Immediately following WWII, the Navy used its carrier forces to demonstrate the projection of naval and air power throughout the globe.¹⁷ Additionally, by 1948 the Navy had demonstrated the capability to launch nuclear-equipped aircraft from an aircraft carrier, eliminating the AF monopoly of that capability.¹⁸ The Navy also staked a claim on the nuclear mission through submarine-launched ballistic missiles. In 1955, Admiral William Raborn was named head of a special projects office with the mission of developing a ballistic missile for the fleet.¹⁹ Under the direction of Admiral Raborn and noted nuclear scientist Dr. Edward Teller, the Navy developed the Polaris, a 15-ton ballistic missile capable of ranges up to 1,500 miles after being launched from a submarine.²⁰ From 1960 to 1970, the Navy's Polaris force grew from 1 to 41 submarines, forming this third leg of the US's nuclear triad.²¹

Without a direct nuclear role, the US Army suffered a great budget decline from 1952 to 1960, with a decrease from its peak of \$219 billion

¹⁵ L. Douglas Kenney, *15 Minutes: General Curtis LeMay and the Countdown to Nuclear Annihilation* (NY: St. Martin's Griffin 2012), 41.

¹⁶ Kenney, *15 Minutes*, 260, 316.

¹⁷ Paul Ryan, *First Line of Defense: The U.S. Navy since 1945* (NJ: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), 8.

¹⁸ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 11. Despite this attempt by the Navy, however, this capability was blocked by the Air Force and did not become reality until the late 1950s.

¹⁹ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 27.

²⁰ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 27.

²¹ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 28.

at the height of the Korean War to \$96 billion dollars eight years later.²² It failed in an effort to win the intermediate-range ballistic missile from the Air Force.²³ In an attempt to increase its budget, the Army developed tactical nuclear weapons, including nuclear artillery rounds.²⁴ The nuclear artillery rounds were never incorporated into the US's national strategy, and the Army's budget remained mostly stagnant from the 1954 until the beginning of the troop buildup in Vietnam in the fall of 1965.²⁵

In addition to nuclear roles and missions, each service also had conventional responsibilities. These were organized around a conventional war in Europe.²⁶ For the USAF, the conventional mission caused a divide between those assigned to Strategic Air Command (SAC) and those in Tactical Air Command (TAC). SAC's primary responsibility was the nuclear mission, while TAC attempted to maintain a conventional capability, which included a non-nuclear air-to-air and air-to-ground arsenal against the Soviet Union.²⁷ In 1948, SAC commander General Curtis LeMay convinced USAF leaders to name strategic bombing as its primary mission and assign TAC to the Continental Air Command.²⁸ This organization would subordinate TAC to the strategic mission of defending the US against nuclear air attack. This competition for budget, roles, and missions would always exist between the two factions within the USAF, though it would vary in its intensity. For the Army, the mission in Europe was exceptionally clear. Against a conventional Soviet Army, the US Army provided firepower and maneuver

²² Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Green Book, Comptroller Report*, US Government White Paper (Washington DC: Department of Commerce, December 2010).

²³ Neal Sheehan, *A Fiery Peace in a Cold War: Bernard Schriever and the Ultimate Weapon* (New York: Random, 2009), 224.

²⁴ Max Hastings, *The Korean War*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 44.

²⁵ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 44.

²⁶ Gaddis, *The Cold War*. 55.

²⁷ Mike Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals: the Problem of Air Force Leadership, 1945-1982*, (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1998), 38.

²⁸ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 39.

with armor, artillery, and infantry.²⁹ The main difference was the size of the force. During the initial Soviet waves, the US Army expected to be fighting against a numerically far-superior foe. For the Navy, the primary conventional mission against the invading Soviet Army led to a confusion of missions. Since the Navy could not contribute to this fight outside of the force projection role, it emphasized sea control, which included dominating areas of the ocean against the Soviet Navy.³⁰ The Korean War came as a surprise to an unprepared American military establishment.

The US became involved in the Korean War from 1950-1953 based on its policy of containment. The Soviet Union acquired and tested its first nuclear weapon in August 1949.³¹ This greatly increased the tension between the US and the Soviet Union because it ended the US's monopoly of the weapon.³² The US also feared that the Soviet Union planned to export communism to surrounding areas, thus the US's foreign policy concentrated on containing communism's advance.³³ The US had made it very clear that Japan and Europe were areas of vital national interest.³⁴ In a famous presentation, however, the Secretary of State failed to include Korea in that category, until the invasion of South

²⁹ Gaddis, *The Cold War*, 55.

³⁰ George Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U. S. Navy, 1890-1990* (CA: Stanford UP, 1996), 315.

³¹ Freedman, *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy*, 60.

³² National Archives Historical Branch, Korean War. <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/korean-conflict/>

³³ National Archives Historical Branch, Korean War. <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/korean-conflict/>.

³⁴ National Archives Historical Branch, Korean War. <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/korean-conflict/> The Truman Doctrine was a policy set forth by President Truman to support free people that were resisting subjugation by armed minorities or outside pressures. The Berlin Airlift was the use of US airpower to ship supplies to West Berlin in response to the Soviet Union blocking all transport into and out of Berlin for supplies. The US was successful and the blockade against the city was lifted. The Marshall Plan was a plan from the US to provide aid to European countries following WWII. The Soviet Union refused the aid from the US, thereby separating Europe behind the lines of the Cold War.

Korea by North Korean forces in June 1950.³⁵

In addition to being a war of containment, the Korean War stands as the first superpower war of the nuclear age to use limited force to achieve limited objectives.³⁶ While the services had prepared their respective arsenals in anticipation of a possible conventional or nuclear confrontation with the Soviet Union, the Korean War was fought with conventional means. Political leaders were concerned with constructing the strategy so as to avoid the descent into global nuclear war.³⁷

President Eisenhower was specifically concerned about the military entering or bombing China, resulting in China, the Soviet Union, or both entering the war.³⁸ At the same time, the military leaders believed their role was to use every weapon in the arsenal to achieve their objectives quickly and efficiently. The military viewed the Korean War as “an opportunity to expand a limited operation into a crushing and symbolic wider victory.”³⁹ Both the civilian leadership and the military believed the other had unrealistic expectations and a misunderstanding of the over-arching concerns of warfare in this new age.⁴⁰ This civil-military tension between political restraint to avoid escalation into nuclear conflict and the military desire to achieve a decisive victory would continue throughout the Korean War and into the Vietnam War.

The Korean War had five phases. During the first phase, US and South Korean forces suffered heavy losses as North Korean forces launched a surprise attack and pushed them into the southeast corner of Korea around the port of Pusan, almost off the peninsula.⁴¹ The second phased included a US counterattack, which then allowed General

³⁵ National Archives Historical Branch, Korean War.

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/korean-conflict/>

³⁶ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 338.

³⁷ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 176.

³⁸ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 177.

³⁹ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 341.

⁴⁰ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 339.

⁴¹ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 76.

Douglas MacArthur to pursue the North Korean forces almost to the border with China.⁴² Phase 3 was the massive Chinese armed intervention in November 1950, which again pushed US and South Korean forces back into South Korea.⁴³ By June 1951, the US and South Korea had responded in Phase 4 and were able to gain back control of South Korea to the 38th parallel, the former border between the nations. Phase 5, which would last for the next two years, was a stalemate along the 38th parallel.

Despite early defeats and frustrations, the Army did not learn all it could have from this conflict. In the first six months, the Army suffered numerous defeats and over 6,000 deaths.⁴⁴ This trend continued for the following three years, which resulted in a final tally of over 33,000 US soldiers killed by the time both sides declared a truce.⁴⁵ Rather than attempt to discern lessons as the Korean War ended, Army planners began shifting their focus away from limited engagements back towards a WWII-style force structure.⁴⁶ Despite the Korean War experience, the Army believed that the main threat was the Soviet Union attacking across the plains of Europe. With its mission of containment, the Army redeployed forces throughout the world after the conclusion of the Korean War, including the new Republic of Vietnam.⁴⁷ However, even with this dispersal of forces, the Army still concentrated its forces on the expected battleground of Europe.

The primary roles for the Navy in Korea were transport, gunfire

⁴² Hastings, *The Korean War*, 113.

⁴³ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 128.

⁴⁴ Center for Military History, *American Military History*, Volume 2, 2010, 225.

⁴⁵ "US Death Toll from Korean War revised downward," *cnn.com*
http://articles.cnn.com/2000-06-04/us/korea.deaths_1_death-toll-battlefield-fatalities-korean-war?_s=PM:US

⁴⁶ Center for Military History, *American Military History*, 248.

⁴⁷ Center for Military History, *American Military History*, 248.

support, and sea control.⁴⁸ It rushed men and material to the US and South Korean forces hemmed into the Pusan Perimeter, while also providing air support and naval gunfire support.⁴⁹ It provided the ships for General MacArthur's decisive amphibious landing at Inchon. And all the while the Navy increased its strength in the waters off Korea.⁵⁰ From June 1950 to July 1951, the Navy increased its manpower from 10,990 sailors to 74,335, almost 20% of its entire force structure.⁵¹ Additionally, in the first four months of the conflict, the Navy increased its presence from 86 ships and submarines to 274 ships and submarines, an increase of over 300%.⁵² It blockaded North Korea from the sea and continued to provide naval gunfire and air support.⁵³ One of the Navy's largest successes during the Korean War was the evacuation of US and South Korean troops near Hungnam, North Korea, in December of 1950. In support of the amphibious evacuation, the Navy flew almost 1,700 sorties and pounded the shore with fire from 4 attack carriers, 1 battleship, 2 cruisers, and 22 destroyers.⁵⁴ These missions would again fall to the Navy during the Vietnam War.

Much like the Navy, according to Conrad Crane's *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, the USAF felt a great sense of pride and accomplishment from its first experience as a separate service.⁵⁵ Initially, the Far East Air Force (FEAF) attacked military and economic targets in North Korea. After the intervention of Chinese forces, strategists unleashed a strategic bombing campaign much like Curtis

⁴⁸ Sonia Benson, *Korean War Almanac & Primary Sources*: (NY: Visible Ink Press, 1980), 103.

⁴⁹ Benson, *Korean War Almanac*, 61.

⁵⁰ James A. Field Jr., and Ernest McNeill Eller, *History of United States Naval Operations: Korea* (CA: University Press of Pacific, 2001), 236.

⁵¹ Eller, *History of United States Naval Operations*, 238.

⁵² Eller, *History of United States Naval Operations*, 238.

⁵³ Eller, *History of United States Naval Operations*, 249.

⁵⁴ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 325.

⁵⁵ Conrad C. Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea, 1950-1953* (Lawrence, KS: UP Of Kansas, 2000), 171.

LeMay's infamous bombing campaigns against Germany and Japan.⁵⁶ However, the North Korean and Chinese armies continued the fight despite relentless bombing. Overall, the USAF believed the combination of strategic bombing and the threat of nuclear weapons was the decisive force in the Korean War.⁵⁷ The USAF paid relatively little attention to tactical air power in Korea. General Curtis LeMay, as the SAC commander, believed that the use of air power as interdiction or close support was a misuse of its overall power.⁵⁸ The lack of emphasis on the lessons of strategic bombing and close support, including the possibility that non-industrial countries may not react to strategic bombing and the need for lower echelons of control in Army-support flights, ensured the same lessons would have to be learned in the Vietnam War.

The USAF's mindset following the Korea War was that, despite the preponderance of sorties supporting the ground battle, a force designed with centralized control for a nuclear mission was ready for anything.⁵⁹ The majority of the 1,040,708 flights during the Korean War were in support of the ground maneuver element.⁶⁰ However, despite the three years of war, lessons including proper air-to-ground coordination, command and control of airborne forces, and priority of targeting were never codified or addressed.⁶¹ Fighters were constantly scheduled to support Army units without knowledge of the Army's positioning or plans. Additionally, because the Army did not dictate the priority between missions, aircraft would show up over a stagnant battle, while another unit in need received little support.⁶² The Army argued for control over these airborne assets, while the USAF maintained the need

⁵⁶ Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, 8.

⁵⁷ Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, 171.

⁵⁸ Worden, *The Rise of the Fighter General*, 63.

⁵⁹ Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, 175.

⁶⁰ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 266.

⁶¹ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 268.

⁶² Hastings, *The Korean War*, 255.

for a centralized control of the air assets.⁶³ This argument continues even today. According to historian Max Hastings, the USAF believed it was the decisive element while the ground force commanders and politicians believed that interdiction did not have the same effect on the battle as close support.⁶⁴ The USAF's perception of success in Korea reinforced LeMay's mindset that a force prepared for a global conflict was ready for any lesser war.⁶⁵

Each portion of this context combined to set the stage for the US military's involvement in the Vietnam War. First, the limited nature of the Korean War illuminated a tension in civil-military relations. Civilians believed, like Clausewitz, that war was a continuation of politics by other means. The civilians were in charge of those politics, so it was their duty to ensure that all military actions served the political goals of the US. The military believed that political involvement did not allow for an efficient, decisive victory. Second, the Navy's role in a conventional war became firmly entrenched in sea control, gunfire support, and force projection. As these were the primary roles of the Navy in Korea, they became the primary missions during the Vietnam War. Finally, the Korean War offered numerous lessons for the Army and USAF based on the effectiveness of interdiction and the need to coordinate with the ground element during close support. Neither the Army nor the USAF recognized the importance of these lessons for almost a decade. However, as the US learned, problems became more complex transitioning from the conventional Korean War to the unconventional war in Vietnam.

⁶³ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 266.

⁶⁴ Hastings, *The Korean War*, 269.

⁶⁵ Crane, *American Airpower Strategy in Korea*, 175.

The Vietnam War

For the US, the Vietnam War also began as an extension of the policy of containment. During and after the Korean War, it was the policy of the US to continue its stand against what it perceived as communist aggression throughout the world.⁶⁶ This included supporting French forces in Indochina.⁶⁷

French forces were fighting against a growing communist movement aimed at ending French colonial rule of Indochina.⁶⁸ The French originally conquered Vietnam during the 1860s during a period of colonial advancement.⁶⁹ During WWII, the Japanese forces displaced the French, but the Japanese were forced to leave in August 1945, which created a power vacuum.⁷⁰ As France attempted to reestablish colonial control over Vietnam, a new leader, Ho Chi Minh, declared the independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on 2 September 1945.⁷¹ In spite of US opposition to colonialism, President Truman elected to support France's efforts to regain control in Vietnam.⁷² The US wanted French support for resistance to communism in Europe. More importantly, the US also believed that a weaker Europe would provide an easy target for expanding communist action from the Soviet Union.⁷³

Following a disastrous defeat for the French at Dien Bien Phu in

⁶⁶ National Archives Historical Branch, Korean War.

www.archives.gov/education/Korean-conflict

⁶⁷ National Archives Historical Branch, Korean War.

www.archives.gov/education/Korean-conflict

⁶⁸ Martin Windrow, *The Last Valley: Dien Bien Phu and the French Defeat in Vietnam* (Da Capo, 2005), 41.

⁶⁹ Kevin Hillstrom, and Laurie Collier Hillstrom, *Vietnam War: Almanac*. Vol I. (Detroit, MI: UXL, 2001), 1.

⁷⁰ Hillstrom, *Vietnam War*, 18. Democratic Republic of Vietnam, *Declaration of Independence*, 1. http://coombs.anu.edu.au/~vern/van_kien/declar.html

⁷¹ Hillstrom, *Vietnam War*, 18.

⁷² Hillstrom, *Vietnam War*, 19.

⁷³ National Archives Historical Branch, Korean War.

www.archives.gov/education/Korean-conflict

1954, the French government negotiated their withdrawal from Vietnam. The siege at Dien Bien Phu led to over 2,200 French soldiers killed, over 5,100 wounded, and almost 10,000 captured.⁷⁴ After this defeat, French political and public support collapsed and the French government agreed to permanent withdrawal under the Geneva Accords.⁷⁵ The primary conditions of the accords included the division of Vietnam along the 17th parallel, the possibility of reunification during elections in 1956, and withdrawal of French forces over the course of the next year.⁷⁶ The US, although not a signatory of the Geneva Accords, was already substantially invested in Indochina based on increasing monetary support from 1950-1954. By the time the French were withdrawing from Vietnam, the US had spent almost \$3 billion dollars, which equated to 80% of the French budget during the war.⁷⁷

Following the Geneva Accords, South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem formally requested assistance from the US against the Viet-Cong insurgency in the form of military advisors and trainers.⁷⁸ The Viet-Cong, an abbreviation for Vietnamese Communists, were insurgent fighters working to destabilize Diem's regime in hopes of unifying Vietnam.⁷⁹ As opposed to the North Vietnamese government, which initially hoped to reunite the country through elections as opposed to warfare, the Viet-Cong attacked village officials throughout the south to destabilize the regime.⁸⁰ After South Vietnam's refusal to conduct the elections described in the Geneva Accords, Ho Chi Minh withdrew his support of the agreements separating Vietnam and announced his intent

⁷⁴ Windrow, *The Last Valley*, 651.

⁷⁵ Hillstrom, *Vietnam War*, 34.

⁷⁶ Hillstrom, *Vietnam War*, 34.

⁷⁷ Hillstrom, *Vietnam War*, 31.

⁷⁸ American Military History, "The US Army in Vietnam," Army Historical Series, USA Center of Military History, 2010, 643. US State Department, *Study of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam*, 3.

⁷⁹ Hillstrom, *Vietnam War*, 48.

⁸⁰ Hillstrom, *Vietnam War*, 49.

to reunite it.⁸¹ From the mid-1950s until the mid-1960s, the official US involvement was limited to an advisory role against the Viet-Cong's destabilization attempts.⁸² From 1955 to 1965, the advisory group had grown from a few hundred to ten thousand men.⁸³ President Lyndon Johnson became concerned that the government in South Vietnam was about to collapse, which would mean the reunification of Vietnam under a communist government.⁸⁴ To prevent this, on 6 April 1965, President Johnson pledged 175,000 troops by the end of 1965, and he would later raise this to 266,000 in early 1966.⁸⁵ Thereafter, American military combat force in Vietnam grew to more than 500,000.⁸⁶ However, the declared goal of the US entering into Vietnam, maintaining a free and independent South Vietnam, did not bring unity of action to the US military effort.⁸⁷ The Army fought two similar campaigns against the Viet Cong insurgent group in South Vietnam.⁸⁸ General Westmoreland, the commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), first planned to use the Army to defend the various bases throughout South Vietnam.⁸⁹ From these bases, Westmoreland launched 'search-and-destroy' missions to locate and destroy the Viet-Cong insurgents. Westmoreland's second priority was to pacify South Vietnamese people

⁸¹ US State Department, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 3.

⁸² Hillstrom, *Vietnam War*, 51. From 1962 until the end of the Vietnam War, the US gave military and financial aid to Laos, despite a promise to the Soviet Union and North Vietnam that Laos would remain neutral. This aid to Laos is also referred to as American's Secret War in Laos.

⁸³ Jeffrey J. Clarke, *Advice and Support: The Final Years, 1965-1973: The U.S. Army in Vietnam - Part 1* (NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 497.

⁸⁴ American Military History, *The US Army in Vietnam*, 643.

⁸⁵ US National Security Action Memorandum No. 328. For the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Army Historical Series, USA Center of Military History, 6 April 1965. American Military History, *The US Army in Vietnam*, 643. Of note, this was in addition to the approximately 23,000 troop already in Vietnam, made up of military advisors and troops sent following the Tonkin Gulf Resolution.

⁸⁶ US National Security Action Memorandum No. 328.

⁸⁷ John Stuckey, and Joseph Pistorius, "Mobilization for the Vietnam War: A Political and Military Catastrophe." *Journal of Army War College*, June 1985, 52.

⁸⁸ Pistorius, "Mobilization for the Vietnam War: A Political and Military Catastrophe", 53.

⁸⁹ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 97.

and convince them to support their government.⁹⁰ In this respect, the Army was involved in a counter-insurgency (COIN) operation aimed at preventing the overthrow the South Vietnamese government. It was not well prepared for either mission.

The USAF was also fighting two kinds of war. First, it fought a strategic air battle against the North Vietnamese and an interdiction campaign against the routes by which it delivered men and material to the South.⁹¹ From 1965-1968, the US would drop 643,000 tons of bombs on North Vietnam, more than was dropped in the entire Pacific theater of WWII, in an attempt to coerce the North Vietnamese into withdrawing support from the Viet Cong in South Vietnam.⁹² This strategic bombing campaign would stop and start many times throughout the course of the war. The campaign transitioned from a gradual buildup of offensive power, first called Rolling Thunder, to a more unrestricted bombing campaign against infrastructure targets in North Vietnam. Little effect could be detected on the North Vietnamese war effort.⁹³ Finally, after the collapse of peace talks between the US and North Vietnam in December 1972, President Nixon ordered Operation Linebacker II.⁹⁴ The campaign lasted only two weeks, but the USAF dropped 36,000 tons of explosives, more than had been dropped by the USAF during the three-year period of 1969-1971.⁹⁵ The North Vietnamese agreed to return to the negotiating tables after eleven days of bombing.⁹⁶ From this event, there was born a belief in the USAF that the particular intensity of the so-called Christmas bombing had demonstrated the real potential of air power and had brought the

⁹⁰ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 97.

⁹¹ C. R. Anderegg, *Sierra Hotel: Flying Air Force Fighters in the Decade After Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Government Reprints, 2001), 58.

⁹² Kevin Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 93.

⁹³ Jeffrey J. Clarke, *Advice and Support*, 108.

⁹⁴ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 231.

⁹⁵ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 232.

⁹⁶ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 232.

Vietnam War to a successful conclusion. In short, strategic bombing had been decisive.⁹⁷

The second mission of the USAF was providing air support for the Army units engaged in a counter-insurgency (COIN) fight, or fight against elements of the population that seek the overthrow of the current government, in South Vietnam.⁹⁸ During the Korean War, the USAF and Army disagreed on the assignment of airlift and the close air support mission and assets between the services.⁹⁹ In 1962, a Tactical Mobility Requirements Board, chaired by General Hamilton Howze, submitted a report to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara that recommended restructuring five of the Army's thirteen divisions into air mobility units for both tactical airlift and close air support. The Howze Board, as it was called, knew the USAF would view the increase in attack capability as an infringement of its roles and missions.¹⁰⁰ Attack capability in this discussion is a platform's ability to attack targets on the ground. Both USAF and Army leaders had learned many lessons regarding these platforms and missions during the Korean War, including command and control, but these lessons had already been forgotten. The USAF commissioned a board chaired by General Gabriel Disosway to respond. The Disosway Board recommended that studies continue with Army and USAF involvement, but no changes should occur at that time.¹⁰¹ Ultimately, neither board resolved the services' difference of opinion, which centered on the control of aviation assets acting in support of the Army. The Army and the Howze Board believed they should be controlled by the supported commander on the ground while the USAF and the Disosway Board believed they should be centrally controlled by

⁹⁷ Benjamin S. Lambeth, *The Transformation of American Air Power* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2000), 142.

⁹⁸ Ian Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry And Air Power In The Vietnam War*, (Fort Leavenworth: CreateSpace, 2006), 31.

⁹⁹ Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry and Air Power in the Vietnam War*, 31.

¹⁰⁰ Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry and Air Power in the Vietnam War*, 47.

¹⁰¹ Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry and Air Power in the Vietnam War*, 52.

an airman.¹⁰² Though the Army gained some air mobility assets, UH-1 helicopters capable of transporting troops and providing fire support, the preponderance of tactical airlift and close air support for the Army fell to the USAF. However, the USAF leadership believed that the strategic bombing and interdiction campaign was the best way to achieve victory, and the Commander-in-Chief of the Pacific Air Forces was therefore reluctant to commit forces to the COIN environment in South Vietnam.¹⁰³ This disagreement over airlift and close support would continue for many years.

During the Vietnam War, the Navy was also fighting its own two-front war. It attacked strategic targets in North Vietnam with carrier-based aircraft, with much the same objectives as the USAF.¹⁰⁴ It also provided naval gunfire support to Marine units ashore and used small craft for riverine operations and interdiction of seaborne supplies to the Viet Cong in South Vietnam.¹⁰⁵ Like the Air Force, most of the Navy's personnel were stationed outside Vietnam.

US participation in the war in Vietnam continued to grow until a combination of disastrous defeats by the Vietnamese, weakening US resolve, and strategic bombing ended the conflict. From 1965 to 1968, US troop strength increased to over 500,000 men.¹⁰⁶ The increased troop levels led to a shrinking ability for the Viet-Cong and North Vietnamese forces to threaten the South Vietnamese government. Then on 30 January 1968, during an agreed-upon cease-fire to allow both North and South Vietnamese citizen to celebrate the Tet holiday, more than 80,000 Viet-Cong and North Vietnamese assaulted over 100 areas throughout South Vietnam.¹⁰⁷ The Tet offensive was a turning point in

¹⁰² Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry and Air Power in the Vietnam War*, 61.

¹⁰³ Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry in Vietnam*, 75.

¹⁰⁴ Department of the Navy, *Naval Forces Vietnam, Monthly Historical Summary*. April 1966, 4.

¹⁰⁵ *Naval Forces Vietnam, Monthly Historical Summary*, 4.

¹⁰⁶ American Military History, *The US Army in Vietnam*, 643.

¹⁰⁷ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 118.

Vietnam, in which a battlefield defeat for the communists was overshadowed by a political defeat at home for American policies in Vietnam. Public support for the war declined rapidly and President Johnson withdrew from consideration for re-election.¹⁰⁸ Richard Nixon was then elected President, partly on hints of a 'secret' plan for the Vietnam War. His plan, Vietnamization, had two parts: US troops would withdraw from South Vietnam and the South Vietnamese would assume greater military responsibilities.¹⁰⁹ Then, in March 1972, three North Vietnamese divisions crossed into South Vietnam in a premature attempt to defeat the Southern government.¹¹⁰ Against this conventional enemy, the Army and USAF were able to mount devastating counter-attacks that defeated the offensive.¹¹¹ Finally, after decreasing public support in the US and the Christmas bombing of North Vietnam, the US, South Vietnamese, and North Vietnamese reached a peace agreement on 23 January 1973. Although this agreement dictated the return of US forces if the South were threatened again, North Vietnam successfully invaded and reunited Vietnam in 1975.¹¹²

The Vietnam War left the US military establishment in crisis. First, the military had a problem with *retention*, driven in part by anti-military sentiment in the country at large, low morale within the military, and the elimination of the draft. Next, the Cold War struggle over roles and missions was compounded by the services' differing perceptions of the Vietnam experience, resulting in enhanced *parochialism and mission uncertainty*. Wartime losses and the deferral of research, development, and procurement meant that equipment for each service was also in need of *modernization*. Finally, mutual recrimination and misunderstanding within the executive branch of government during the war had poisoned

¹⁰⁸ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 119.

¹⁰⁹ American Military History, *The US Army in Vietnam*, 341.

¹¹⁰ American Military History, *The US Army in Vietnam*, 481.

¹¹¹ American Military History, *The US Army in Vietnam*, 482.

¹¹² American Military History, *The US Army in Vietnam*, 495.

civil-military relations.

Retention

Following the Vietnam War, the US military experienced problems with recruitment and retention. For the purposes of this discussion, recruitment is the military's ability to sign up a civilian for a term of service in the military. Retention is the military's success in convincing someone in the military to remain in, or sign up for additional time. Beginning in the mid-1960s, when the US first sent combat forces to Vietnam, each branch of the military experienced a sharp down-turn in military retention. As shown in Figure 3, each service reached its lowest point between 1970 and 1972.¹¹³

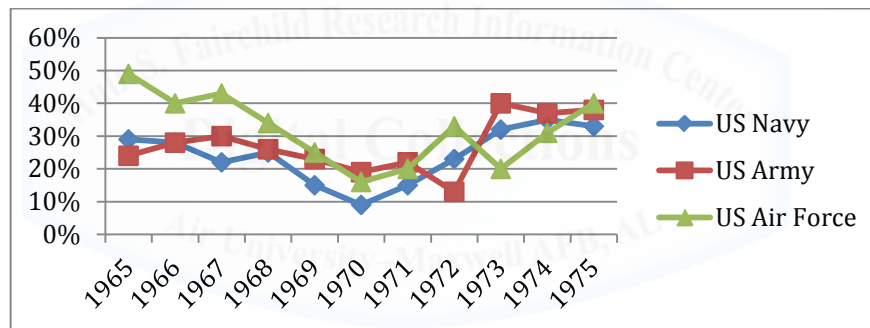


Figure 3. Retention Rates for the Services 1965-1975

Source: Department of Defense Annual report, 1965, 1968, 1972-1976; DCSPER Annual Historical Summary, 1972. "I Want You: Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force." *RAND Corporation.*

While the reasons for the upswing in the early to mid-1970s are addressed in later chapters, the focus of this section is the reason for the drop in the mid-to-late 1960s. These reasons included the public's unfavorable view of the Vietnam War, the perception that the military was largely responsible for the hostilities, the transition from a draft to an All-Volunteer Force (AVF), and problems within the ranks ranging

¹¹³ James R. Schlesinger, *Annual Defense Department Report FY 1975, 1976* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1975). Bernard Rostker, "I Want You: Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force" (Santa Monica CA: RAND, 2006), 7.

from low morale to racism.

In 1965, government officials and the wider public generally supported President Johnson's decision to intervene militarily in Vietnam.¹¹⁴ However, there were some within the Johnson administration who disagreed, including Vice President Hubert Humphrey. In Johnson's administration, however, the Vice President was removed from President Johnson's inner circle of war strategists.¹¹⁵ When Humphrey began protesting the escalation of the war in 1965, Johnson excluded him from specific policy-making in Vietnam until Humphrey publicly voiced his support for Johnson's policies in 1966.¹¹⁶ Additionally, the CIA's Chief of the Staff Estimates Harold P. Ford sent a memorandum voicing the agency's concern about the efforts in Vietnam becoming less focused with more risk.¹¹⁷ These two individuals represented the beginning of a dissenting voice within the Johnson administration.

Outside the Johnson administration, opposition to the war began mostly among pacifists, then spread slowly to other segments of the population.¹¹⁸ The most visible opponents were the youth, who were subject to the draft, but they were joined by artists, intellectuals, clergymen, and civil-rights activists.¹¹⁹ While most opponents protested the war because they felt it was immoral, others felt that it was unwinnable based on the US's refusal to employ its full military power.¹²⁰ On 12 August 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King called on President Johnson to negotiate with the North Vietnamese and Viet-Cong.¹²¹ During the same month, student protesters from the San Francisco area attempted

¹¹⁴ William C. Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War* (NJ: Princeton UP, 1995), 19.

¹¹⁵ Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War*, 21.

¹¹⁶ Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War*, 21.

¹¹⁷ Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War*, 21.

¹¹⁸ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 133.

¹¹⁹ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 133.

¹²⁰ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 133.

¹²¹ Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War*, 27.

to stop Army trains and equipment bound for ports on the west coast. Some were burning their draft cards.¹²² From 1965 to 1971, public opinion shifted gradually from support for the war to opposition. Figure 4 traces this shift through the results of a Gallup poll asking citizens if they thought the US involvement in the Vietnam War was a mistake. Over the six-year period, the percentage of people who thought it was ‘not a mistake’ dropped from 61 percent to 28 percent, while the percentage that thought it was a ‘mistake’ rose from 24% to 61%.¹²³ Of note, the ‘mistake’ category becomes the leading opinion around the time of the Tet Offensive. Figure 5 shows that the rise in the disapproval rating coincided with a rise in public protests.¹²⁴

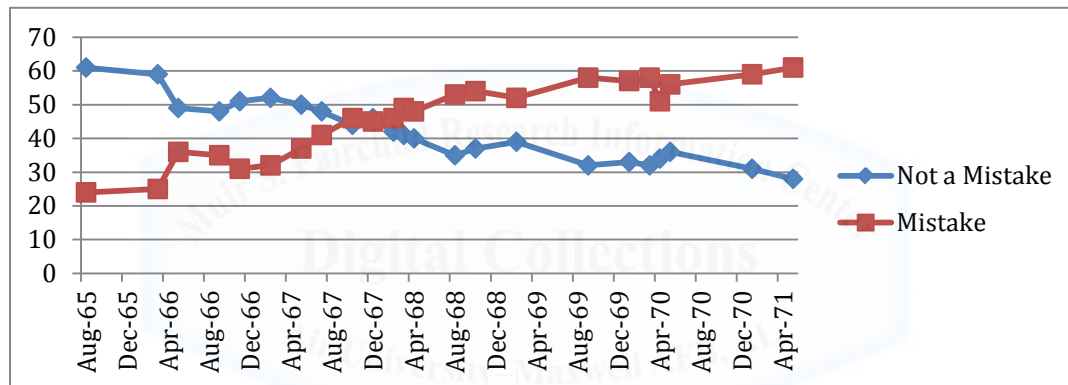


Figure 4. Public Opinion Poll: Was US action in Vietnam a mistake?

Source: William Gibbons. *The US Government and the Vietnam War: Executive and Legislative Roles and Relationships*.

¹²² Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War*, 29.

¹²³ Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War*, 25.

¹²⁴ Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War*, 340.

Numbers participating in major anti-war demonstrations (in thousands)

Percent disapproving of US actions in Vietnam

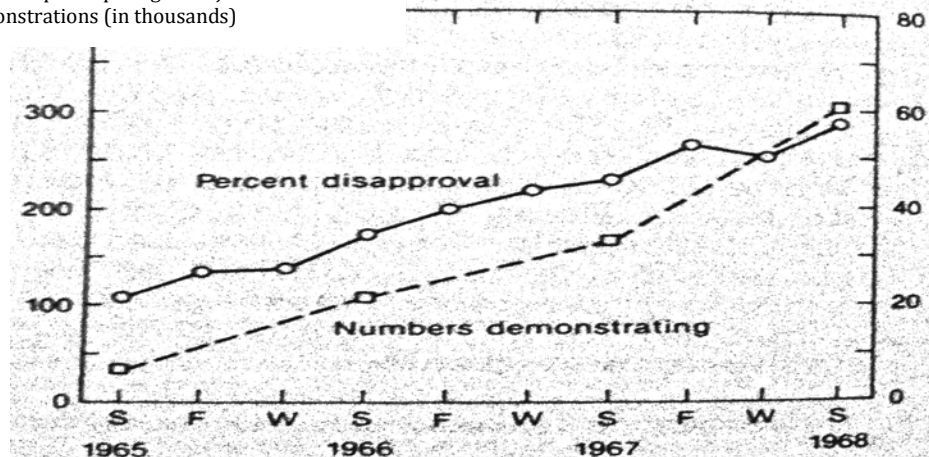


Figure 5. Public Disapproval Rating versus Public Demonstrations

Source: William Gibbons. *The US Government and the Vietnam War*.

While it is difficult to determine what effect the protests had on the war effort, most sources agree that the anti-war movement had a profound impact on public support for the war.¹²⁵ While today the Vietnam War is regarded as a mistaken national policy, many protesters at the time blamed the military.¹²⁶ Instead of viewing the military as instruments of national policy, the protests often held them responsible for the policy.¹²⁷ These feelings crippled recruitment as the military transitioned from a draft to an AVF.

The AVF truly began in September 1973. The AVF law of 28 September 1971 extended the draft for two more years.¹²⁸ The Army increased its reserve force in Vietnam between 1967 and 1972, thereby decreasing the need for draftees to be sent to Vietnam. Additionally, President Nixon announced in June 1972 that no draftees would be sent to Vietnam unless they volunteered.¹²⁹ After that point, as shown in figure 3, the draft accounted for only 16% of the Army's strength in

¹²⁵ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 151. Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War*, 27.

¹²⁶ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 154.

¹²⁷ Hillstrom, *The Vietnam War*, 154.

¹²⁸ Rostker, *Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force*, 4.

¹²⁹ US Army Historical Center, "Army Historical Summary FY, 1972" (Washington DC: Army Historical Center, 1972), 77.

Vietnam and 14% of total Army recruitment.

DRAFTEE PERCENTAGES OF OVER-ALL STRENGTH		
YEAR	IN VIETNAM	IN ARMY
1967	49 percent	42 percent
1968	41 percent	39 percent
1969	40 percent	36 percent
1970	39 percent	22 percent
1971	28 percent	28 percent
1972	16 percent	14 percent

Figure 6. Draftee Percentage of Overall Strength

Source: Army Historical Summary FY 1972.

Despite this apparent decrease in reliance on the draft, the services could not meet their needs without a draft.¹³⁰ A RAND study concerning the military's evolution to an AVF reached two conclusions. First, the USAF and Navy would see as large a downturn in military recruitment as the Army.¹³¹ This conclusion was based on two factors. Many young men had joined the USAF or Navy based on fear of being drafted in the Army.¹³² The second factor was that military pay scales were approximately 10-15% below the civilian average for a comparable job.¹³³ RAND concluded that military base pay would have to increase by 68% to achieve the required manpower levels.¹³⁴ While the new service chiefs could not directly control the pay level of their forces, they did have responsibility for finding other measures to improve military recruitment and retention.

Parochialism – Missions

Inter-service rivalries, exacerbated by budget cuts, continued during and after the Vietnam War. Although the budgets in Figure 7 demonstrate a noticeable increase for the services in the late 1970s,

¹³⁰ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1973, 157.

¹³¹ Rostker, *Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force*, 49.

¹³² Rostker, *Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force*, 50.

¹³³ Green Book, 2010, 52.

¹³⁴ Rostker, *Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force*, 52.

Figure 8 shows these same years in constant dollars. Much of the apparent increases in budgets were decreased by inflation rates as high as 10% in the 1970s.¹³⁵ As the entire Department of Defense came under scrutiny and pressure from budget cuts and the failed war effort in Vietnam, each of the services fought more tenaciously to protect its share of the military budget.

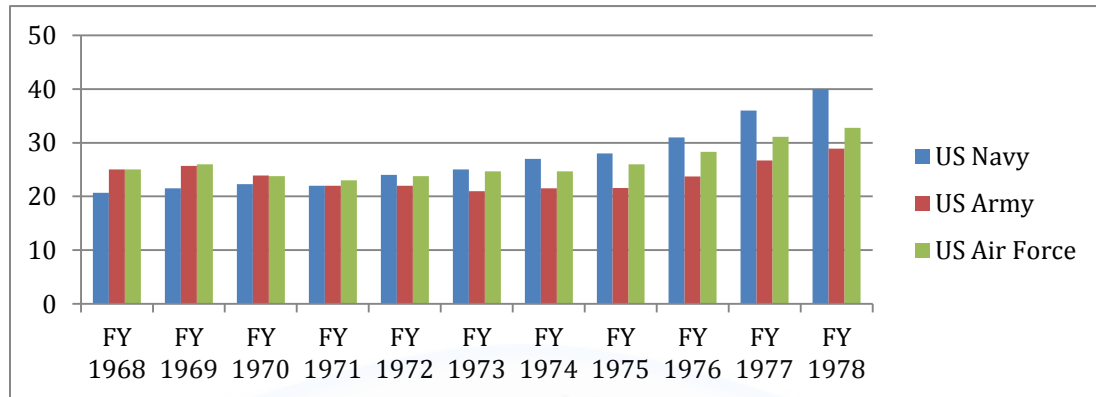


Figure 7. Budgets for Services FY 1968-1978 – Then-Year Dollars

Source: “Green Book,” Comptroller, Office of the Sec of Defense 2010.

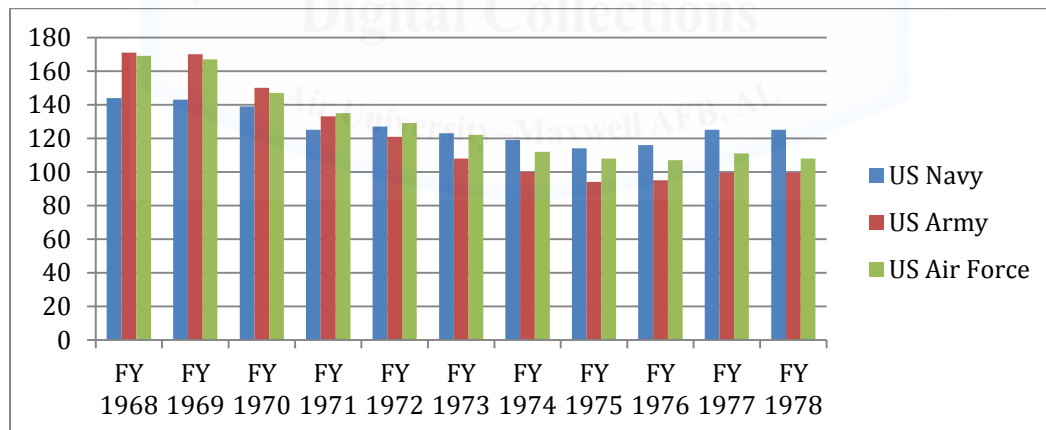


Figure 8. Budgets for Services FY 1968-1978 – 2010 Dollars

Source: “Green Book,” Comptroller, Office of the Sec of Defense 2010.

The period from 1972 and beyond will be the subject for the later chapters, but the FYs from 1968-1972 set the stage for the new service chiefs. While the Navy’s budget remained fairly stable, the budgets in constant dollars demonstrate the decrease in the Army and USAF

¹³⁵ Brown, Harold, *Annual Defense Department Report FY 1980* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1980), C-9.

budget.¹³⁶ Roles and missions go hand-in-hand with budgets. The services compete for their share of the nation's defense budget by performing functions viewed as indispensable to national security. The Air Force had dominated this struggle since the early years of the Cold War, but it was not clear in the early 1970s how the contest would play out in the post-Vietnam era.

Retired General Maxwell Taylor had more experience than most in the changing roles and missions of the services during the Cold War era. In 1955, Taylor retired as the Army's Chief of Staff, but he was brought back into service by President Kennedy as the 'Military Representative to the President.'¹³⁷ Taylor characterized the nature of the relationship between the CoS and the President as a "crisis."¹³⁸ As a result of Taylor's recommendation, Kennedy broke the traditional rotation between the services and "installed Taylor as the new Chairman of the JCS on 1 October 1962."¹³⁹ Taylor continued in this role after President Kennedy's assassination and during President Johnson's administration until 1 July 1964, when he was appointed as the US Ambassador to South Vietnam.¹⁴⁰ During his time as Military Representative to the President, Chairman of the JCS, and ambassador, historian HR McMaster depicts Taylor as continually playing the services against each other to garner favor with the civilian administration.¹⁴¹ Still, in 1968, Taylor offered advice to all the services on what the future held.

The greatest reason for uncertainty concerning military missions,

¹³⁶ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *"Green Book,"* 2010, 52.

¹³⁷ H.R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998), 11.

¹³⁸ McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 22.

¹³⁹ McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 22. Incidentally, Taylor had previously condemned President Eisenhower for taking similar actions while Taylor was the Army's CoS. According to McMaster, Taylor did not protest this decision by Kennedy because it was exceedingly beneficial to Taylor.

¹⁴⁰ McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 105.

¹⁴¹ McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 105. Despite these allegations from military authors of Taylor's duplicity, this is a one-sided assessment of an exceedingly complex situation.

according to Taylor, was the fear of WWII.¹⁴² The ever-present threat of global nuclear war, said Taylor, trumped all other judgments about war and peace by civilian leaders.¹⁴³ It would surely dominate the thoughts of civilians in the post-Vietnam era and it would drive the determination of roles and missions. No doubt just this kind of calculation motivated the Air Force to return to the strategic bombing mission as a primary focus following the Vietnam War.¹⁴⁴ This focus was also a derivative of certain cultural beliefs within the USAF, which would also drive force structure and mission preference.¹⁴⁵ Specifically, the leaders from SAC wanted the USAF to return to its Cold War mission of nuclear deterrence, while the TAC leadership wanted to focus on the tactical applications of air power, including close air support.¹⁴⁶ This balance would shift during the 1970s from SAC to TAC in what was later described as the ‘rise of the fighter generals.’¹⁴⁷ Also, the Navy leadership used a worst-case view of its adversary, the Soviet Union, to put more effort into the sea control mission following the Vietnam War.¹⁴⁸ In the final years of the Vietnam War, both services were already making preparations to return their emphasis to nuclear deterrence and sea control.¹⁴⁹

Taylor also warned that the Vietnam experience would shape the military’s focus on roles and missions. The greatest risk, he felt, was that the services had failed to develop a strategy for defeating an insurrectionary war.¹⁵⁰ The Army of 1968, he said, was unprepared to fight a “war of liberation” against an enemy such as the Viet-Cong. The

¹⁴² Maxwell Taylor, “Post-Vietnam Role of the Military in Foreign Policy” (Maxwell AFB, AL: *Air University Review*. July 1968), 52.

¹⁴³ Taylor, “Post-Vietnam Role of the Military in Foreign Policy”, 52.

¹⁴⁴ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 211.

¹⁴⁵ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 211.

¹⁴⁶ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 216.

¹⁴⁷ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 216.

¹⁴⁸ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 70.

¹⁴⁹ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 70.

¹⁵⁰ Taylor, “Post-Vietnam Role of the Military in Foreign Policy,” 52. The article was published in May 1968, almost five years prior to the end of hostilities. At this point, the Vietnam War was less than halfway complete.

Viet Cong's ability to maneuver men and materials quickly had an effect on the post-Vietnam areas of concentration for the Army.¹⁵¹ The Army concentrated on its need to develop Army-controlled air support, a lesson from the fighting in Vietnam, and the findings of the Howze Board.¹⁵² These led the leadership to concentrate on their internal ability to provide firepower and maneuverability.¹⁵³

Internal and external factors led to increased parochialism and uncertainty with regard to missions for each military service following the Vietnam War. Between the apparent decrease in services' buying power, fear of WWII, and an uncertainty based on the experience of Vietnam, each service chief in the late 1960s and 1970s chose to develop only their own internal forces. It would take a changing of the guard before the forces would begin to integrate.

Modernization

While the Vietnam War expended the services' physical assets, some modernization in each service was deferred.¹⁵⁴ The typical flow for procuring new assets in the military is the process of researching, designing, testing, and deploying the new equipment to units in the US. After units received the equipment, they would be able to train on the equipment to ensure familiarity and reliability.

In Vietnam, the funds normally allocated for research, development, and training shifted into other portions of the wartime budget. The Department of Defense's (DoD's) research and development

¹⁵¹ Taylor, "Post-Vietnam Role of the Military in Foreign Policy," 52.

¹⁵² Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry in the Vietnam War*, 176.

¹⁵³ Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry in the Vietnam War*, 176.

¹⁵⁴ Lambeth, *Transformation of American Air Power*, 53. Lambeth describes how the USAF continued development of weapons including the Laser-Guided-Bombs, which provided the USAF with increased capability in 1972 from previous bombing campaigns between 1965 to 1968.

budget dropped from \$40.2 billion in 1968 to \$29.8 billion in 1972.¹⁵⁵ Additionally, the Army's budget for equipment and training dropped a total of \$39.2 million dollars from 1970-1973, a decrease of almost 20%.¹⁵⁶ All the services were losing equipment in the war, and new equipment was difficult to procure.¹⁵⁷ The combat loss rate for the USAF was only 0.4%, compared to 2% in Korea and 9% during WWII.¹⁵⁸ However, the loss of more than 2200 aircraft throughout the Vietnam War forced the USAF to use much of its budget during the war to replace damaged and destroyed aircraft rather than modernizing the fleet.¹⁵⁹ Additionally, rather than crews using modern equipment in training to educate the fleet, squadrons, or corps, new equipment was taken from the US-stationed units and brought directly to Vietnam for the war.¹⁶⁰

Each service faced a different situation with regard to its budget and force capabilities after the Vietnam War. The combination of budget changes and the equipment needs of the services caused each service chief to re-define what the service needed to accomplish its mission. As the military exited the Vietnam War, it was in dire need of modernization.

Civil-Military Relations

Many high-ranking civilian officials in both Democratic and Republican administrations early in the Cold War agreed with Georges Clemenceau, the World-War-I President of France, that war was too

¹⁵⁵ Melvin Laird, *Annual Defense Department Report FY 1973* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1973), 201. These figures are in constant FY 1973 dollars.

¹⁵⁶ US Army Historical Center. "Army Historical Summary FY, 1973." 1973, 32. These figures are in constant FY 1973 dollars.

¹⁵⁷ John Romjue, "The Evolution of the Airland Battle Concept" (Maxwell AFB, AL: *Air University Review*. May – June 1984), 25.
<http://www.au.af.mil/au/cadre/aspi/airchronicles/aureview/1984/may-jun/romjue.html>

¹⁵⁸ John Schlight, *A War Too Long: The USAF in Southeast Asia 1961-1975* (CA: UP of Pacific, 2004), 103.

¹⁵⁹ Schlight, *A War Too Long*, 103.

¹⁶⁰ Romjue, "The Evolution of the Airland Battle Concept," 25.

important to be left to the generals.¹⁶¹ A recent example in the 1950s was the notorious Truman-MacArthur controversy. In the Korean War, General Douglas MacArthur had pressed for the ability to invade North Korea following his successful amphibious landing at Inchon. Then, after the Chinese had entered the conflict, MacArthur wrote multiple letters back and forth with President Truman emphasizing the importance of challenging China with the full military force available to the United States.¹⁶² The differences of opinion between Truman and MacArthur became public, and Senator Wayne Morse described the US as having two foreign policies, Truman's and MacArthur's.¹⁶³ In a complaint to the British Ambassador in Washington DC, the British foreign advisor described MacArthur as wanting a war with China, adding that his actions had "weakened public confidence in the [US] and in Western Europe."¹⁶⁴ MacArthur was relieved on 12 April 1951 on the grounds of insubordination; even the military members present for discussions with Truman believed it should have happened much earlier in the war.¹⁶⁵ This was a case often cited by civilian leaders to justify the need for tight civilian control.¹⁶⁶

While civil-military relations were strained during the Truman administration, less-well-known events in the beginning of the Kennedy administration caused them to deteriorate further. Prior to leaving office, President Eisenhower had authorized the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to build and train a Cuban force to overthrow Fidel Castro's regime in Cuba.¹⁶⁷ In April 1961, months after his inauguration, Kennedy elected to execute the plan without a clear understanding of the possible

¹⁶¹ Taylor, *Post-Vietnam Role of the Military in Foreign Policy*. Taylor mistakenly attributes this quote to Maurice de Talleyrand in this paper.

¹⁶² Max Hastings, *The Korean War*, 193.

¹⁶³ Max Hastings, *The Korean War*, 201.

¹⁶⁴ Max Hastings, *The Korean War*, 201.

¹⁶⁵ Max Hastings, *The Korean War*, 202.

¹⁶⁶ Taylor, *Post-Vietnam Role of the Military in Foreign Policy*.

¹⁶⁷ McMasters, *Dereliction of Duty*, 5.

consequences.¹⁶⁸ Based on a lack of secrecy and American air cover, the invaders were defeated in the Bay of Pigs, Cuba. Kennedy placed a large part of the blame on the JCS because they had not shared their doubts of the invasion's success with Kennedy. The JCS disagreed with this assessment and claimed that Kennedy had only consulted them after he had made the decision to invade.¹⁶⁹ The Bay of Pigs "debacle" further increased the distrust between the civilian and military leadership.¹⁷⁰

Additionally, reduced Presidential access for the JCS during the Kennedy-Johnson administrations decreased the military's ability to resist increasing civilian involvement in military decisions. Whereas President Eisenhower had used the National Security Council's two major committees, the Planning Board and the Operations Coordinating Board, to hear the military advice from the JCS, Kennedy disbanded the two committees and relied instead on an 'inner club' of his most trusted advisers, including Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, who became known for his penchant for disregarding military advice.¹⁷¹ Johnson continued President Kennedy's lead on the use of committees other than those staffed by the military and developed a distrustful view of the military. According to H.R. McMaster's *Dereliction of Duty*, Johnson believed the military was trying to pressure him into making decisions without giving him all the facts, which may have been close to the truth.¹⁷²

Civil-military relations improved slightly during the later portions of the Vietnam War in President Nixon's administration. As his administration took office in January 1969, President Nixon attempted to

¹⁶⁸ McMasters, *Dereliction of Duty*, 6.

¹⁶⁹ McMasters, *Dereliction of Duty*, 6.

¹⁷⁰ McMasters, *Dereliction of Duty*, 7.

¹⁷¹ McMasters, *Dereliction of Duty*, 4. It is not McMaster's intent, nor the intent of this thesis, to suggest that President Eisenhower's administration experienced smooth sailing with the military leaders. For a further in-depth examination of President Eisenhower and his administration's military relations, see Campbell Craig's *Destroying the Village*.

¹⁷² McMasters, *Dereliction of Duty*, 53.

promote a good working relationship with his principal military advisors by increasing their direct access to him.¹⁷³ From 1969-1973, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird and Nixon installed a new chain of command that ran directly from the advisors and commanders in Vietnam to the JCS, and then to the White House. This attempt to seemingly increase JCS involvement in decision-making may have been merely politically motivated, but it increased the JCS role and gave the chiefs access to the most current information concerning Vietnam.¹⁷⁴

Based on the experiences of the Vietnam War, military leaders believed that civilian control had become excessive. In Vietnam, the JCS believed that they could not provide military advice in the absence of a clear purpose statement for the US in Vietnam.¹⁷⁵ From their perspective, the prevention of the over-throw of the non-communist government in South Vietnam required steps they were not permitted to take, including “over-flights of Laos and Cambodia to acquire operational intelligence, bombing key North Vietnamese targets using US resources (and assuming full responsibility for the attacks), and mining the sea approaches to North Vietnam.”¹⁷⁶ From the point of view of the civilian leadership, a declared war, or unrestricted bombing, against the North Vietnamese could cause China to enter the conflict as in the Korean War. This could have ultimately led to global war between the US and the Soviet Union. For example, on 1 March 1968, General Westmoreland, commander of the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), requested the commitment of 206,000 more troops to Vietnam.¹⁷⁷ This request was only months after the Tet Offensive, a massive defeat for the Viet Cong but a political disaster for the United States. The new Secretary of Defense Clark Clifford recommended to President Johnson

¹⁷³ Stephen P. Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons: Nixon, Kissinger, and the Easter Offensive* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2007), 162.

¹⁷⁴ Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons*, 173.

¹⁷⁵ McMasters, *Dereliction of Duty*, 64.

¹⁷⁶ McMasters, *Dereliction of Duty*, 64.

¹⁷⁷ Gibbons, *The US Government and the Vietnam War*, 790.

that he disapprove this request.¹⁷⁸ By this time, the Secretary of Defense felt the military did not have the same appreciation for the big picture in Vietnam. Clearly, as Secretary of Defense, it was Clifford's job to maintain a strategy based on the big picture, and he did not believe the military's opinion outweighed his appraisal of the situation.¹⁷⁹

The tension between the avoidance of WWII and the unrestricted ability to accomplish military objectives would continue into the 1970s. Following the Vietnam War, both civilian leaders and the service chiefs would be forced to face this problem to form a properly functioning civil-military relationship. The military leaders would need to learn to accept political decisions, and the civilian leadership to use its military establishment more effectively.

Conclusions

From the end of WWII through the Korean War, the US military developed problems that would affect each service during and after the Vietnam War. The military's *retention* problem decreased numbers in each service. Next, the services' differing perceptions of WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War resulted in increased *parochialism and mission uncertainty*. Also, each service needed *modernization*, but the budget could not support each service's needs. Finally, although *civil-military relations* were improving, each service encountered difficulties in dealing with its civilian superiors.

Although each service would face these collective problems, they each had unique problems of their own. Chapters 2 through 4 will illustrate the unique issues faced by the service chiefs of the Navy, Army, and USAF respectively.

¹⁷⁸ Gibbons, *The US Government and the Vietnam War*, 790.

¹⁷⁹ Gibbons, *The US Government and the Vietnam War*, 790.

Chapter 2

The USN and Admiral Elmo Zumwalt

*It is a return to our oldest and most proven tradition:
Command by leadership.*

- Admiral Elmo Zumwalt

*Ours must be a Navy family that recognizes no artificial
barriers of race, color, or religion. There is no black Navy,
no white Navy, just one Navy—the United States Navy.*

- Admiral Elmo Zumwalt

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) from June 1970 to June 1974. As with the other service chiefs during this time, Zumwalt faced four major issues following the Vietnam War: *retention and recruitment, parochialism, deferred modernization, uncertain roles and missions, and poor civil-military relations*. This chapter begins with a brief introduction of Zumwalt based on his experiences in Vietnam. Then, the discussion will examine each issue above as it pertained to the Navy. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an examination of some of Zumwalt's more memorable leadership principles.

History - Admiral Elmo Zumwalt

The future Chief of Naval Operations graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1943, accepting a commission as a surface-warfare ensign. During WWII, he served as an engineering officer and emerged from the war with the usual medals and credits.¹ After assignments as the commander of a destroyer and with the Bureau of Personnel, he caught the eye of Paul H. Nitze, the assistant secretary of defense for

¹ John B. Hattendorf, and Bruce A. Elleman, eds., *Nineteen-Gun Salute: Case Studies of Operational, Strategic, and Diplomatic Naval Leadership during the 20th and Early 21st Centuries* (Newport, R.I.: Dept. of Navy, 2010), 186.

international security affairs in the administration of John Kennedy.² When Mr. Nitze became Secretary of the Navy in 1963, Zumwalt served as his executive assistant.³ In 1965, he became the youngest rear admiral in the Navy, based largely on a recommendation from Nitze.⁴ He was promoted ahead of 130 other officers to the rank of vice admiral, and he was subsequently assigned as the commander of the naval forces in Vietnam.⁵

As the Commander of the Naval Forces in Vietnam (COMNAVFORV) from September 1968 to June 1970, Zumwalt's duties included operational control of naval assets participating in the Vietnam War, including the Coastal Surveillance Force and the River Patrol Force.⁶ During his time as COMNAVFORV, the commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), General William C. Westmoreland, assigned Zumwalt the task of using these units more aggressively and developing a plan for the timely withdrawal of naval forces. The need for a withdrawal design was based on the plans being contemplated by the Nixon administration. In fact, the plan that Zumwalt developed would eventually form part of the Nixon administration's strategy of Vietnamization.⁷ Vietnamization was designed to turn over

² Paul B. Ryan, *First Line of Defense: The U.S. Navy since 1945* (CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1981), 65.

³ Richard Goldstein, "The Admiral Who Modernized the Navy," *New York Times*, 3 January 2000, 1.

⁴ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 67. In Ryan's text, he discusses Zumwalt's inexperience in commanding larger naval assets. He mentions that Zumwalt commanded only destroyer-type ships before being promoted to rear-admiral, and Zumwalt's only sea command as an admiral was a cruiser/destroyer flotilla in San Diego. Ryan then quotes Zumwalt's own biography when he says that his promotion to rear admiral was based largely on a recommendation by Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze.

⁵ Goldstein, "Admiral Who Modernized the Navy".

⁶ Department of the Navy, *Naval Forces Vietnam, Monthly Historical Summary*. April 1966, 4. The Coastal Surveillance Force, or Task Force 115, patrolled the coasts out to 40nm at sea to prevent the enemy from infiltrating supplies and munitions to forces in South Vietnam. The River Patrol Force, or Task Force 116, patrolled the rivers and canals of South Vietnam to prevent the flow enemy supplies and secure safe passage for South Vietnamese.

⁷ Hattendorf, *Nineteen Gun Salute*, 187.

combat operations to the South Vietnamese.⁸ Zumwalt developed the Southeast Asia Lake Ocean River Delta Strategy (SEALORD) and the Accelerated Turnover to Vietnamese (ACTOV).⁹ SEALORD increased the amount of coastal and river patrols within Vietnam, while ACTOV combined military and social elements in the training of the Vietnamese.¹⁰ Both plans were viewed as effective, and ACTOV later became a cornerstone of President Nixon's Vietnamization program.¹¹

SEALORD and ACTOV both demonstrate Zumwalt's hands-on leadership technique. Zumwalt believed in being the primary decision-maker for the naval forces in Vietnam. He played a heavy role in the development of both SEALORD and ACTOV from the commander's guidance to the decisions on patrol size and rate of turnover.¹²

While SEALORD and ACTOV are examples of Zumwalt's organizational and conceptual skills in a large project, it was his ability to communicate with subordinates that made men consider him a sailor's admiral. He believed that sailors operating in harsh combat conditions were getting little recognition, even when they performed valiantly. He began flying out from his headquarters in Saigon to their locations in the field to meet with them and present timely awards for gallantry.¹³ When a young officer name Joe Lopez, later a four-star admiral, lost multiple men on the same day, Zumwalt was there to discuss the loss and its repercussions.¹⁴ He even took the time to write letters home to some families that lost loved ones; there were a lot of

⁸ Elmo R. Zumwalt, and Jr., *On Watch: a Memoir* (New York: Quadrangle/ New York Times Book Co, 1976), 36.

⁹ Hattendorf, *Nineteen Gun Salute*, 185.

¹⁰ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 40. While the military training involved ship building and naval tactics, the social elements included teaching the Vietnamese to speak English. The Commander of the Vietnamese Navy encouraged these lessons as he wanted his men and women to speak an international language.

¹¹ Hattendorf, *Nineteen Gun Salute*, 183.

¹² Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 40.

¹³ Lee Cullen, *Brown Water Admiral: Elmo R. Zumwalt Jr. and United States Naval Forces, Vietnam, 1968-1970* (TX: Texas Tech University Press, 1999), 93.

¹⁴ Cullen, *Brown Water Admiral*, 96.

letters.¹⁵ His visibility to his sailors and his hands-on style of command added to his effectiveness as a leader and helped to build his reputation with the rank and file.

On July 1, 1970, at the age 49, Zumwalt became the youngest CNO in the Navy's history. Some admirals within the Navy felt that Zumwalt's selection was based too much on Nitze's influence and ignored Zumwalt's lack of command experience.¹⁶ His contemporaries felt that he "had spent relatively much time in Washington wrestling successfully with conceptual problems but relatively little in facing tough operational and morale problems encountered by major fleet commanders."¹⁷ Although young, and possibly inexperienced for the position, Zumwalt faced the same challenges as the other service chiefs in the latter years of the Vietnam War.¹⁸

Retention

In 1970, when Zumwalt became CNO, the Navy's retention rate fell to 9 percent.¹⁹ While the Navy's goal for retention in the preceding decade had been 35 percent, it had recently fallen from its peak of 30 percent in 1965.²⁰ Problems with retention in the Navy in the 1970s

¹⁵ Cullen. *Brown Water Admiral*, 102. From the Naval Forces Vietnam, Monthly Historical Summary September 1968 through June 1969, the NAVFORV suffered almost 500 casualties.

¹⁶ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 67.

¹⁷ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 67. In his selection for CNO, Zumwalt was promoted over 33 other admirals considered senior. The primary concern was Zumwalt's inexperience in commanding an aircraft carrier with the accompanying ship's support vehicles. However, these contemporaries seem to give little credence to Zumwalt's time as COMNAVFORV.

¹⁸ In comparison to Zumwalt's 49, the average age of the three previous CNOs was 55. The current CNO Admiral Jonathan W. Greenert was 58 when he took office.

¹⁹ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 271,

²⁰ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 167. From 1965-1973, the Army began decreasing its reliance on the draft to fulfill its manning requirements. During the time of the draft, the USAF and Navy would rely on those trying to escape the Army to fulfill their recruitment requirements. With a decreased draft in the Army, the other services witnessed a down turn in recruitment and retention.

were based on the US's involvement in the Vietnam War and the social upheaval that gripped the country.²¹

First, the experience of the Vietnam War had darkened the public's view of military life. According to public opinion surveys, the Navy was no longer an attractive career, especially to young people, because it was seen as a violent, authoritarian, and mindless profession.²² During this period, the youth culture was built around the iconic images of 'sex, drugs, and rock and roll.' The national temperament at this time was characterized by hatred of war, racial inequalities, and an overarching need to rebel.²³ Public opinion of the war had dropped drastically in the second half of the previous decade; more than 60% of the US public believed the war in Vietnam was a mistake.²⁴ Additionally, the number of individuals participating in anti-war protests was over 300,000 when Zumwalt began his tenure as CNO.²⁵ From haircuts and uniform requirements, to discipline and mistreatment of lower ranked individuals by the higher-ups, the US Navy seemed to be an organization operating in an alien and even hostile environment.

Zumwalt believed that Navy culture was partially to blame. In his view, the Navy was a "humorless, tradition-bound, starchy institution owned by and operated for the benefit of white males."²⁶ He set about changing the culture using the same direct, hands-on style of leadership he had displayed in Vietnam. His most famous tool was the Z-gram.

The Z-gram was the nickname given to the open messages that Zumwalt sent directly to all sailors in the Navy. The intention of the Z-

²¹ As discussed in Chapter 1, the social unrest in the US had grown significantly since 1965. Additionally, re-enlistment is the term given to describe the choice by a service member, after four years of service or longer, to either continue in the military or depart the service.

²² Goldstein, "The Admiral Who Modernized the Navy," 1.

²³ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 67.

²⁴ William Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War* (NJ: Princeton UP, 1995) 286.

²⁵ Gibbons, *The U.S. Government and the Vietnam War*, 286.

²⁶ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 178.

gram was to open lines of communication and break the stereotype of an authoritarian navy run by an ossified and inapproachable leadership deaf to the concerns of its sailors. Sailors saw Z-grams as a way to “promote new social attitudes and a way to make naval life more attractive.”²⁷ These messages from the CNO were not classified or restricted from public access. That meant they were readily available for reading by the public and media.

From the top admirals to the middle managers came objections to reforming the navy in public and addressing the sailors directly. Many senior naval officers, even former CNOs, told Zumwalt that these Z-grams violated the most proven and accepted principles of leadership and command.²⁸ Some viewed these memorandums as “going over the heads of commanders,” or “washing dirty linen in public.”²⁹ In addition to giving the impression that he was undercutting the authority of his commanders, Zumwalt also gave other admirals the idea that he did not value their opinions.³⁰ To such complaints, Zumwalt replied that the Navy had to broadcast loud and clear to the American public and to the rank and file of the Navy that changes were being made. To make his point, Zumwalt used *his* version of a parable of Lincoln’s cabinet. “President Lincoln once put a critical issue to his cabinet for a vote and got all ‘Nays,’” said Zumwalt after his retirement. “He then voted ‘Aye’ and announced, ‘The Ayes have it!’ In a small way, I chose to do the same thing when I overruled the unanimous advice of men I had respected and followed for many years.”³¹

²⁷ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 68.

²⁸ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 69.

²⁹ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 179.

³⁰ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 70.

³¹ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 194. Note, this style of leadership can lead to quick and dramatic changes. However, as Zumwalt would discover throughout the course of his time as CNO, it also runs the risk of alienating him from his contemporaries in the Navy, other service chiefs, and the civilian leadership.

In another version of these events, Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, Lincoln made the decision despite opposition, but he also listened to the inputs of his cabinet. This story is originally based on the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862. While Zumwalt's version can demonstrate steadfastness, it does contain some historical inaccuracies. Prior to presenting the Emancipation Proclamation to his cabinet, Lincoln sought the input of only the Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, and the Secretary of State, William H. Seward.³² When President Lincoln read the Emancipation Proclamation to the rest of his eight-member cabinet on 22 July 1862, he did meet with initial disapproval from six of the eight.³³ The only support came from the Secretary of War, Edwin M. Stanton and the US Attorney General, Edward Bates. After hearing the arguments of those for and against the proclamation, Lincoln later said, he had not heard a single argument that "he had not already fully anticipated and settled in [his] own mind, until Secretary Seward spoke."³⁴ Secretary Seward agreed on the proclamation itself, but he requested the President wait for a military victory in the ongoing Civil War to announce such a drastic measure. Lincoln agreed, and he delayed the announcement of the Emancipation Proclamation until after the Union's victory at Antietam on 17 September 1862.³⁵ Lincoln issued the preliminary proclamation on 22 September 1862, and he signed the executive order on 1 January 1863.³⁶ While Zumwalt's version tells of the virtue of a leader making a decision in the face of opposition, the actual version includes Lincoln standing firm on his ideals yet responding to input and criticism from those whose advice he trusted.

³² Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 465.

³³ Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006), 464.

³⁴ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*, 467.

³⁵ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*, 482.

³⁶ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals*, 482, 501.

While Zumwalt's version is the more often told, Zumwalt could have gained an appreciation for accepting and acting upon criticism by a more historically accurate version of the story.

Despite the unilateral nature of his actions, Zumwalt based his decisions on the belief that the Navy could not be revitalized without these changes.³⁷ It is revealing, however, that Zumwalt remembered that his Z-grams, and perhaps other controversial policies, were opposed unanimously by respected Navy leaders.

Z-Gram 57 – Mickey Mouse Regulations (Or the Elimination of Demeaning or Abrasive Regulations) – 10 November 1970

Z-gram #57 sent shockwaves throughout the Navy. "The Mickey Mouse Z-gram," as it came to be called, emphasized the "whole person." Zumwalt intended it to force the Navy to understand and respect a person's worth and personal dignity despite rank or position.³⁸ First, Z-gram #57 allowed haircuts, sideburns, and off-duty clothes more in keeping with current civilian norms.³⁹ Zumwalt declared that fitness and performance reports should not be affected, positively or negatively, by a sailor's decision to grow a beard or wear stylish clothing when off duty. This Z-gram also authorized wearing the traditional blue denim work uniform (also known as dungarees) to and from work, as well as to dining facilities. Z-gram #57 also attempted to end the pattern of sprucing up facilities in advance of visits by high officials. Zumwalt believed that "rusted surfaces hastily painted over are a reflection of poor command discretion."⁴⁰ Anticipating criticisms that these decisions would lower the professionalism of the Navy, Zumwalt attempted to

³⁷ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 465.

³⁸ Z-Gram #57 *Mickey Mouse Regulations (Or the Elimination of Demeaning or Abrasive Regulations) – 10 November 1970*. <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq93-2.htm>

³⁹ Although the previous CNO had recommended and instituted these changes, Zumwalt believed the guidance was misunderstood and not enforced.

⁴⁰ Z-Gram #57.

assuage these fears by stating clearly in the final paragraph of Z-gram #57: “I am not suggesting that a more lenient attitude toward irresponsible behavior be adopted.”⁴¹

Still, many saw Z-57 and other Zumwalt reforms as signs of the erosion of good order and discipline. Retired admirals, congressmen, senators, and even some middle-ranking sailors opposed the relaxation of standards of dress and personal grooming. Most importantly they linked these changes in regulations to a perceived social decadence to which the US public was succumbing.⁴² An article in the *New York Times* entitled “Beers, Beards, and Broads” ridiculed the reforms as a harbinger of the Navy’s eventual downfall.⁴³ While some admitted that the intent behind the Z-gram was to prove that “a tight ship was not dependent on an uptight ship,” there was a collective sigh of relief from the community of retired admirals when Zumwalt’s successor eventually re-instituted some of the former uniform regulations.⁴⁴

In response to these claims of declining standards of good order and discipline, Zumwalt published a new Z-gram and testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee. In Z-gram #102, “Responsibility for Standards of Smartness”, Zumwalt acknowledged that some may have misinterpreted Z-57 to allow for relaxed discipline and cleanliness. Zumwalt understood that there would be some who would take advantage of these relaxations, but he also knew that the reforms would benefit the majority of the Navy.⁴⁵ Therefore, he attempted to paint a more clearly defined picture of his intent. He stated to “all hands that military courtesies, including customary saluting and deference to seniors, and adherence to traditional standards of cleanliness, neatness, and smartness will continue to be an integral part of our Navy as they

⁴¹ Z-Gram #57.

⁴² *Beers, Beards, and Broads*, New York Times, 27 Nov 1970.

⁴³ *Beers, Beards, and Broads*, New York Times, 27 Nov 1970.

⁴⁴ Donald F. Parker, *Leadership Training in the Navy* (Washington DC: Naval Historical Archives, Naval Institute, 1996), 200.

⁴⁵ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 183.

have been since our beginning. Those standards are essential elements of a proud and professional force.”⁴⁶

Zumwalt wanted to address those issues that caused the most unnecessary annoyance to sailors and their families. According to Zumwalt, the ‘Mickey Mouse’ regulations did “as much to cause dissatisfaction among our personnel as have extended family separation and low pay scales.”⁴⁷ Zumwalt believed that the repeal of the ‘Mickey Mouse’ regulations would not encourage irresponsible behavior, but the equal treatment of all sailors would instead lead to a more responsible force.⁴⁸

In addition to longer hair, beards, and civilian clothes, Zumwalt fought for racial equality. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 raised America’s national consciousness and outlawed discrimination in voting, schools, hiring, and public accommodations. It could not, however, remove racism from the hearts of men. African Americans were denied employment in many high-paying jobs and denied access to specific groups or clubs.⁴⁹ African Americans found advancement in the Navy blocked to them.

For minorities in the Navy, even the Civil Rights Act could not eliminate prejudice and unequal treatment. Primary jobs for African Americans in the 1970’s Navy included cooks, ship maintenance, and other low-skill jobs. African Americans were denied the best jobs in nuclear propulsion, aviation, and surface warfare. The standard practice for the assignment of minorities, said Zumwalt, was to “send them to dead end billets so that their promotion beyond middle rank would be unlikely.”⁵⁰ No African Americans had attained flag rank in the Navy as of 1970, nor was any in the queue to achieve that rank within the next

⁴⁶ Z-Gram #102.

⁴⁷ Z Gram #57.

⁴⁸ John Darrell Sherwood, *Black Sailor, White Navy: Racial Unrest in the Fleet During the Vietnam War Era* (New York: NYU, 2007), 175.

⁴⁹ Cullen, *Brown Water Admiral*, 318.

⁵⁰ Elmo Zumwalt, *My Father, My Son* (NY: Dell Press, 1987), 116.

five years.⁵¹ In some areas, African American officers and their families were denied housing alongside other naval officers.⁵²

Zumwalt's first step in understanding and coping with this problem was the creation of a retention study group. Zumwalt had an understanding of the Navy's personnel problems based on his earlier assignment in the Bureau of Personnel.⁵³ Each board would consist of officers and enlisted men and women with a purpose of discussing the "working or living conditions that made serving in the Navy difficult or disagreeable and forming recommendations for improving those conditions."⁵⁴ While the initial group reports became the basis for Z-gram #57, the later reports dealt specifically with racial tensions.⁵⁵

In one particular retention group report, Lt Commander William Norman, the head of minority affairs for the Navy at the time, recalled an exchange between an admiral and a family. An officer and his wife had just finished explaining their difficulties in finding accommodations in the local area, and the admiral replied that he had once helped a 'boy' find housing when this issue arose previously. When asked how old the 'boy' was, the admiral replied approximately thirty-five.⁵⁶ Zumwalt addressed these issues with arguably his most important Z-gram: #66 Equal Opportunity.

Z-gram 66 – Equal Opportunity – 17 December 1970

Zumwalt abhorred racism; in the early portions of his naval career, he had repeatedly encountered what he later described as institutional

⁵¹ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 201.

⁵² Mason John, T. Interview with Rear Admiral George H. Miller, USN (Ret) (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute Oral History Series, January 19, 1971).

⁵³ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 170.

⁵⁴ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 170.

⁵⁵ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 199.

⁵⁶ William Norman, *Retention Group Report* (Washington DC: Naval Historical Center, 6 Nov 1970). Referenced in *On Watch*, 201.

racism.⁵⁷ Despite these earlier experiences, including service in the Navy's assignment and promotion section of the Bureau of Personnel, Zumwalt believed the racial problems in the Navy were much less severe than in the civilian community.⁵⁸ Early in his tenure as CNO, he uncharacteristically had very little personal contact with minority personnel. He later admitted to viewing the issues more from a "managerial than a human viewpoint."⁵⁹ However, a November 1970 report from LCDR Norman changed that opinion. Zumwalt realized, "We do have problems, and it is my intention and that of Secretary [of the Navy John] Chaffee to take prompt steps toward their solution."⁶⁰

In Z-gram 66, Zumwalt outlined his overall strategy for changing the culture of race relations within the Navy. He saw two keys to the problem. First, communication between minority officers and senior leadership was poor. Zumwalt felt that minorities lacked the support and understanding their superiors.⁶¹ Secondly, Zumwalt believed that the entire Navy had to develop greater sensitivity to the problems faced by minorities in the military.⁶²

Zumwalt's plan increased communication between senior officers and minorities throughout the Navy and developed a better environment for minorities and their families. Zumwalt directed "every base, station, and aircraft squadron commander and ship commanding officer" to appoint a minority group officer as a special assistant for minority affairs.⁶³ Zumwalt also directed that this assistant have access to the commander and be consulted on military issues dealing with minorities.

⁵⁷ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 198.

⁵⁸ Z-gram #66. During his earlier assignments with the Bureau of Personnel, Zumwalt was dismayed at the level of effort it took to reassign minorities despite their qualifications. Also, as quoted above, he believed the institutional policy, or at least the commonly accepted policy, of the Navy was to assign minorities to lesser posts to decrease their chances of promotion, as discussed in *On Watch*, 198.

⁵⁹ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 198.

⁶⁰ Z-gram #66.

⁶¹ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 198.

⁶² Z-gram #66.

⁶³ Z-gram #66.

To improve the quality of life for minorities and their families, Zumwalt directed base exchanges and other support shops to better serve the minorities. The base exchanges and commissaries were directed to carry health care products, foods, and services for minorities; barbershops were directed to have personnel on staff capable of taking care of different minority hairstyles.⁶⁴

Much like the 'Mickey Mouse' Z-gram, the Equal Opportunity message also required a follow-up message.

Two racial incidents followed the release of Z-gram 66, one in October 1972 aboard the USS *Kitty Hawk* and another the next month aboard the USS *Constellation*. In each case, a group of predominantly African-American sailors protested racial inequalities in the Navy. The situation aboard the *Kitty Hawk* began after a fight at the enlisted club while in port. After the ship left port, an investigator called an African-American sailor into his office to discuss his possible role in the altercation. The sailor was accompanied by nine other African-American sailors, but they were denied entry into the meeting based on their loud and belligerent language.⁶⁵ The African American brought in for questioning regarding the altercation refused to make a statement and was allowed to leave. The sailor then met up with the nine other sailors who had attempted to attend the investigation. The ten African-American sailors then moved through the ship with various weapons and assaulted white crewmembers.⁶⁶ While later discussions among these and other African-American crewmen would turn into a protest of a perceived racial bias on the ship, they initially limited their actions to acts of violence against white crew members. After this incident,

⁶⁴ Z-gram #66.

⁶⁵ House, Committee on Armed Forces, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy* (92nd Cong., 2d sess., 1973, HASC 92-81. Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1973), 9.

⁶⁶ House, Committee on Armed Forces, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 9.

including the assault of two white cooks, the ship's Executive Officer (XO) addressed the group of African-American assaulters.⁶⁷ Despite the efforts of the XO and parallel efforts by the Commanding Officer (CO) to control this group, the violence began anew and spread throughout the ship. Finally, one hundred and fifty African-American sailors were assembled in the mess hall. The XO again addressed the crowd, although he believed that "had he not been black, he would have been killed on the spot."⁶⁸ After discussing perceived racial inequalities for over two hours, the sailors were sent to their cabins. In all, twenty-one African-American sailors were charged with assault under the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), the laws that govern military members.⁶⁹ Forty-seven men were treated for minor injuries while three were transported to shore hospitals for further treatment.⁷⁰ Although other sources, such as Gregory Freeman's *Troubled Water*, claim it was a mutiny, the Special Subcommittee report on the incident declared it was an example of increasing disciplinary problems in the Navy.⁷¹

On the *Constellation* in November 1972, personnel conducted a 'sit-in' protest that forced the ship to put in to port earlier than expected.⁷² Prior to the incident, a group of African-American sailors had organized to formalize complaints of racial inequality. The ship's XO had attended some of these meetings and described them as gripe sessions.⁷³ Following the standard breakup of one such meeting, several

⁶⁷ House, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 9.

⁶⁸ House, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 10.

⁶⁹ House, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 11.

⁷⁰ House, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 11.

⁷¹ House, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 1.

⁷² House, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 11.

⁷³ House, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 11.

African-American sailors assaulted a white cook, fracturing his jaw.⁷⁴ The commanding officer decided to remove these African American sailors from the ship, but that decision coincided with the downsizing of the ship's crews by 250 sailors. Rumors circulated that all 250 were African American and all would receive dishonorable discharges. Both of the rumors were false, but a group of 50 to 150 sailors responded with a sit-in on the forward decks.⁷⁵ All the participants refused to work. The CO put the ship into shore and the protesting sailors were given the opportunity to leave the ship. The sit-in moved from the ship to the shore.⁷⁶

Zumwalt's response was simple; respect for racial equality did not mean disrespect for authority. His solution was to tell the men on the *Constellation* that their grievances would be heard and resolved, but they must first return to the ship and cease the protest.⁷⁷ While Zumwalt was attempting to deal with the situation, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger informed him that President Nixon wanted all participating crewmembers to be dishonorably discharged.⁷⁸ Zumwalt believed this to be an illegal order, and he ignored it. The matter was never raised again, and Zumwalt was able to handle the situation internally. While some men were dishonorably discharged, a majority followed orders to cease and desist while their complaints were heard.⁷⁹

Based on these incidents and a lack of perceived progress two years after the release of Z-gram 66, Zumwalt formulated a new policy statement. Meeting 10 November 1972 with the flag officers assigned to staff positions in Washington-DC, he used the occasion to speak to the

⁷⁴ House, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 11.

⁷⁵ House, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 11.

⁷⁶ House, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 11.

⁷⁷ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 229.

⁷⁸ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 240.

⁷⁹ House, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 6.

entire Navy. Zumwalt made it clear that the incidents aboard the *Kitty Hawk* and *Constellation* were a manifestation of racial tensions in the Navy.⁸⁰ He repeated the need for timely and effective implementation of Z-gram #66. And he stressed the critical nature of this moment for the Navy: “What I am asking for, and what this Navy must have if it is to continue to fulfill its mission – especially in an all-volunteer environment – is something more than programs. We must not administer programs; we must lead men and women.... It is a return to our oldest and most proven tradition. Command by leadership.”⁸¹

Zumwalt took other steps as well to improve communication in the Navy. The Flag Officer Newsletter (FONL) passed guidance to his admirals and promoted the “cross-pollination of ideas.”⁸² Flag officers were able to digest CNO’s inputs and respond either privately to Zumwalt or through an open forum for flag officers only.

Zumwalt also initiated open forums with his middle managers and younger sailors. The Naval Decision Center (NADEC) encouraged broad-based policy discussions.⁸³ Although led by the CNO, this no-rank forum measured the value of the ideas advanced and not the rank of the correspondents. As he had claimed in his anecdote about President Lincoln, Zumwalt was not afraid to take responsibility alone, but he listened to all ranks to ensure he had the most relevant information prior to making a decision.

Did Zumwalt’s reforms help with retention in the Navy? Re-enlistments rose from 9 percent in 1970, to 15 percent in 1971, 18

⁸⁰ Office of the CNO, Speeches from the CNO (Operational Archives Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington DC). Zumwalt describes this speech as the most important one he ever gave during his time as the CNO. This speech is also cited in full in *On Watch*, 235.

⁸¹ Office of the CNO, Speeches from the CNO (Washington DC: Operational Archives Branch, Naval Historical Center).

⁸² Jeffrey I. Sands, *On His Watch: Admiral Zumwalt’s Efforts to Institutionalize Strategic Change* (Center for Naval Analyses, CRM-93-22, July 1993), 39.

⁸³ Sands, *On His Watch*, 40.

percent in 1972, 23 percent by 1973, and 30 percent in 1974.⁸⁴ Zumwalt was also CNO for the first African American flag officer.⁸⁵ Whether or not he was responsible for these increases is up for debate, but his policies and influence did have a drastic effect on the internal culture of the Navy.

Missions - Parochialism

In the late 1960s, Admiral Thomas Moorer, Zumwalt's predecessor as CNO, faced the possibility of a declining budget. While the Army and USAF budget rose steadily throughout the 1960s based on their commitments in the Vietnam War, the Navy budget remained relatively unchanged.⁸⁶ Admiral Moorer believed that the end of the Vietnam War would bring a return of the Navy's primary missions of strategic deterrence, sea control, projection of power ashore, and naval presence.⁸⁷ To achieve these missions under the constraints of a projected declining budget, Moorer began a program to save operating costs by decommissioning older ships. From 1968 to 1975, the US Navy decommissioned more than 450 destroyers, frigates, attack submarines, and amphibious ships, as detailed in Figure 9 below.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Department of Defense, Annual Report to Congress, 1965, 1968, 1972-1976; Rostker, "All Volunteer Force", RAND Study. In Zumwalt's biography, he claims that retention rates rose to 35% in 1974, but the Secretary of Defense's annual report suggests a slightly lower rate. Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 271.

⁸⁵ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 272.

⁸⁶ Department of the Navy, Navy Historical Center, Washington Naval Yard, 20374. <http://www.history.navy.mil/library/online/budget.htm>

⁸⁷ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 70.

⁸⁸ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 70.

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number decommissioned</i>
Antisubmarine warfare carrier	8
Amphibious ships	123
Attack submarines	59
Destroyers and frigates	181
Underway replenishment ships	n.a.
Mine countermeasures ships	81

Figure 9. US Naval Ships Decommissioned 1968-1975

Source: Department of Defense Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1977.

After decommissioning these ships, Moorer, a naval aviator, intended to purchase sixteen nuclear-powered aircraft carriers at a cost of \$1.44 billion each.⁸⁹ When Zumwalt arrived as the CNO, Moorer presented him this plan and the budget forecast for the Navy.

The budgetary plan for the Navy called for a cut from \$20 billion dollars to \$16.5 billion dollars from 1970-1974.⁹⁰ Zumwalt believed that these budget decreases and the ongoing ship retirements were gambling that the Navy would not be called upon to fight a major war in the coming decade.⁹¹ He found that a risky gamble, and he began planning to reverse the proposed budget cuts and modernize the fleet's force structure.

The planned budget reductions were the most urgent problem. As the Vietnam War drew to a close, the Navy's force structure was heavily weighted to aviation, submarine, and submarine-based ballistic missiles.⁹² Zumwalt believed he had to first define the mission to justify a change in force structure and budget.

According to George Baer in *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, Zumwalt believed the primary mission of the Navy was sea control. In Zumwalt's mind, sea control was the ability to control limited areas of

⁸⁹ George Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power: The U. S. Navy, 1890-1990* (Stanford UP, 1996), 402.

⁹⁰ Forecasted Naval Budget, 1969-1973. <http://www.history.navy.mil/library/online/budget.htm>. This forecast was developed in FY1970 and presented to Zumwalt after he took office. Admiral Moorer continued his service as the CJCS.

⁹¹ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 404.

⁹² Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 63.

the world's oceans – especially the Atlantic and Pacific – for limited times.⁹³ He believed that total command of the sea was impossible with any foreseeable assets. But he did believe that the Navy should be able to control the oceans flanking the United States and project its power into any ocean on earth for limited times. By focusing on this mission, of course, he discounted the relative importance of other missions, including nuclear deterrence with ballistic missile submarines.⁹⁴

To demonstrate the Navy's need for an increased budget, Zumwalt calculated the probability of U.S. success in achieving sea control in the face of Soviet opposition. Victory would be determined by the Navy's ability to protect other naval assets, sea lines of communication, and coastal areas.⁹⁵ He told the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) on 30 June 1970 that the US Navy had a 45-55% chance of defeating the Soviet Navy in a battle for sea control.⁹⁶ If the current budget and force structures were not changed, he saw this decreasing to a 25% chance by July 1974.⁹⁷ In Figure 10 below, Zumwalt portrayed his decreasing estimation of the Navy's prospects.

⁹³ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 404.

⁹⁴ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 404. The nuclear-equipped submarines were a critical portion of the nation's nuclear triad, made up also of the B-52 bombers and Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) force.

⁹⁵ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 101.

⁹⁶ Sands, *On His Watch*, 12. Of note, the Soviet Union's navy is not built to attain naval supremacy. Their primary mission at this point remains nuclear projection and sea denial. Zumwalt's predictions are therefore based on his assessment of success for the US surface and carrier fleet against the armada of Soviet attack submarines and anti-air ships.

⁹⁷ Sands, *On His Watch*, 12. Zumwalt describes in his autobiography that many of the percentages were based on estimates and plans versus data from an intelligence agency of the Soviet Union's capabilities or an honest assessment of the US capabilities. His belief was that hard numbers help make decisions and help others see the "big picture."

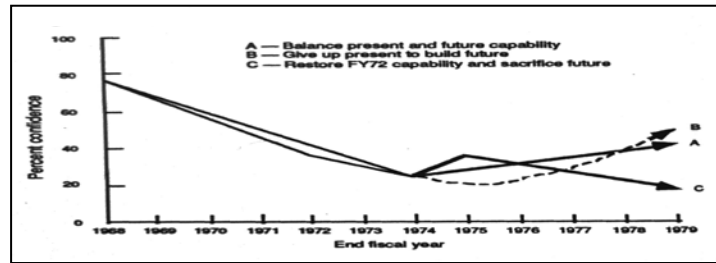


Figure 10. Percent Confidence in the US Navy against the Soviet Navy.

Source: CNO Papers, *Budget Pres to Sec Richardson*, 1973 - Sands

However, while the Soviet Navy had grown since 1950, it had not achieved the strategic parity suggested by Zumwalt's analysis. Not only had the Soviets not developed the capability to challenge US sea control, they were not even trying to challenge it. Throughout the 1970s force protection and force projection through nuclear-armed submarines were the primary missions of the Soviet Navy.⁹⁸ Initially following WWII, the primary focus of the Soviet Navy was to protect the homeland from US or other invasion. After the US and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) dropped amphibious assault from their mission in the 1950s, the Soviet Union stopped expansion of its surface fleet.⁹⁹ Thus, sea control was not a mission for the Soviet Union until after the Cuban Missile Crisis. Following that encounter, the Soviets recognized the United States advantage in power projection through its aircraft carriers and nuclear submarines. The Soviets began to build their forces with a focus on submarines and other anti-carrier weapons.¹⁰⁰ By 1971, the Soviet Union had over 50 ballistic missile submarines and over 300 attack

⁹⁸ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 394. Beginning in the 1960s, Premier Khrushchev attempted to gain strategic parity with the US through nuclear-equipped submarines and land-based ICBMs.

⁹⁹ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 394. Additionally, the death of Joseph Stalin in 1945 helped reduce paranoia within the Soviet government and the fear of invasion from Western powers.

¹⁰⁰ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 394. The Soviet Union worked concurrently on the development of ballistic missile submarines and attack submarines. Ballistic missile submarines were intended to be a part of the Soviet's initial nuclear strike force, a role they were denied until 1973. The attack submarines were meant as a counter to the US aircraft carrier advantage. The Soviet focus on nuclear-equipped submarine forces is most evident by the Soviet Union overtaking the US in production of nuclear-equipped submarines by 1971.

submarines.¹⁰¹ Therefore, the mission of the Soviet Navy in the early 1970s was nuclear force projection and sea-denial. That latter mission had the potential to conflict directly with Zumwalt's plans for sea control.

As Paul Ryan argued in *First Line of Defense*, there are two ways to compare the fleets of opposing countries: number of ships and total tonnage. In 1968, the Soviet navy had 790 major ships, while the US had only 574. By 1972, that difference had grown to 820 to 447 in favor of the Soviet Union.¹⁰² The Soviets also enjoyed an advantage in submarine numbers with 399 to the US 113 in 1960 and 294 to 119 in 1978.¹⁰³ Zumwalt claimed that in a battle for sea control, the Soviet Navy would outnumber the US fleet by a factor of 2.5 to 1.¹⁰⁴ This assertion was based the number of ships, not tonnage or capability.¹⁰⁵ When the fleets were compared by tonnage, the U.S. had an advantage of four million tons to barely more than 2 million tons.¹⁰⁶ This advantage was based mostly on the United States' thirteen large attack carriers; the Soviet Union had no carriers and would not deploy any until 1979.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, security officials and academics in the West agreed that the US could still operate effectively even with the Soviet's numerical advantage.¹⁰⁸ The Soviet forces were primarily focused on defeating the US aircraft carriers and projecting a possible submarine-launched nuclear strike against the United States. The US held a qualitative advantage in both conventional forces, heightened by anti-submarine technology; its nuclear power was comfortably embedded in America's

¹⁰¹ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Sea Power*, 397.

¹⁰² Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 73. When Ryan uses the term major ship, he is including all sea-borne craft including submarines. This excludes the Soviet's land-based naval aircraft.

¹⁰³ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 73.

¹⁰⁴ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 74.

¹⁰⁵ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 346.

¹⁰⁶ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 74.

¹⁰⁷ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 73.

¹⁰⁸ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Naval Power*, 398.

nuclear triad.¹⁰⁹

Nonetheless, Zumwalt used the numbers to secure an increase in the Navy's budget. In his budget briefing to President Nixon in August 1973, Zumwalt argued that sea control was the only mission that guaranteed the US's ability to move forces, and thereby provide support, to allies.¹¹⁰ Additionally, he contended that the sea represented the only operating environment in which the US would have to fight alone, based on allies' limitations.¹¹¹ Determined to portray the Navy in the worst possible light, he neglected to point out that the naval advantage of the West over the Soviet Bloc was significantly increased when HATO assets were counted.¹¹² Zumwalt's argument convinced Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, and subsequently Kissinger and Nixon, that the Navy needed additional resources.

Hindsight and historical perspective make Zumwalt's true motivation and perception more clear. In 1970, the Soviets conducted a large naval exercise with over 200 ships and submarines, with mostly new equipment including their newest missile ships and carriers.¹¹³ This information, combined with Zumwalt's earlier descriptions of the growing Soviet fleet, provided Zumwalt's evidence to insist on a higher budget for the Navy. He may even have believed his own argument. He was able to secure an increase of \$4.2 billion dollars over the course of his four years as CNO, even when the Army and the Air Force were suffering sharp budget reductions. Zumwalt characterized the Soviet Navy, and the

¹⁰⁹ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Naval Power*, 399.

¹¹⁰ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 347. This is also the same briefing referenced in the parochialism section of this chapter. Following this briefing, Zumwalt would take this brief to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget and brief it again without any of the other service chiefs present.

¹¹¹ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 347.

¹¹² Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 74. Although, France's de facto withdrawal from NATO in the 1960s demonstrated that even the most secure coalitions are not a guarantee.

¹¹³ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Naval Power*, 399. A helicopter carrier gave the Soviets the ability to move helicopters quickly into a battle area. While they did not possess the same strategic value as an aircraft carrier, they helped garner prestige for the Soviet Union.

US's deficiencies, in such a way to justify the Navy's needs above that of the other services. However, his claim to have secured for the Navy an increase of 1% of the DoD budget for each year from 1971 to 1974 was wildly exaggerated, suggesting a capacity for self-delusion and self-promotion.¹¹⁴

Modernization

Zumwalt's plan for modernizing the Navy during times of fiscal constraint was called the High-Low plan. During Zumwalt's first year as CNO, his advisors were recommending small numbers of powerful, sophisticated ships or large numbers of medium to small, austere ships.¹¹⁵ Zumwalt's High-Low plan was designed to strike a balance between these two choices. Rather than simply splitting the difference, however, he advocated a decrease in his predecessor's plans for high-performance ships and the acquisition of more vessels in the moderate-to-small range.¹¹⁶ Zumwalt believed that a larger number of conventionally powered escorts would yield higher odds of a US victory at sea than a smaller number of large, expensive nuclear-propelled assets.¹¹⁷ This plan also sat well with many representatives and senators in Congress when they discovered that the low-end ships

¹¹⁴ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 348. Based on the figures from the Naval Historical Archives, the Naval Budget was raised each year. 1971 – \$22.7 Billion, 1972 – \$24.0 Billion, 1973 – \$25.3 Billion, and 1974 – \$26.9 Billion. The reader may note that these figures do not support Zumwalt's claim of a 1% increase in the Navy's portion of the DoD budget. In fact, the Navy's percentage of the budget fluctuated up and down less than 1% while Zumwalt was the CNO. Department of the Navy, Navy Historical Center, Washington Naval Yard, 20374.

<http://www.history.navy.mil/library/online/budget.htm>

¹¹⁵ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 101. Zumwalt wanted to achieve the right number of High assets, or expensive and powerful ships, and the right number of Low assets, or cheaper but less capable ships.

¹¹⁶ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 75.

¹¹⁷ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 101. When describing his reasoning for choosing the smaller vessels, Zumwalt cites that it is the proper decision based on "all the worthwhile analytical studies that have been done over the years."

Zumwalt was recommending, the destroyers and small patrol frigates, cost 2.5 and 4 times less than high end nuclear-powered frigates.¹¹⁸

Unfortunately, there were two problems with this plan. First, Zumwalt's High-Low plan was disconnected from national strategy. In his first year in office, President Nixon introduced three principles of his foreign policy: the US would keep its treaty commitments, the US would provide a shield if allies, or countries deemed vital to its security, were threatened by a nuclear power, and the US would provide military and economic assistance to countries facing aggression.¹¹⁹ These points became known as the Nixon Doctrine. The national strategy required the Navy to provide force projection, sea control, and strategic deterrence with its ballistic missile submarines. However, Zumwalt's strategy concentrated on sea control. His strategy preserved transport and communication security on the sea, but it did not enhance the other two missions.¹²⁰ Given the evidence presented by Baer and the benefit of over forty years of hindsight, it is possible that a higher priority on the surface fleet may have shifted the Navy's focus further from strategic deterrence and force projection than was prudent.¹²¹

The second problem with the High-Low plan was survivability. According to his critics, Zumwalt's plan sacrificed capability to meet the numbers of the Soviet Union.¹²² For the most part, the critics opposed to Zumwalt's High-Low plan were advocating a concentration of resources on powerful, expensive aircraft carriers.¹²³ For these critics, the strength of the Navy rested in the force projection offered by these new carriers.¹²⁴ Zumwalt's argument was that the carriers were too expensive to expose

¹¹⁸ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 75.

¹¹⁹ Stephen P. Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons: Nixon, Kissinger, and the Easter Offensive* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 2007), 162.

¹²⁰ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 75.

¹²¹ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Naval Power*, 404.

¹²² Baer, *One Hundred Years of Naval Power*, 406.

¹²³ Baer, *One Hundred Years of Naval Power*, 406.

¹²⁴ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 76.

to enemy surface fleets, and that it was more cost-effective to expose smaller, less-expensive ships with the ability to put firepower, not airpower, on the shore. The critic's counter-argument on this point was that if the Soviet Union's surface fleet were a threat to the advanced carriers, then the smaller, less sophisticated craft would not stand a chance.¹²⁵ It is unclear; however, how much of this criticism was based on his policy decisions versus their perception of him as an admiral attempting radical change.¹²⁶ Not even his critics would doubt that Zumwalt was doing what *he* thought was best for the Navy, but they did find fault with his willingness or ability to hear dissenting opinions and to foresee some of the possible problems with his strategy.¹²⁷

In spite of Zumwalt's success at raising the Navy's budget and focusing resources on procurement of smaller, less expensive fighting ships, the overall decline in the size of the U.S. fleet continued on his watch. In fact, the Soviet Union maintained at least a 2-to-1 advantage over the US fleet until the 1980s.¹²⁸

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number decommissioned</i>	<i>New ships^a</i>	<i>Net reduction</i>
Antisubmarine warfare carrier	8	. . .	8
Amphibious ships	123	23	100
Attack submarines	59	29	30
Destroyers and frigates	181	46	135
Underway replenishment ships	n.a.	n.a.	32
Mine countermeasures ships	81	. . .	81 ^b
Total	n.a.	n.a.	386

Figure 11. US Ships Decommissioned and Net Reduction 1968-1975

Source: Department of Defense Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1977.

¹²⁵ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 76.

¹²⁶ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 68.

¹²⁷ Ryan, *First Line of Defense*, 68.

¹²⁸ Michael Allen, *The Soviet Navy: Strengths and Limitations* (Naval Institute, 1996), 183.

Civil-Military Relations

Civil-military relations deteriorated throughout the Vietnam War and the Johnson administration, but they recovered somewhat under Nixon, thanks largely to the efforts of SecDef Melvin Laird.¹²⁹ Often disregarded during the Johnson administration, the JCS further weakened their position during the Vietnam War by parochial in-fighting and an inability to articulate a joint strategy or alternatives to the administration's plans.¹³⁰ As the Nixon administration took office in January 1969, President Nixon attempted to repair the damage with a shortened chain of command. Rather than disconnect his military advisors, Nixon implemented a chain-of-command that ran directly from the Vietnam advisors to the JCS. Thus, the JCS were to report to the White House and provide the needed updates and advice.¹³¹ SecDef Melvin Laird also worked during his term in office from 1969-1973 to improve the relations between the civilian leaders and the service chiefs.¹³² Zumwalt, taking office as the CNO a little over a year after President Nixon took office, was in a perfect position to use his penchant for hands-on leadership and personal relationships to improve the situation. Unfortunately, his conflict with Henry Kissinger hindered improvements in civil-military relations.

Henry Kissinger was a gifted statesman. As described by Walter Isaacson in his biography *Kissinger*, Kissinger's most important trait was his brilliance, which manifest itself in his ability to conceptualize foreign affairs and see the second- and third-order effects of diplomatic decision-making.¹³³ As National Security Advisor to President Nixon, Kissinger

¹²⁹ H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Johnson, McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies That Led to Vietnam* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998), 325.

¹³⁰ McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty*, 327.

¹³¹ Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons*, 162.

¹³² Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons*, 173.

¹³³ Walter Isaacson, *Kissinger: A Biography* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 151.

felt he was able to handle foreign policy affairs more expertly than the current Secretary of State.¹³⁴ In a flurry of letters to Nixon, Kissinger pressed Nixon to centralize power in the hands of the National Security Advisor to enable quicker decision-making.¹³⁵ In Kissinger's mind, this decreased bureaucracy enabled him to make decisions much more effectively, but it appears to have been an attempt to secure more power for himself.¹³⁶ On 20 January 1969, the day of Nixon's inauguration as President, Kissinger had already distributed the national security directives that elevated him, at least as far as Kissinger wanted to believe, above the Secretary of State with regard to foreign policy decision-making.¹³⁷

Kissinger believed his ascension to the roles of National Security Advisor and Secretary of State made sense based on the needs of the country. Following his term as National Security Advisor, Kissinger was appointed as the Secretary of State in August 1973.¹³⁸ In his autobiography, *Years of Upheaval*, Kissinger described the years from 1969 to 1973 as critical to his eventual rise to the appointment of Secretary of State.¹³⁹ In fact, he believed the appointment to Secretary of State was a demonstration of both Nixon's weakness following the Watergate affair and the strength that Kissinger could bring to the administration.¹⁴⁰ As both the National Security Advisor and the Secretary of State, Kissinger saw himself as a statesman who made

¹³⁴ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 152.

¹³⁵ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 156.

¹³⁶ Henry Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston: Little Brown & Co (T), 1982), 4.

¹³⁷ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 157. The role of the National Security Advisor depends on the pleasure of the president. In comparison, the Secretary of State is the head of the Department of State.

¹³⁸ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 3.

¹³⁹ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 4.

¹⁴⁰ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 4. The Watergate Affair was a crisis for the Nixon administration. Following a break-in at the Democratic National Convention, the Nixon administration attempted to cover-up its involvement. This eventually led to the resignation of President Nixon in August 1974.

decisions without consulting other experts.¹⁴¹ In this respect, Kissinger and Zumwalt were much alike.

Zumwalt and Kissinger shared the ability to make unpopular decisions against the advice of others, but Zumwalt felt there was a significant difference in their personal outlooks. Based on his anecdote concerning Lincoln's cabinet and his use of Z-grams despite the advice of other admirals, Zumwalt, like Kissinger, was a leader who was unafraid to make decisions despite opposition.¹⁴² However, in his autobiography *On Watch*, Zumwalt describes Kissinger's motivations as overwhelmingly pessimistic.¹⁴³ Zumwalt recalls a conversation with Kissinger about the nature of the Cold War in November of 1970. According to Zumwalt's notes, Kissinger said that the US was past the high point of its civilization, and it did not have the stamina to continue the Cold War against the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁴ Although Kissinger's autobiography does not mention this exchange, other sources do mention his innate pessimism with regard to the fate of all civilizations.¹⁴⁵ This exchange potentially shook Zumwalt's faith in the decisions Kissinger made, leading to increasing distrust between the two.

It is more likely, however, that this exchange between Zumwalt and Kissinger was a demonstration of Kissinger's personal feelings towards Zumwalt or the military. Autobiographies and biographies of Zumwalt

¹⁴¹ G. R. Berridge, Maurice Keens-Soper, and Thomas G. Otte, eds., *Diplomatic Theory from Machiavelli to Kissinger* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 186. Multiple sources attempt to discern the source of Kissinger's drive to make decisions on his own. According to Berridge's study, this translates to Kissinger's view of the statesman as a 'lone cowboy,' a stand-alone heroic figure that must make the difficult decisions without relying on outside influence.

¹⁴² Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 194.

¹⁴³ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 319.

¹⁴⁴ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 319. Zumwalt then contrasts this with a personal anecdote in which George Marshall once relayed to Zumwalt the inherent strengths of the American people.

¹⁴⁵ Berridge, *Diplomatic Theory from Machiavelli to Kissinger*, 186. Multiple sources including other biographies and New York Times articles hint at Kissinger's conceptions of the future of the US civilization and its eventual downfall. Give at least one other example.

and Kissinger reveal a clear pattern of animosity, or most likely rivalry, between the two. In Zumwalt's autobiography, he is unable to make it past the second page of the preface without characterizing Kissinger as deliberately deceitful and dismissive of experts.¹⁴⁶ In Zumwalt's autobiography, Kissinger is mentioned well over fifty times.¹⁴⁷ Always, Zumwalt portrays himself as trying repeatedly to communicate productively with Kissinger. From the other side of the relationship, Kissinger's biographer, Walter Isaacson, describes Kissinger as having a propensity to deal directly with Zumwalt.¹⁴⁸ Both Isaacson and Zumwalt portray Kissinger as repeatedly by-passing Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird to discuss naval matters directly with Zumwalt.¹⁴⁹ Naval histories of the period frequently describe the communication between Zumwalt and Kissinger as strained but cordial.¹⁵⁰ Based on these accounts, it is clear that Zumwalt had a closer relationship with Kissinger than most people, including the other service chiefs. However, this closer-than-normal relationship did not dissipate their philosophical disagreements or competition for autonomy. While other histories frequently mention the interactions between Kissinger and Zumwalt, it is very telling of Kissinger's perspective of their relationship that Zumwalt appears just twice in his memoir.¹⁵¹

As a statesman, Kissinger's role was to consult the military without being constrained by what they recommended. In Vietnam, the military advisors were unable to see the global structure, according to Kissinger, based on their inexperience in other areas.¹⁵² Whereas Kissinger, with his understanding of the Cold War and its many facets, could make

¹⁴⁶ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, xii.

¹⁴⁷ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 552.

¹⁴⁸ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 204.

¹⁴⁹ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 309. Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 204.

¹⁵⁰ Sherry Sontag, and Christopher Drew, *Blind Man's Bluff: The Untold Story of American Submarine Espionage* (William Morrow Paperbacks, 2000), 175.

¹⁵¹ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 1017, 1175.

¹⁵² David Landau, *Kissinger: the Uses of Power* (New York: Crowell, 1974), 159.

decisions on military affairs such as troop levels despite his lack of military experience.¹⁵³ Kissinger believed that military men did not have the ability to see the full solution to a problem as their expertise lay solely in the military domain.¹⁵⁴ To Kissinger, it was the responsibility of the statesman to understand both the political and military situations and retain the creativity required to handle them.¹⁵⁵ Based on the relationship between Kissinger and Zumwalt, it is clear that Zumwalt may have perceived their inescapable disagreements and conflicts as breakdowns in civil-military relations. Kissinger, however, would have said their relationship normal and appropriate.

This difference of opinion between Zumwalt and Kissinger would come to a head during negotiation of the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I). This watershed agreement between the US and Soviet Union to limit offensive and defensive nuclear weapons was hammered out in the summer of 1972.¹⁵⁶ The primary issues in the 1972 negotiations were the limits on the overall number of missiles, anti-ballistic missile (ABM) systems, and the number and character of multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs).¹⁵⁷ The Joint Chiefs and Nixon's chief SALT negotiator developed four options, A/B/C/D, all of which, they believed, would satisfy America's strategic intent.¹⁵⁸ Option A allowed each country twelve ABM sites, no limits on MIRVs, and a ceiling on overall nuclear missiles that would require no US cuts.¹⁵⁹ Option B was the same except it limited the number of ABM

¹⁵³ Landau, *Kissinger*, 159.

¹⁵⁴ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 1175.

¹⁵⁵ Berridge, *Diplomatic Theory from Machiavelli to Kissinger*, 186.

¹⁵⁶ Randolph, *Powerful and Brutal Weapons*, 157.

¹⁵⁷ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 316. MIRVs allowed one missile to contain multiple warheads. Therefore, one of the primary mistakes of the first SALT agreement was that without a limit on MIRV technology it would be impossible to verify decreases in force structure. While the US and USSR could easily count the number of missiles or silos, they could not verify each other's warhead count.

¹⁵⁸ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 283.

¹⁵⁹ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 319.

sites to one, and it limited development of MIRVs.¹⁶⁰ Option C was the same as Option B except it included heavy limitations on MIRV development and deployment, and Option D limited each side to one ABM site, and imposed deep missile cuts with no restrictions on MIRVs.¹⁶¹ While Kissinger originally preferred Option B, he eventually developed a fifth Option E. Based on Zumwalt's biography, he perceived that Kissinger developed this option without consulting any members of the DoD, State Department, or the SALT negotiation team. However, he could not have known who Kissinger consulted, so the fact is that neither he, nor anyone else in his confidence, was consulted.¹⁶² Kissinger's option, which included a limit of one ABM site, no limits on MIRVs, and a limit of no more than 200 ICBMs, was considered a failure by the military and SALT negotiators.¹⁶³

Four years later during another iteration of SALT deliberations, Kissinger again developed and presented an option without the military or other actors.¹⁶⁴ After formally protesting the decision through the Secretary of Defense and Kissinger, Zumwalt wrote a letter to the President explaining what he saw as the weaknesses of the agreement.¹⁶⁵ The White House was not amused. The White House Chief of Staff forbade the Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger from attending Zumwalt's retirement and presenting Zumwalt with the Department of

¹⁶⁰ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 319. This one ABM site was designated as a protection for the capital only, not in defense of a second-strike capability, or the ability to launch a nuclear missile after an attack.

¹⁶¹ Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 319.

¹⁶² Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 283.

¹⁶³ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 256. The missile limit is of a very specific variety, the ICBM with ranges capable of striking the US or Soviet Union from the respective opposite country. Isaacson, *Kissinger*, 321. Smith, Nixon's chief SALT negotiator, was appalled at the decision. He wrote a longhand note to Kissinger that stated, "Any constraints on US ABMs should be accompanied by constraints on USSR offensive weapons systems." Although the treaty did limit missiles, the lack of limitations on MIRVs did not restrain offensive capability.

¹⁶⁴ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval*, 496.

¹⁶⁵ Office of the CNO, Personal correspondence of the CNO (Navy Historical Archives, CNO Papers). Zumwalt believed this was the most important letter he ever wrote. Reprinted in full in *On Watch*, 499.

Defense Distinguished Service Medal; Schlesinger ignored him and did both of these things anyway.¹⁶⁶ The important aspect of this decision is not the particulars of the various options or the mistakes made in the name of nuclear disarmament but instead the differences of opinion between the military and civilian leaders regarding each side's role and purview for treaty negotiations.

For two people who were known for their ability to communicate, their relationship and the outcome of the SALT treaty demonstrates a lack of understanding and willingness to communicate. While Kissinger most likely understood Zumwalt's side in the SALT discussions, he chose not to attempt to sway Zumwalt to his side, as this was not his job. It is unclear, however, if Zumwalt understood Kissinger's position on these issues. While Zumwalt had no problems sending communications, which had a tendency to alienate the senior leadership of the Navy, he sometimes had difficulty in receiving communications.

Civil-military relations could have improved during this time, given Zumwalt's personal-relationship skills, but instead he was eclipsed by a personality that too closely mimicked his own.¹⁶⁷ Both Kissinger and Zumwalt had a tendency to make decisions on their own without consultation or in direct contrast with the recommendations of others.¹⁶⁸ Kissinger's feelings towards the military and their inability to see the big picture restricted Zumwalt's overall ability to influence his decisions. However, Zumwalt had already established a reputation for seeing the contrasting roles of culture and discipline within the Navy. In hindsight, Zumwalt could have been a more effective influence on Kissinger during the SALT negotiations if he had understood Kissinger's inclination to discount military advice, continued a personal dialogue, and demonstrated his grasp of the interplay between politics and the military.

¹⁶⁶ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 498. When describing this situation in his own words, Zumwalt said, "Mickey Mouse is not particular to the Navy."

¹⁶⁷ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 194.

¹⁶⁸ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 194.

Conclusions

Zumwalt's leadership of the Navy following the Vietnam War set precedents for action in the face of adversity. In each major problem area for the Navy, *retention, parochialism and missions, modernization, and civil-military relations*, Zumwalt used his unique style of leadership and communication to address the most critical problems he perceived in the Navy. Using this unique style, he often leapt without considering each consequence and perhaps did not gather outside advice enough, or chose to discount some of the advice he did get. His primary leadership tenet was the Navy must be led from the front, and that the CNO must know and understand the problems facing his senior officers, his young sailors, and the statesman within the civilian government.

First, Zumwalt believed in an equal Navy. By this, he did not believe everyone in the Navy was equal, as he believed in the hierarchical command structure of authority. Rather, Zumwalt believed there should be an equal opportunity across the races, sexes, and personal beliefs on dress and grooming. Zumwalt believed that every sailor should have the right to serve and advance in the Navy. When his Z-gram#66 for racial equality failed to produce rapid change, Zumwalt addressed his cadre of senior leaders to ensure they understood that implementation was expected immediately.¹⁶⁹ In addition, when sailors refused orders during a racial demonstration, he ordered them to return to the ship and cease the protest.¹⁷⁰ When some chose to still disobey, he had them dishonorably discharged.¹⁷¹ Though his Z-grams were found to undercut some of the senior leaders, Zumwalt's dedication to the equality of sailors

¹⁶⁹ Officer of the CNO, Speeches of the CNO (Operational Archives Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington DC). Zumwalt describes this speech as the most important one he ever gave during his time as the CNO. This speech is also cited in full in *On Watch*, 235.

¹⁷⁰ Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 229.

¹⁷¹ US House of Representatives, *Report by the Special Subcommittee on Disciplinary Problems in the US Navy*, 6.

brought the Navy into the modern day with respect to the social environment and equality.

Next, Zumwalt greatest strength and weakness as a leader during a time of crisis was his ability to form personal relationships. Zumwalt relished his ability, like his version of the Lincoln parable, to disregard the opinions of respected leaders to make his decision.¹⁷² Sometimes this allowed him to cut through the bureaucracy to effect changes quickly; other times this resulted in alienating his senior leaders. Sometimes it did both at once.

Zumwalt led the people of the Navy by forming personal relationships with sailors that were normally outside the scope of the CNO. As the culture in the US changed, it forced the Navy to change. While contemporaries and retired groups did not see the problems, Zumwalt was able to listen to his sailors' problems and discern the importance of action. Through the Z-gram, Zumwalt sought to change Navy culture directly and quickly. But the Z-grams may also have bred their own opposition and resistance within some segments of the Navy leadership.

Many commanders questioned Zumwalt's technique of communicating directly with all Navy personnel. This expedient left many senior Navy leaders believing that Zumwalt did not value their input. This failure by Zumwalt to anticipate and accommodate the skepticism of senior leaders may have retarded the progress he sought to make. In reality, Zumwalt might have been better served by making the same policy decisions but directing their distribution through the standard chain of command, thereby maintaining a positive relationship with his contemporary leaders and mid-grade officers. In this respect, he would have shown that he cared about a personal relationship with all of his sailors.

¹⁷² Zumwalt, *On Watch*, 194.

Commanders today can learn a great deal by combining Zumwalt's techniques with a more accurate parable of Lincoln. Given Goodwin's treatment of Lincoln, it is clear the former President did make decisions when he needed to. However, it is also clear that he used his cabinet to aid in his decision-making and even apologized when he realized he had made a mistake.¹⁷³ The best combination of Zumwalt and Lincoln for a leader today is to lead proactively from the front but be continually mindful of the advice of those you lead.



¹⁷³ Goodwin. *Team of Rivals*, 527.

Chapter 3

The US Army and General Creighton Abrams

When eating an elephant, take one bite at a time.
- General Creighton Abrams

*You people are telling me what you think I
want to know. I want to know what is
actually happening.*
- General Creighton Abrams

Introduction

The focus of this chapter is General Creighton Abrams, Chief of Staff of the US Army from October 1972 until his untimely death in September 1974. This chapter will begin with a brief history of Abrams' career as it related to the problems of the Army in Vietnam and in the period immediately following. Next, the chapter will illustrate the four major problems facing the US military after the Vietnam War: *retention, parochialism and missions, modernization, and civil-military relations*. As the CoS of the US Army, Abrams faced some of the same issues as the USN or USAF, but these problems were magnified for the Army as many in the public and media came to see the Army as the face and a cause of America's failure in Vietnam.¹

History – General Creighton Abrams

From a second lieutenant in the 1st Cavalry Division to the commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (MACV), Abrams served in three major wars. In WWII, Abrams commanded from the lead tank the breakthrough of the German lines to rescue the

¹ William L. Hauser, *America's Army in Crisis: A Study in Civil-Military Relations* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1974), 4.

surrounded 101st Airborne Division in Bastogne.² During the Korean War, Abrams was the chief of staff for the 1st Corps, not a battlefield position but one that allowed Abrams to visit the soldiers that he felt made up the Army. Although he was responsible for directing numerous staff officers, he found the work unsatisfying.³ In a letter to his wife, Abrams complained that he was not really doing anything, just ensuring that each member understood and executed his own job.⁴ In 1964 to 1967, Abrams served as the Vice CoS in the Army before transferring to Vietnam to take over for General William Westmoreland as the commander of the MACV.⁵

Abrams had been selected in front of more than thirty-two other three-star generals and the ten eligible four-star generals for the role of Vice CoS of the Army.⁶ In his first week in office, events began to unfold in Vietnam that would lead to increased US involvement. After two alleged encounters between U.S. naval vessels and North Vietnamese gunboats in international waters, President Johnson proposed, and Congress passed, the Gulf of Tonkin resolution on 10 August 1964.⁷ Officially known as the Asia Resolution-Public Law 88-408, the Gulf of Tonkin resolution allowed President Johnson to use all necessary means to protect American personnel in Vietnam without an official declaration

² James Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers* (Brassey's Publishing. Washington: Potomac, 1997), 118.

³ Lewis Sorley, *Thunderbolt: General Creighton Abrams and the Army of His Times* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2008), 127.

⁴ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 127.

⁵ US Army Historical Center "Creighton Abrams". Biography.

⁶ Harold Brown, *Annual Defense Department Report FY 1979* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1979), 25. Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 179. Additionally, General Harold K. Johnson, who was selected as the Chief of Staff, was number 33 on the list of all the three star generals. Therefore, he was only one spot above Abrams and still chosen above the three-star generals above him and ten four-star generals in the Army. After Abrams was selected, he said of the work load, "The way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time. I think I'll try that."

⁷ Edwin Moise, *Tonkin Gulf and the Escalation of the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: Univ of North Carolina Pr, 2004), 109. Tonkin Gulf Resolution; Public Law 88-408, 88th Congress (General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives, 7 August 1964).

of war.⁸ Soon after Johnson signed the resolution, Abrams was placed in charge of the Army's readiness to fight.

After nine months inspecting the readiness of the Army's forces, Abrams found them seriously deficient. In 1961, three years prior to Abrams appointment as Vice CoS, the Army had begun a transition to prepare it to fight irregular war in addition to conventional war in Europe.⁹ First, the Army expanded from eleven to thirteen divisions. The division is the Army's major field combat organization, which can operate independently based on its internal resources. It is regularly changed in number or focus to fit the latest developments in weapons, tactics, and political situation.¹⁰ In this case, the two new divisions brought an air mobility, or helicopter, capability and light infantry.¹¹

In Abrams' view, this increase in the number of divisions and changing of division focus led to decreased mission effectiveness.¹² Adding divisions without a corresponding rise in the Army's overall strength meant a decreased number of troops available in each division. Based on this, units began reporting to Abrams that they were not ready to perform their mission.¹³ Following President Johnson's pledge in April 1965 to commit additional ground troops to Vietnam, Abrams testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that of the 1,487 combat units submitting readiness reports from the Army, only 705 were mission ready.¹⁴ The term 'mission-ready' meant that a unit was organized, trained, and equipped with men and materials to perform its specified mission.

⁸ Tonkin Gulf Resolution; Public Law 88-408, 88th Congress (General Records of the United States Government; Record Group 11; National Archives, 7 August 1964).

⁹ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 182.

¹⁰ US Army Historical Center. "Army Historical Summary FY, 1969." 1969, 49.

¹¹ US Army Historical Center. "Army Historical Summary FY, 1969." 1969, 49.

¹² Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 182.

¹³ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 182.

¹⁴ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 182. NSAM Memorandum 328, 6 April 1965. Logistical problems, manpower requirements, decreased experience on the job, and equipment issues were ranked as the most important issues that led to their non-mission ready status.

Based on the commitment of ground forces to Vietnam, the Army's authorized strength was increased, which led to a rise in the inexperience of the Army's new officers and enlisted personnel. In 1965, the Army's total strength for active duty was approximately 965,000.¹⁵ By 1966, this number would increase to 1.4 million men.¹⁶ These numbers included a mix of draftees and volunteers; all were inexperienced additions to the force.¹⁷ Of these inexperienced forces, over 800 units, which equates to almost 60% of the total active duty force, were sent to Vietnam from July 1965 – July 1966, including ones previously identified by Abrams as not ready.¹⁸

The decision to send these non-mission ready units would become a crusade for Abrams after he became CoS of the Army. Abrams often tried to get the civilian leadership in the Pentagon to understand the military concept of readiness. Abrams' quote below illustrates his frustration at conveying this understanding and seems to indicate his blame of the politicians for the Army's lack of readiness.

You know, in here, working in this building, in that job, or other jobs, you'll have a reason to quit every day. You just don't see any point in going on, or how you're going to get things done. But we know the soldier and we know the conditions of the battlefield, so no matter what they [the politicians] do, or how tough they make it, our job is to hang in there, day in and day out, so that when that soldier has to fight, he can be as well-equipped and as well prepared as

¹⁵ James R. Schlesinger, *Annual Defense Department Report FY 1975, 1976*, (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1975), D-3.

¹⁶ Schlesinger, *Annual Defense Department Report FY 1975, 1976*, D-3. This increase in troop numbers by almost 50% would clearly have an impact on the strength of the Army's divisions.

¹⁷ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 186.

¹⁸ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 186.

we can make him...*That's why we hang on!*¹⁹

From his position as Vice-Chief of Staff, Abrams was sent to Vietnam as the deputy MACV in May 1967, where he began to develop his own understanding of the war. His boss, General William Westmoreland shared Abram's perception of their mission: to force the North Vietnamese to stop trying to take over South Vietnam by force.²⁰ But the two officers had different ideas about how to achieve that goal. Westmoreland's approach was to wage a war of attrition, using search-and-destroy tactics, in which the only quantifiable metric was a body count.²¹ Westmoreland believed if he could inflict enough casualties, the North Vietnamese would cease aggressive action against the South Vietnamese.²² In Westmoreland's defense, his strategy was based on a directive from SecDef McNamara to degrade the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces as fast as Westmoreland could put men in the field.²³ Abrams, on the other hand, focused his attention on the other mission of the MACV: upgrading and improving the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), which was the land force of South Vietnam from 1955-1975.²⁴

In his first few months in Vietnam, from May-June 1967, Abrams realized that improving the ARVN required a different strategy than Westmoreland's. On one occasion, Abrams became stranded at an

¹⁹ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 187. Emphasis in original.

²⁰ Lewis Sorley, *Westmoreland: the General Who Lost Vietnam* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011), 91.

²¹ Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968, Volume V – Vietnam July-December 1967. Notes of the President's meeting with senior advisors. In this example, a war of attrition is defined as battling in a way to wear down the enemy's ability to fight.

²² Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968, Volume V – Vietnam July-December 1967. Westmoreland was not present during this meeting with the President, but his views were carried by another representative.

²³ Samuel Zaffiri, *Westmoreland*, 160. Sources vary on Westmoreland's own attachment to this strategy. Accounts from Sorley claim that Westmoreland continued the strategy based on his own appraisal of the situation. Zaffiri, however, claims that Westmoreland's strategic decisions were constantly directed by civilian leadership. The priority for this paper is to understand Abrams' ability to study a situation and make a decision against the current conventional wisdom.

²⁴ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 200. Army of the Republic of Vietnam Historical Site, http://www.b-2-1-196lib.com/httpdocs/Sub_Htms/History_ARVN_Units.htm

outpost in a remote northern district town during a unit visit. With no air transportation available to take him back to Saigon, a column of trucks from the ARVN arrived to transport him back.²⁵ Abrams used this opportunity to speak with as many men as he could, from private to officer. He remained with them for hours, long after arriving back in Saigon, asking about “their weapons, their tactics, their pay, their families, [and] their leadership.”²⁶ These interactions with South Vietnamese soldiers solidified his opinions on the importance of training the ARVN.²⁷ He also relayed to the President in a cabinet meeting in January 1968 that the South Vietnamese could never be capable of their own defense if they were a second-tier priority in America’s strategy.²⁸ Leaving the South Vietnamese with a few advisors and new equipment without the proper training, while the US units engaged in combat, would not achieve the US’s objectives. Instead, he said, the primary job of the US should be to improve the ARVN.²⁹

The Tet Offensive in January 1968 proved to be a turning point for the US Army in Vietnam. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Tet Offensive was a synchronized, large-scale offensive by the Viet Cong over all of South Vietnam.³⁰ Despite numerous intelligence reports of the impending attack, Westmoreland did not adequately prepare for such an attack based on the assumption that an attack of that magnitude would irrevocably damage the enemy’s forces.³¹ When Westmoreland was promoted six months later, many said his replacement by Abrams was

²⁵ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 200.

²⁶ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 201.

²⁷ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 201. Lewis Sorley compiled thousands of tapes of conversations during the Westmoreland/Abrams transition in Vietnam and during Abrams’ time as MACV. It is unclear if this conversation between Abrams and Westmoreland was transcribed from these tapes or recalled from personal interview. Westmoreland maintains that Abrams agreed with his tactics in the Vietnam War.

²⁸ Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968, Volume VI – Vietnam January-June 1968. Notes of the President’s meeting with senior advisors.

²⁹ Foreign Relations of the United States 1964-1968, Volume VI – Vietnam January-June 1968.

³⁰ Zaffiri, *Westmoreland*, 259.

³¹ Zaffiri, *Westmoreland*, 259.

due to his failure to anticipate the Tet Offensive.³²

When Abrams took command, he immediately put his plan of supporting the ARVN into action. He closed down fire bases such as Khe Sanh; these bases were necessary in support of a war of attrition, but Abrams wanted to insulate the South Vietnamese from attacks in major cities such as Saigon.³³ He immediately began pairing all US military units with South Vietnamese counterparts.³⁴ In a meeting with SecDef Melvin Laird in April 1970, Westmoreland described the successes of Abrams' plans to put the South Vietnamese forces amongst the people.³⁵ Following his tenure as the commander of the MACV, Abrams was nominated to become the next Chief of Staff of the Army in October 1972.

Retention

Of all the services, the Army was the most affected by the end of the draft. The Army had the most personnel, and therefore it was the most reliant upon the draft.³⁶ In addition, the Army most likely needed the draft because it was commonly thought to be the most dangerous and the least prestigious of the services. Thus, the Army found it increasingly difficult to meet recruitment quotas with qualified applicants as the Army entered the 1970s.³⁷

In 1971, recruiters began accepting applicants whose mental

³² Zaffiri, *Westmoreland*, 320. Despite these claims, numerous sources cite that Westmoreland was always due to depart Vietnam to become the next CoS. When Abrams arrived in May of the previous year, he was only supposed to remain as the deputy for 2 months before becoming the commander, MACV. However, the Tet Offensive has become synonymous with Westmoreland's name and his previous 'rosy' descriptions of the war in Vietnam.

³³ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 229-230. The closing of Khe Sahn came only two months after Westmoreland staged an enormous battle against North Vietnamese encircling the fire base.

³⁴ Zaffiri, *Westmoreland*, 320.

³⁵ Foreign Relations of the United States 1969-1976, Volume VI – Vietnam January 1969.

³⁶ William L. Hauser, *America's Army in Crisis: A Study in Civil-Military Relations* (Johns Hopkins UP, 1974), 4.

³⁷ US Army Historical Center. "Army Historical Summary FY, 1973." 1973, 64.

capabilities were lower than previously allowed.³⁸ The applicants were broken into categories, I through IV, based on education, aptitude, and qualification for service in various specialized areas. Category I represented the most qualified applicants, and category IV represented the least qualified.³⁹ Figure 12 below illustrates the percentages of recruits by category for 1973.

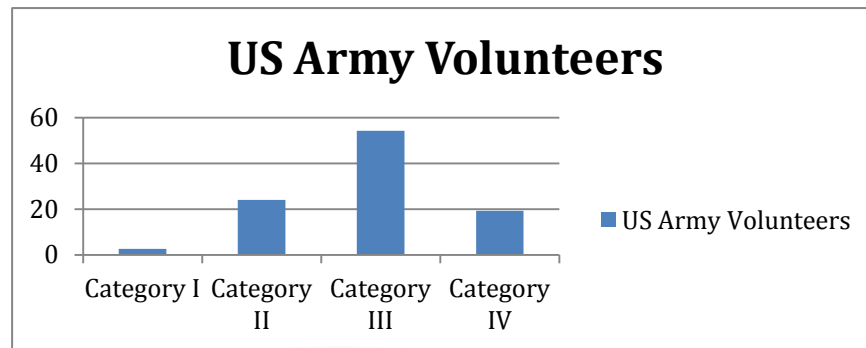


Figure 12. Breakdown of US Army Volunteers by Category

Source: US Army Historical Summary, 1973.

In 1973, the category III and IV applicants made up almost 75% of the applicants.⁴⁰ In addition to lowering the standard requirements of the recruits, Army recruiters were also found cheating, or coaching recruits through entry exams and overlooking disqualifying information during criminal background checks or physical exams.⁴¹ The first years of the AVF also saw increases in the numbers of African-American and other minority applicants. The percentage of African-American applicants rose from 10 to almost 14 percent from 1970 to 1972, while other minorities grew from 3.2 to 3.7 percent.⁴² This increase in minority recruitment may have been a result of the lower standards, higher pay, which had increased an average of 7% per year since 1965,

³⁸ US Army Historical Center. "Army Historical Summary FY, 1972." 1972, 77.

³⁹ US Army Historical Center. "Army Historical Summary FY, 1973." 1973, 64.

⁴⁰ US Army Historical Center. "Army Historical Summary FY, 1973." 1973, 64. .

⁴¹ US Army Historical Center. "Army Historical Summary FY, 1973." 1973, 63.

⁴² US Army Historical Center. "Army Historical Summary FY, 1973." 1973, 34.

or both.⁴³ In this respect, the Army was a representation of the social firestorm growing within the US's civil society. Based on the minority recruitment increases and the lower standards, Army leaders worried about the spread of this firestorm into the military and the potential for the development of a "military underclass."⁴⁴

In addition to recruitment issues caused by the AVF, the Army also faced problems of retention and careerism in both officer and enlisted ranks. In 1973, several high-ranking officials within the Army held a "little soul-searching session on professional ethics and integrity with the students at [Army Command and Staff College]."⁴⁵ The young officers painted a dreary picture of an army immersed in careerism; the officers described "an abysmal situation...where the command hierarchy created such pressure for glowing fitness reports that evaluations were routinely falsified."⁴⁶ In *Crisis in Command*, authors Richard Gabriel and Paul Savage describe a change in the popular image of a career in the Army. As opposed to military service being different than a career with a company such as IBM, it had become similar. They go on to describe how this change had created a new type of officer, focused on self-promotion, which led the Army to be weaker.⁴⁷

In addition to these attitudinal changes within the officer corps, enlisted retention was declining. It fell from 30% in 1967 to 19% in 1970.⁴⁸ The retention increased to 22% by the end of 1971 as a result of Westmoreland's initiatives for the beginning of the All-Volunteer Force, including appointing senior general officers to oversee the Army's

⁴³ Department of the Secretary of Defense, "Green Book" (Department of Comptroller, Undersecretary of Defense, 2010), 52.

⁴⁴ Rostker, *I Want You: Evolution of the All Volunteer Force*. RAND, 4. Many sources describe a military underclass as a military made up solely of an underclass (poor/uneducated) portion of society, thereby dispelling any notion of the military representing a cross-section of the US.

⁴⁵ Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers*, 146.

⁴⁶ Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers*, 147.

⁴⁷ Richard A. Gabriel, and Paul Savage, *Crisis in Command: Mismanagement in the Army* (Hill and Wang, 1979), 20.

⁴⁸ Rostker, *Evolution of the All Volunteer Force*, 270.

transition to an All-Volunteer Force.⁴⁹ The general officers' initiatives included developing a publicity campaign in 1971 to attract volunteers.⁵⁰ However, retention fell sharply again in 1972 to 13%, the lowest Army retention rate between 1970 and the present.⁵¹

When Abrams became Chief of Staff, the Army was required to develop and maintain an All-Volunteer Force for the first time since before WWII.⁵² To attract, develop, and retain professional soldiers, Abrams established the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel on 15 August 1972.⁵³ The primary mission of this office was to address Abrams' three top concerns for the future of the all-volunteer Army: increasing officer and enlisted professionalism, improving off-duty Army life, and implementing recruitment and retention initiatives.⁵⁴

As the CoS, Abrams addressed professionalism through education. Education in the Army came from various schools, for enlisted and officer training, and from doctrine. Abrams believed the Army was made up of individual soldiers, and if you improved the soldier, you improved the Army.⁵⁵ Therefore, Abrams initiated an examination of the curriculum at each Army School, officer and enlisted.⁵⁶ Abrams oversaw the addition of additional courses, including training on human relations, race issues, drug abuse, and counseling, much like the issues that confronted Admiral Zumwalt. Additionally, Abrams dictated changes to doctrine including updating Field Manual (FM) 22-100, the Army's leadership manual, to include techniques on how to handle

⁴⁹ Rostker, *Evolution of the All Volunteer Force*, 152.

⁵⁰ Rostker, *Evolution of the All Volunteer Force*, 153.

⁵¹ Department of Defense Annual Report, 1978. 334.

⁵² Army Historical Summary, 1973, 61.

⁵³ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 62. Though Abrams had not yet been confirmed in August 1972, he is attributed in the Army's historical summary with the establishment of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel.

⁵⁴ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 62.

⁵⁵ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 350.

⁵⁶ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 62.

human and social issues.⁵⁷

Abrams invested scarce institutional dollars to improve soldiers' quality-of-life. In August 1972, he authorized the Variable Re-enlistment Bonus, a cash payment available to enlisted members who chose to sign-up for an additional time in service.⁵⁸ The earlier the member applied for the bonus, and the additional amount of time he or she signed up for, the more the bonus would be. Bonuses could be as high as \$2,500 a year based on the type of job the enlisted member held.⁵⁹ Additionally, Abrams instituted an increase to the already existing Superior Performance Pay from \$30 to \$50 per month.⁶⁰ This bonus was given to enlisted members rated "superior" by their commander. Only 10% of enlisted members qualified for this bonus.⁶¹

Finally, Abrams addressed recruitment and retention through increased advertising. Over the course of Abrams' time as Chief of Staff, the advertising budget for the Army increased 300%, from less than \$10 million dollars in 1971 to \$26.7 million dollars in 1973, and \$38.2 million dollars in 1974.⁶² Advertising included school trips by recruiters, posters, and even television commercials.⁶³

By 1974, Abrams began to see results. In recruitment, the Army enlisted 166,798 soldiers in 1974, a 25% increase over 1973.⁶⁴ In addition, 37,608 soldiers re-enlisted for at least 4 additional years of service. These actions pushed the Army's retention rate up to almost 40%.⁶⁵ In an attempt at quality-control in the midst of these reforms, Abrams supported the DoD Appropriations Act of 1974, which stated

⁵⁷ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 62.

⁵⁸ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 68.

⁵⁹ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 68.

⁶⁰ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 68.

⁶¹ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 68.

⁶² Army Historical Summary 1974, 53.

⁶³ Army Historical Summary 1974, 53.

⁶⁴ Army Historical Summary 1974, 51.

⁶⁵ Harold Brown, *Annual Defense Department Report FY 1978* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1978), B-4.

that no less than 55% of enlistees had to have a high school diploma and at least 82% of enlistees had to come from the top three mental categories. As a result of Abrams' changes, retention numbers went up.⁶⁶

Abrams was not the father of the AVF, but he used his time in office to make it work. While the beginnings of the AVF stretch as far back as the early 1960s, it was after Abrams' time as CoS that the SecDef could actually report the AVF as a success.⁶⁷ Abrams used education to increase professionalism, money to incentivize enlistment and re-enlistment, and increased advertising to attract the younger generation to Army careers. While it took the efforts of many to make the AVF a success, Abrams contributed as much as any individual.

Parochialism – Missions

Throughout the Vietnam War, Abrams believed the Army was not structured appropriately to organize, train, and equip the troops. Therefore, he re-organized the force so that it was best structured to conduct the missions expected in the post-Vietnam era. Prior to Abrams taking the office of CoS, Westmoreland had begun a reorganization of the Army on 24 April 1972 by establishing the Office of the Project Manager for Reorganization.⁶⁸ After Abrams took office, he announced on 11 January 1973 a series of reorganizations to modernize and streamline the Army, beginning with the discontinuation of two major commands.⁶⁹

In 1962, a former Army CoS, General Earle Wheeler, had redefined the roles of the Army's three separate commands: the Continental Army Command, the Combat Developments Command, and the Army Materiel Command. The Continental Army Command was responsible for the

⁶⁶ Army Historical Summary, 1974, 52.

⁶⁷ Army Historical Summary, 1974, 55.

⁶⁸ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 44.

⁶⁹ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 44.

direction and coordination of all Army training within the US, but it did not include service schools and other professional military education.⁷⁰ The Combat Developments Command was to respond to contingencies or unforeseen problems throughout the world, but it did not maintain command and control of a preponderance of Army forces.⁷¹ Finally, the Army Materiel Command was the sole command in charge of logistical support for the entire Army.⁷² To enable the Army to meet its expected missions, Abrams decommissioned the Continental Army and Combat Developments Commands on 1 July 1973 and 31 December 1973 respectively.⁷³ In their place, he stood up Forces Command (FORSCOM) and Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

The primary mission of FORSCOM was to oversee the combat components of all Army stateside units and all reserve units.⁷⁴ FORSCOM was thus responsible for almost 60% of the Army's manpower, including 225,000 active-duty and 660,000 reserve soldiers.⁷⁵ Abrams had other reasons for bringing the active-duty and reserve forces under one command, which this chapter will illustrate during the civil-military relations section.

The primary mission of TRADOC was to merge all service schools and training venues into one command, rather than have them spread between the former Continental Army and Combat Developments Command. Abrams hoped to achieve “synergistic” benefits by combining the elements of individual training with service school education and the doctrinal development process, which was responsible for the lessons learned and best practices of the Army.⁷⁶ The intention was also to give a home to doctrine development for the current force. Abrams believed

⁷⁰ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 45.

⁷¹ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 45.

⁷² Army Historical Summary, 1973, 45.

⁷³ Department of Defense, Annual Report, 1974, 153.

⁷⁴ Department of Defense, Annual Report, 1974, 153.

⁷⁵ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 45.

⁷⁶ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 46.

the difference in opinion with Westmoreland concerning tactics in Vietnam was a manifestation of narrowness of Army doctrine, which was focused almost exclusively on conventional operations. Abrams wanted to pair the education element of the Army with the doctrinal development team.⁷⁷ By the end of 1974, TRADOC's force levels reached 181,000, which represented approximately 22% of the total force.⁷⁸

Abrams also sought to streamline the force by removing unnecessary personnel from the service chief's and major headquarters' staffs and sending them to operational units. Over the course of his tenure, the authorized strength of the Army CoS and major headquarters' staffs decreased from 2,683 to 1,898, as seen below.

Date	Military	Civilian	Total
January 1969	2,983	6,617	9,600
June 1972	2,683	4,877	7,560
June 1973	1,904	2,912	4,816
June 1974	1,898	2,821	4,719

Figure 13. Authorized Strength of the Army Staff

Source: Army Historical Summary, 1973, 48

While force restructuring was a priority for Abrams, he still was forced to maintain the 'joint' portions of his role as the CoS. Abrams maintained a chilly relationship with the other members of the JCS.⁷⁹ While he believed the day-to-day business of running the Army took priority over all other duties, he was still required to sit on the JCS. He believed that a good portion of his time there spent discussing ambassador issues, including who should represent the US as the military attaché in Portugal, or other items outside the Army, would have been better spent focusing internally.⁸⁰ During a time of crisis for the Army, Abrams did not see the benefit of participating in the JCS

⁷⁷ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 45.

⁷⁸ Department of Defense, Annual Report, 1974, 153. Army Historical Summary, 1973, 46.

⁷⁹ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 357.

⁸⁰ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 357.

discussions. He even attempted to delegate the role of attending the JCS meetings to the Vice CoS.⁸¹ Abrams' disinterest in the JCS suggests that he failed to appreciate the US system of national security and the importance of inter-service collaboration.

Abrams concentrated on identifying the Army's internal problems as opposed to stressing joint development among the services. Through the creation of TRADOC, the Army had an organization that could develop the best strategy. TRADOC produced new Army doctrine focusing on the demands of winning the first battle of any war.⁸² This new command brought each of the different operational specialties under one command, including artillery, armor, infantry, and Army air power. This streamlined readiness reports and enabled better-integrated training among different branches.⁸³ In keeping his focus internal, Abrams did not encourage parochial behavior among the services, but he did not discourage it either. Abrams was still involved in the budget disputes that drove disagreements with other services, and Abrams attempted to get the Army the largest portion possible for his modernization efforts.

Abrams' efforts led to a more efficient Army, with fewer troops fulfilling staff requirements, but he did not make inter-service cooperation between the Army and USAF or Navy a priority. Abrams was and is revered by the Army, but given his talents, he could have been revered by the total force if he had taken his ideas to the entire DoD as opposed to only the Army. Overall, however, Abrams, as a product of his times, may have suffered from parochialism and contributed more to the problem than the solution at the joint level.

⁸¹ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 357.

⁸² John Romjue, "The Evolution of the Airland Battle Concept" (Maxwell AFB, AL, *Air University Review*. May – June 1984), 1. <http://www.au.af.mil/au/cadre/aspj/airchronicles/aureview/1984/may-jun/romjue.html>

⁸³ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 45.

Modernization

As discussed in Chapter 1 above, the US Army typically researched, designed, procured, and tested its new equipment in the US prior to deployment. As a result of the decreasing budget for the Army's equipment and training, equipment damaged in transit or battle during the Vietnam War was difficult to replace.⁸⁴ As the Army exited the Vietnam War, it was a force in dire need of modernization and revitalization.

Abrams developed a modernization plan stressing an increase in critical Army capabilities, both offensive and defensive. The Army is designed around the fighting soldier, as opposed to a fighting platform, such as a ship or an airplane.⁸⁵ Abrams believed the key to obtaining the maximum ground combat power from scarce resources was to modernize in a few key areas with the potential to enhance the fighting power of the soldier.⁸⁶ During his time in office, Abrams increased ground firepower, aerial firepower, and air defense capabilities.

Increased ground firepower came from Abrams' most prized development project, the new main battle tank that would eventually carry his name. Although the existing Army tank, the Patton M60A3, introduced in 1960, was as good as or better than the Soviet T-62 tank, the US did not want to assume the Soviet research and development had stopped.⁸⁷ The new main battle tank would cost double the M60A3, but in Abrams' view, the armor made it more than worth the price.

As Abrams presided over a review committee for the tank, the team learned about a new type of armor, named "Chobham", intended to

⁸⁴ Romjue, *The Evolution of the Airland Battle Concept*, 2.

⁸⁵ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 101.

⁸⁶ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 335. Of note, the majority of equipment Abrams pushed forward during his tenure was based on the plan for conventional war in Europe against the Soviet Union.

⁸⁷ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 105.

ensure the dominance of the M1.⁸⁸ “Chobham” was the name given to a new type of ceramic composite armor developed by a British research facility on Chobham Common in Surrey, England; it provided exceptional protection against shaped charges and high-velocity rounds. After a personal visit to the Chobham research center and a demonstration of the armor’s effectiveness, Abrams decided to adopt it for the new main battle tank.⁸⁹ The weight penalty imposed by the heavy armor limited other design features of the M1 tank, but Abrams decided it was worth the cost. As recounted by historian Orr Kelly in his description of the birth of the M-1, the decision by Abrams “to pay the price in weight and size to take full advantage of the new armor” made the M-1 the most powerful and protected tank on the battlefield for decades.⁹⁰ According to Schlesinger, the M-1 ensured the US against a possible future Soviet breakthrough in tank technology.⁹¹ When the M1A1 entered service in 1978, it was named the “Abrams” in honor of its late champion.⁹²

Abrams also fought for the modernization of attack helicopters and their weaponry. Based on its demonstration of capability during the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Abrams understood the US’s need for advancements such as the Tube-launched, Optically-Guided, Wire-commanded (TOW) missile.⁹³ This missile provided a precise anti-tank capability well above existing US weapons. During Abrams tenure, the AH-1 Cobra attack helicopter was modified to mount the TOW missile at a cost of \$73 million dollars, approximately 30% of the Army’s research

⁸⁸ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 338.

⁸⁹ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 338.

⁹⁰ Kelly Orr, *King of the Killing Zone* (Berkley, CA Publishing, 1990), 254.

⁹¹ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 106.

⁹² Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 378.

⁹³ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 108. During the 1973 conflict, the effectiveness of the tank, and the effectiveness of the anti-tank technology, demonstrated to US planners the risks of current battlegrounds. No longer could the US accept defeat in the early stages of a war, as the brutality of these new capabilities made fighting so much more destructive.

and development budget.⁹⁴ In 1974, Abrams also apportioned \$61 million to continue development of the advanced attack helicopter (AAH), also known as the Apache, which entered the inventory in 1986 and is still in service.⁹⁵

The concept for a new attack helicopter came out of the Army experience with close-air-support in Vietnam. Initially, the troop transport and close-air-support missions in the Army were executed by the UH-1 Huey and the OH-6A Cayuse.⁹⁶ After the Army deployed the attack variant of the UH-1, designated the Cobra, it recognized some critical weaknesses. The new attack helicopter needed to address the weaknesses of the UH-1, including longer loiter time with more ammunition and better survivability.⁹⁷ From these needs, the Army developed the AAH concept, from which the Apache was born. Abrams, however, would not see the attack helicopter in action, as the flying prototypes did not emerge until 1976, and the Apache did not officially enter the service until 1986.⁹⁸

In terms of air defense, Abrams advocated the Patriot anti-ballistic missile (ABM) defense. Air defense, and therefore ABM defense, fell to the Army rather than the USAF following an intense period of interservice rivalry.⁹⁹ In 1973, Abrams reorganized the ABM defense systems under a single program manager.¹⁰⁰ As the sole service in charge of protecting the US intercontinental ballistic missile sites, the Army received \$450

⁹⁴ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1979, A-1. Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 235.

⁹⁵ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 110.

⁹⁶ Richard Chait, John Lyons, and Duncan Long, "Critical Technology Events in the Development of the Apache Helicopter" *Center for Technology and National Security Policy*, February 2006, 31.

⁹⁷ Chair, Lyons, and Long, "Critical Technology Events in the Development of the Apache Helicopter", 31.

⁹⁸ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 110.

⁹⁹ Neil Sheehan, *A Fiery Peace in a Cold War: Bernard Schriever and the Ultimate Weapon* (Vintage Books, NY. 2009), 222.

¹⁰⁰ Army Historical Summary, 1974, 28.

million for the Safeguard Anti-Ballistic Missile System.¹⁰¹ Of the six primary ABM agencies using the Safeguard system, Abrams discontinued one, and relocated the others in two locations, Arlington, Virginia, and Huntsville, Alabama.¹⁰² During the next year's budget planning, Abrams pushed to commit \$111 million, almost half of the ABM's dedicated budget, for the development of the SAM-D surface-to-air missile.¹⁰³ SAM-D was intended as a replacement for the Safeguard System, the Nike Hercules Radar, and the Improved Home-All-the-Way-Killer (I-HAWK) missile system. While the Army was still committing \$89 million for the procurement of the I-HAWK, Abrams was also pursuing the research to replace it.¹⁰⁴ When the SAM-D eventually came on-line in 1985, it was designated the Patriot, which first saw combat in Operation Desert Storm (ODS).¹⁰⁵

Abrams did not initiate any of these modernization efforts, but he did influence budget decisions that allowed development of these systems to continue. Abrams used a 50% increase in research and development funds between 1972 and 1974, procured by Westmoreland's efforts as CoS, to advance specific projects Abrams identified as important.¹⁰⁶ He believed these projects were required to gain and/or maintain the Army's advantage in its offensive and defensive capabilities.¹⁰⁷

Civil – Military Relations

¹⁰¹ Army Historical Summary, 1974, 25.

¹⁰² Army Historical Summary, 1974, 25. The Advanced Ballistic Missile Defense Agency was discontinued while its personnel and resources were reassigned to the Ballistic Missile Defense Advanced Technology Center.

¹⁰³ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 110.

¹⁰⁴ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 110.

¹⁰⁵ Project Patriot, Army Technology, <http://www.army-technology.com/projects/patriot/>

¹⁰⁶ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 101.

¹⁰⁷ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 335.

In the aftermath of the poisonous civil-military relations of the Vietnam era discussed in Chapter 1, Abrams worked to improve the Army's relationship with each component of the civilian administration. Abrams worked to impress the legislative branches of the government and to form a strong relationship with the Secretary of Defense, James R. Schlesinger.

The first steps Abrams took in repairing civil-military relations was during his confirmation hearing for promotion to the CoS, which was delayed based on an incident involving General John Lavelle.¹⁰⁸ General Lavelle became the commander of the 7th Air Force in Vietnam in July 1971.¹⁰⁹ In what would become known as the "Lavelle case", which Lewis Sorley describes as "a product of the larger self-limiting way in which America had chosen to fight [in the Vietnam War]," General Lavelle had authorized approximately 28 pre-planned strikes against enemy targets in off-limits areas under the guise of self-defense.¹¹⁰ In other words, when pilots landed following these sorties to attack targets in off-limits areas, they falsified reports to say that they had received enemy fire from the target areas prior to attacking them.¹¹¹ Although Abrams would testify during his confirmation hearing that he had knowledge of only one of these events, for which he verbally reprimanded Lavelle, the Senate Armed Services Committee decided to delay Abrams' confirmation hearings until they were ready to conduct the investigation hearings on Lavelle. This delayed his promotion to CoS from late June until mid-October 1972.¹¹²

During Abrams' confirmation process, it was clear some Senators

¹⁰⁸ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 340.

¹⁰⁹ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 329.

¹¹⁰ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 329

¹¹¹ US Senate, Senate Armed Services Committee. Testimony of General Creighton Abrams, 9 October 1972, 116.

¹¹² Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 335. Abrams testimony during confirmation hearings, 109.

felt deeply distrustful of the military.¹¹³ Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, repeatedly asked Abrams about his ties to the Lavelle incident during his time as the commander of the MACV. The Senator was repeatedly asked by other members of the committee to focus on other issues, including morale, leadership, discipline, and readiness, to no avail.¹¹⁴ In fact, Abrams was asked these types of questions only when Chairman Symington departed the room temporarily and formal questioning ceased.¹¹⁵

While it is easy to implicitly suggest that Senator Symington's behavior was based on his own personal aversion to the Vietnam War, more likely, his protests signified a larger continuing power struggle between the executive and legislative branches of the government. According to Samuel Huntington in *The Soldier and the State*, the division of power between the executive and legislative branches affects many other groups in the US government.¹¹⁶ In the context of the Vietnam War, the primary debate concerned the 'war powers' of the US President versus the need for congressional approval and oversight. Huntington describes the role of the President as merely an office of command, rather than a function of command.¹¹⁷ In this example, Senator Symington was, most likely, not directly challenging Abrams, but he was challenging what he perceived to be a military operating out-of-bounds while following a President that was also out-of-bounds.

For Abrams involvement in the questioning, the transcripts of his testimony reveal no signs of conflict or animosity over the committee's

¹¹³ Senate, Senate Armed Services Committee. Testimony of General Creighton Abrams, 9 October 1972, 111.

¹¹⁴ Senate, Senate Armed Services Committee. Testimony of General Creighton Abrams, 9 October 1972, 111.

¹¹⁵ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 335.

¹¹⁶ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Belknap Press, Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard UP, 1981), 177.

¹¹⁷ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 178.

line of questioning. Abrams maintained a professional composure throughout. His testimony illustrated to the members of the committee his thoughts on the subordination of the military to civilians and even the rules of engagement throughout the Vietnam War.¹¹⁸ Abrams mentioned that he understood why the rules existed in Vietnam. He suggested there had been a potential communication gap between the early administration and military leaders, which he had worked to repair.¹¹⁹ He said that the role of the military was to serve the political ends of the elected government of the US, but the pressure from Washington for specific results could often force leaders to make poor decisions, as with the Lavelle case.¹²⁰ Based on the context of this statement, Abrams seemed to be excusing Lavelle's conduct more than blaming the behavior on political involvement.

Towards the end of his confirmation hearings, Abrams attempted to make clear his views on repairing the civil-military relationship. Abrams said that the subordination of the military to civilian control was a necessary principle of America's form of government, based on the constitution, and he would work as the CoS to improve this environment.¹²¹ Abrams was then confirmed as the CoS by the Senate Armed Services Committee vote of 16-0 and a vote of 84-2 in the full Senate.¹²² In addition to the respect he garnered during his confirmation hearings, Abrams' largest step to repair the civil-military disharmony was his relationship with SecDef James Schlesinger. Schlesinger is remembered for his close relationship with the military and his work to understand the issues affecting each service.¹²³ Schlesinger entered the Nixon administration as the assistant director of the Bureau of the

¹¹⁸ Senate, Senate Armed Services Committee. Testimony of General Creighton Abrams, 9 October 1972, 109.

¹¹⁹ Senate, Testimony of General Creighton Abrams, 9 October 1972, 109.

¹²⁰ Senate, Testimony of General Creighton Abrams, 9 October 1972, 152.

¹²¹ Senate, Testimony of General Creighton Abrams, 9 October 1972, 153.

¹²² Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 341.

¹²³ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 360.

Budget and later became the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).¹²⁴ Schlesinger believed in a strong defense and military. “In particular, Schlesinger saw a need in the post-Vietnam era to restore the morale and prestige of the military services; modernize strategic doctrine and programs; step up research and development; and shore up a DoD budget that had been declining since 1968.”¹²⁵ As a result, historian Lewis Sorley called the relationship between Abrams and Schlesinger “depth unto depth” and a partnership of rare compatibility.¹²⁶ According to Sorley Schlesinger credited Abrams with teaching him the impact that a Defense Secretary’s decisions could have within the armed forces.¹²⁷ For his part, Schlesinger worked to support Abrams’ modernization initiatives. In his 1975 annual report to Congress, for example, Schlesinger expressed support of Abrams initiatives including force modernization, training, and combat readiness.¹²⁸ This relationship paid great dividends to the Army after Abrams’ illness.

Abrams illness brought an unexpected end to his term as CoS. After an exhausting trip to Europe in May 1974, Abrams returned home early where doctors found a malignant tumor on his left lung.¹²⁹ After the removal of his left lung, Abrams returned to duty in mid-July but was still recovering. Despite his debilitated condition, Abrams also attended a meeting with new President, Gerald Ford, following President Nixon’s resignation on 9 August 1974. After several complications, including blood clots in his legs and remaining lung, Abrams was readmitted to the hospital on 17 August 1974.¹³⁰ Abrams never

¹²⁴ US Government. Biographies of the Secretary of Defense. http://www.defense.gov/specials/secdef_histories/bios/schlesinger.htm

¹²⁵ US Government. Biographies of the Secretary of Defense. http://www.defense.gov/specials/secdef_histories/bios/schlesinger.htm

¹²⁶ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 360.

¹²⁷ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 361.

¹²⁸ Department of Defense Annual Report, 1975. 100.

¹²⁹ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 372.

¹³⁰ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 372.

recovered and passed away ten years to the day after he was promoted to General.

Despite these complications during Abrams' final year, his relationship with Schlesinger was fruitful for both men. Abrams used this relationship to secure an agreement that would eventually restrict the capabilities of the President when deploying forces. With Schlesinger, Abrams worked to ensure that every combat division in the Army was made up of a mix of reserve and active-duty forces. In Abrams view, this prevented the President from deploying the Army into combat without mobilizing the reserves. Although his intentions were to protect the Army and ensure that the President did not act without the support of the nation, he effectively tied the hands of the executive branch and displayed his distrust of the overarching civilian authority.

When President Johnson committed the US to ground combat in the Vietnam War without calling up the reserves, he broke with a national precedent that went back to World War I. From 1965 to 1973, the US mobilized only 22,786 men and women from the reserve force to fight in Vietnam, compared to an average of 340,000 troops mobilized during WWI, WWII, and the Korean War.¹³¹ Figure 14 below shows each of the major conflicts, the current authorized strength of the Army, and the number of troops mobilized.

<u>Conflict</u>	<u>Initial Strength</u>	<u>Mobilized</u>
World War I	127,588	208,000
World War II	187,893	377,000
Korean War	591,487	382,900
Vietnam War	970,000	22,786

Figure 14. Initial Strength vs. Mobilized Strength

Source: Department of Defense, Annual Report 1965-1973. Stuckey, Pistorius,

¹³¹ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1965-1973. John Stuckey, and Joseph Pistorius. "Mobilization for the Vietnam War: A Political and Military Catastrophe." *Journal of Army War College*, 1985, 1. This does not include the Civil War based on its unique nature. In this regard, a major conflict is defined as a significant contest between two or more nation-states.

Mobilization for the Vietnam War.

In 1965, the JCS tried to convince SecDef McNamara and President Johnson to mobilize more troops. According to Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum (JCSM) 238-65, the JCS requested the power to remove any and all administrative impediments to the war effort in their opinion.¹³² This included the ability to consult Congress on the mobilization of the Guard and Reserve forces. This memorandum seems to request the removal of political considerations, or the threat of escalation, from the military's strategy. This represents an embodiment of the civil-military split of the time: the civilian control to avoid WWII versus the military's desire to win the battle decisively and efficiently.

On 6 April 1965, Johnson approved the addition of 18,000 troops to the almost 23,000 troops and advisors already in Vietnam, and he pledged to continue troop elevations until reaching 175,000 troops by years end.¹³³ Although millions of Americans would eventually serve in Vietnam, the reserves did not constitute a significant portion of that number. Many sources claim that Johnson's decision to delay mobilization was his attempt to maintain national focus on his own domestic agenda and avoid publicity on the increasing nature of the US commitment in Vietnam.¹³⁴ According to the US Army Center for Military History, regardless of Johnson's motivations, the lack of mobilization sent the signal to allies and enemies that the US lacked the internal resolution to support the effort needed for victory in Vietnam.¹³⁵ Based on their inability to use reserve forces, seven of the Army's sixteen

¹³² JCSM 238-65, Pentagon Papers IV, 2 April 1965.

¹³³ NSAM Memorandum 328, 6 April 1965. American Military History, *The US Army in Vietnam*, Army Historical Series, USA Center of Military History, 643. In addition, early in 1966, Johnson elevated troop levels to 266,000 without the addition of a reserve force.

¹³⁴ James Currie, *The Army Reserve in Vietnam*, 76. Hillstrom, Kevin, and Laurie Collier Hillstrom, *Vietnam War: Almanac*. Vol I (Detroit, MI: UXL, 2001), 81.

¹³⁵ American Military History, *The US Army in Vietnam* (Army Historical Series, USA Center of Military History, 2009), 643.

active duty divisions were serving in Vietnam.¹³⁶

Without the reserves, the Army felt as if it were sent into battle without the will of the country; Abrams believed this was the fateful decision from which all other tragedies of the war originated.¹³⁷ From this belief, Abrams developed a lack of trust in the national political leadership. From this lack of trust, Abrams would build one of his most important contributions in the final year of his life: the Golden Handshake.¹³⁸

In the last year of his life, Abrams ensured future Presidents could not commit the Army to battle without mobilizing the reserves.¹³⁹ In early 1974, Abrams and Schlesinger made the Golden Handshake, an agreement in which Schlesinger would attempt to keep the Army's manning at its present level of 780,000. By maintaining a relatively constant number for the Army's manning, Abrams could execute his plan of shifting combat forces to the reserves. Had the Army's strength been allowed to decrease while Abrams was moving responsibility to the reserves, he may have had a force without the ability to maintain a domestic presence, much less an international one. Additionally, if the Army could find secondary missions to cancel, Abrams could keep the money saved for his budget.¹⁴⁰ Abrams agreed, and then announced his decision to increase the number of Army divisions to its pre-Vietnam War level of 16. Abrams would link his idea of freezing the Army's manpower with the Total Force concept of the DoD.

In August 1970, SecDef Melvin Laird had announced the Total Force Concept. Under this concept, all services would move manpower from the active duty force to the reserve component in an attempt to save

¹³⁶ American Military History, *The US Army in Vietnam*, 643.

¹³⁷ Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers*, 151.

¹³⁸ Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers*, 149.

¹³⁹ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 361.

¹⁴⁰ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 363.

money.¹⁴¹ This concept was continued by SecDef Schlesinger when he took office. Abrams would combine the Total Force Concept with the Golden Handshake to ensure a dependence on the reserve force.

When Abrams announced his decision to bring the Army to 16 divisions, his staff did not understand. Based on the Army decreasing its size from 1.6 million in 1966 to 780,000 in 1973, it was not manned to fully train and equip the 13 divisions, let alone 16.¹⁴² However, at the center of Abrams' plan was the promise from Schlesinger through the Golden Handshake to maintain the current Army size.

By using the Total Force Concept and the Golden Handshake, Abrams was able to obtain money for modernization and move a large portion of the Army's manpower into the reserves. According to Schlesinger's Annual Report in 1974, the Army began shifting its combat support and combat service support into the reserves.¹⁴³ Because Abrams did not have the manpower to support sixteen divisions, he divided the divisions into a combined force manned by both active duty and reserve.¹⁴⁴ In this respect, the Army could now provide the necessary strength to man sixteen divisions based on the combined strength of the 780,000-man active duty Army and the almost 400,000-man reserve force.¹⁴⁵ Abrams also knew that integrated divisions with active duty and reserve forces would be unable to operate or support themselves during a combat deployment without the mobilization of the reserve force. In contrast, Schlesinger believed another of Abrams' motivations was his understanding of the linkage between the soldier and the state.¹⁴⁶ Schlesinger believed this was a way for Abrams to

¹⁴¹ American Military History, *Rebuilding the Army: Vietnam to Desert Storm* (Army Historical Series, USA Center of Military History, 2008), 375. The shift from active duty to reserve would save money for the Department of Defense as funds for the Reserve and Guard forces are not part of the DoD's budget.

¹⁴² Department of Defense, Annual Report, 1975, 99.

¹⁴³ Department of Defense, Annual Report, 1975, 99.

¹⁴⁴ American Military History, *Rebuilding the Army*, 375.

¹⁴⁵ American Military History, *Rebuilding the Army*, 376.

¹⁴⁶ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 364.

ensure the Army was made up of a cadre of citizen soldiers, as opposed to being ruled by military elite.¹⁴⁷ In addition to the manpower savings, Schlesinger mentioned in his annual report that the cost savings to the Army from the Total Force Concept, and thereby available to Abrams for modernization, would be tremendous.¹⁴⁸

There was, however, a downside to this agreement. The active duty Army could not be used in support of a major conflict without the mobilization of the reserves. While, in Abrams' view, this may have limited exposure of the Army to a situation like the Vietnam War, it also limited the effectiveness of a smaller Army dealing with deep budget cuts.

While Abrams' relationship with Congress and with Schlesinger helped repair the civil-military relationship, his Golden Handshake worked against the relationship with the President. In Abrams' mind, he was ensuring the Army's ability to support itself during future combat operations. However, he was also demonstrating a lack of trust in the national political leadership's ability to commit forces without mobilizing the reserves.

Conclusions

Abrams' experiences and decisions as CoS provide valuable examples for future leaders. In each major problem area of the Army, *retention, parochialism and missions, modernization, and civil-military relations*, Abrams' attempted to lead the Army further away from Vietnam.

First, Abrams believed that the Army was not made up of divisions or battalions; it is made up of soldiers. When faced with a crippling retention rate and the beginning of the AVF in 1973, Abrams addressed each particular aspect of the problem. When his officer corps was

¹⁴⁷ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 364.

¹⁴⁸ Department of Defense. Annual Report, 1975. 200.

complaining about a lack of integrity throughout the system, Abrams instituted new education opportunities in professionalism and leadership. For the young soldiers, Abrams used what he could from the budget to offer increased incentives and bonuses to join or stay with the Army. Finally, for those outside the Army, Abrams increased the advertising budget by 300% to broadcast the changes to the Army and distance itself from the Vietnam War.¹⁴⁹ Believing in the soldier paid dividends in 1973, Abrams' first full year as CoS, as recruitment went up 25%, retention rose to 40%, and the Army's goals for manpower were at 112% of its yearly goals.¹⁵⁰

Next, Abrams believed the equipment a soldier used in the fight was a critical component of his strength. After the Vietnam War, the Army's budget for equipment and training dropped \$39.2 million dollars, or almost 20%, in three years.¹⁵¹ Since the Army was forced to take equipment from stateside units for the war in Vietnam, Abrams had to modernize the Army's equipment despite the budget cuts.¹⁵² Abrams modernized by allocating a 50% increase in research and development funds while he was CoS.¹⁵³ Abrams believed his small but critical contributions to the M1A1 Main Battle Tank, the AH-64 Apache, and the Patriot ABM system were important for the Army to maintain its strategic advance on the offense and defense.¹⁵⁴ These systems are all still active in the Army inventory today.

Finally, while Abrams worked to improve relations with some components of the civilian government, he acted to protect the military from others. For example, President Johnson delayed the mobilization of the reserves to preserve his domestic programs and ensure his re-

¹⁴⁹ Army Historical Summary, 1974, 53.

¹⁵⁰ Department of Defense, Annual Report, 1980. B-4.

¹⁵¹ Army Historical Summary, 1973, 32.

¹⁵² Romjue, *The Evolution of the Airland Battle Concept*, 84.

¹⁵³ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 101.

¹⁵⁴ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 335.

election.¹⁵⁵ After Johnson's decision on 31 March 1968 not to seek re-election, the reserve forces were called up, though they were limited by the Secretary of Defense, Clark Clifford to 20,000 troops, as opposed to the 54,000 troops requested.¹⁵⁶ The civilian administration's decision to delay and diminish the reserve call-up in the Vietnam War damaged the military trust in the Presidency, Abrams believed. His solutions were the Golden Handshake deal with SecDef Schlesinger and the Total Force Concept, which he used to transfer the bulk of the Army's combat power to the reserves.¹⁵⁷ Based on Abrams' apparent motivations, this could be classified today as a violation of the civilian control of the military. Although he had the best interests of the Army at heart, Abrams' allegiance was supposed to be to the US, not to the Army. In the end, his actions more closely mirrored Johnson's failure to call up the reserves than he would have liked.

The largest lessons from Abrams' tenure are his empathy with the soldier and his bias towards executive control. Like Admiral Zumwalt, Abrams is well-remembered as a general that cared about his men and women. His practices and actions concentrated on improving the Army and preventing what he perceived was the misuse of its resources. Also like Zumwalt, Abrams may have made a larger impact if his actions were based on the betterment of the military, as opposed to only the Army. Additionally, Abrams' relationship with the executive branch, and the elements of the national political leadership outside of Schlesinger, was not based on trust. Perhaps Abrams believed that the administration did not possess an adequate understanding of the military profession, as

¹⁵⁵ Currie, *The Army Reserve and Vietnam*, 78.

¹⁵⁶ Currie, *The Army Reserve and Vietnam*, 79.

¹⁵⁷ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 99. Each division was comprised of a minimum of 40% either National Guard or Reserve forces. The 25th Infantry Division included three active duty brigades, two National Guard Brigades, and one Reserve Brigade. Additionally, of the Army's seven mechanized brigades and three armored brigades, the reserve component accounted for two of the seven mechanized and two of the three armored brigades.

described by Huntington, so he attempted to alter the civil-military relationship to rectify this deficiency.¹⁵⁸ With any explanation, the principle to extract from his experience is that a leader must care for his troops, but a leader, especially a CoS, must keep the organization's larger picture in mind.



¹⁵⁸ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, 165.

Chapter 4

The USAF and General David C. Jones

It seems to me that it is very presumptuous that somebody in the military can set themselves up on a pedestal, that they have the answer to the country...This country is built on compromises and consensus. It is up to the military to make its case, and then salute smartly once that case is made.

- General David C. Jones

Introduction

This chapter examines General David C. Jones, Chief of Staff USAF from 1974 to 1978. This chapter will give a brief history of Jones' career as it related to the problems of the service. Then, it will examine the four major problems facing the US military following the Vietnam War: *retention, parochialism and missions, modernization, and civil-military relations*. Within each problem, the discussion will include the major policy initiatives he took. The final section will attempt to distill the essence of Jones' leadership record.

History - General David C. Jones

Jones' career varied between the strategic and tactical roles, giving him an understanding of many facets within the USAF. Jones began his career shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor that brought the US into WWII.¹ Over the next thirty-three years, Jones flew bombers in WWII and the Korean War and attack aircraft in Vietnam, and served as aide-de-camp to the legendary Curtis LeMay, commander of the Strategic Air

¹ Jones, David C., LtCol Maurice Maryanow, and Dr. Richard H. Kohn, "US Air Force Oral History Interview General David C. Jones." 1985-1986, 4. Cited in John Edwards, *American's Joint General* (Maxwell AFB, AL, Air University Press, 2008), 15.

Command (SAC). In each position, Jones was credited with maintaining a priority on accomplishing the mission while maintaining close contact with his subordinates.²

General Jones faced a particularly challenging environment when he commanded the 33rd Tactical Fighter Wing (TFW). Having transferred to this TAC unit from a bomber assignment with SAC, he came under the suspicion of TAC commander General Gabe Disosway. Determined to purge SAC influence from his command, General Disosway considered relieving Jones, but he was finally won over by the young general's performance and professionalism.³ Having been a top student in attack aircraft training, Jones focused on mission accomplishment through internal evaluations and competitions.⁴ Under his leadership, the 33rd TFW reached combat-ready status after only three months, twice as fast as other wings.⁵ By focusing on mission over the culture wars between SAC and TAC, Jones won the confidence and respect of General Disosway.

Jones also demonstrated his commitment to professionalism over politics in his dealings with civilian leaders, in one instance sacrificing a potential promotion opportunity from colonel to brigadier general. In October 1961, Jones was the Chief of the Manned Systems Branch within the Operations Division of the Air Staff at the Pentagon.⁶ In addition to overseeing the development and sustainment of missile assets within SAC, he was responsible for the development of the B-70 Valkyrie, a possible future replacement for the B-52. Jones constructed a brief on the program and delivered it to SecDef Robert McNamara, SecAF Eugene

² Department of Defense. "Official Air Force Personnel Records of General David C. Jones." Edited by Air Force Personnel Center: Air Force, 2008. Cited in Edwards, *Joint General*.

³ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 79. Cited in Edwards, *Joint General*, 49.

⁴ History. 33rd Tactical Fighter Wing. 30 June 1965, 5. Cited in Edwards, *Joint General*.

⁵ History. 33rd Tactical Fighter Wing. 30 June 1965, 8.

⁶ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 58. Prior to leaving the Pentagon in the summer of 1964, Jones would go on to become the Deputy Chief and Chief of the Strategic Division of the Air Staff.

Zuckert, and LeMay, the commander of SAC.⁷ Although the briefing was well received, McNamara canceled the program the following month.⁸

As the B-70 was supported by many in Congress, the House Armed Services Committee asked for a briefing on the program after receiving the cancellation notice. The representatives on the committee felt so strongly about the fate of the B-70 based on Jones' briefing, they immediately requested him to give the briefing again to the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee.⁹

After hearing of the House Armed Service committee's reaction to Jones' briefing, McNamara elected to alter the brief to better represent the data as he understood it. McNamara's changes to the briefings included charts and figures detailing the aircraft's expected costs and performance. Instead of the passion that Jones used in his original briefing, Jones was told to qualify his statements by saying "In my judgment" as opposed to speaking with any certainty.¹⁰ It is important to note, Jones did not recall that McNamara changed any factual data; McNamara merely removed speculative data that was not backed up by facts. Instead of giving his opinion, Jones was directed to give only the data that could be statistically confirmed concerning the long-term costs and performance of the B-70. Jones gave the briefing as directed.

During the briefing, however, it soon became clear that the data on the charts did not match Jones' opinions. Senator Willis Robertson asked Jones if this was the same briefing given to the House Appropriations Subcommittee. Jones answered that the briefing had

⁷ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 60.

⁸ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 61. Multiple sources recognize McNamara's insistence on canceling the program, but none mention concrete details. It is most likely that the cost benefit analysis demonstrated it would be cheaper to maintain the B-52 fleet rather than absorb the cost of a new bomb. The B-52 remains in service as of 2012, a testament to its longevity and cost effectiveness.

⁹ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 62. Jones believes it was his passion that enflamed the representatives to question the decision by McNamara to cancel the program. While Jones would continually stress his non-partisanship in the civilian decisions, he was a clear advocate of the program.

¹⁰ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 62.

been changed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense.¹¹ In Jones' opinion, this was not a direct challenge to his support of the civilian administration; he simply told the truth.¹²

Jones was an avid supporter of the B-70 program. While the adjustments to the briefing did constitute a change from the earlier version, the changes do not seem drastic. More than likely, McNamara understood Jones' support of the program and wanted to ensure that he did not use statistical data to sell the concept. Jones' reaction to McNamara's changes and his later reaction to the cancelation of the B-1 program by President Carter demonstrate his understanding of the proper civil-military relationship.¹³ While he believed he had the right to voice his opinion, he also believed it was his role to "salute smartly" and follow the direction of the civilian administration.¹⁴

During the next promotion cycle, many felt Jones was assured promotion to brigadier general. He was not promoted, and many generals at the time were quick to blame McNamara's influence on the board.¹⁵

Despite this setback, Jones was promoted in the next year's board and eventually became Chief of Staff of the USAF (CSAF). His desire for honest and open communication with civilian legislators and the members of the USAF served him throughout his career. He applied it

¹¹ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 63.

¹² USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 63. In reality, the disparity came between Jones' remarks and the data presented to the committee. While Jones would advocate a particular cost saving or force capability, the charts seemed to indicate differently. This raised the suspicion of the Senate committee to ask if changes had been made.

¹³ Although the B-70 program was canceled by President Kennedy and SecDef McNamara, General LeMay continued to fight for a new bomber for the USAF, which led to the advanced manned strategic aircraft (AMSA), also known as the B-1.

¹⁴ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 209.

¹⁵ Edgar Puryear, *American Generalship: Character Is Everything: The Art of Command*, (Presidio Publishing, CA, 2001), 34. Puryear used a number of interviews with high-ranking generals to determine Jones' probability of promotion. The strongest evidence is that given his support from within the USAF, including from the CSAF (whom he served for three years as an aide-de-camp), most officers would have been promoted. Promotion board records are sealed, and it is impossible to discern the actual reason of why he wasn't promoted at that time.

well in his years as CoS, when he faced the same problems that challenged his fellow service chiefs.¹⁶

Retention

Following the Vietnam War, each service experienced a different type of retention problem, but the symptoms were the same. These symptoms included low morale based on the experiences in the Vietnam War and a widespread public hostility to all things military. At the same time, each service was experiencing the end of the draft.

On September 28, 1971, President Nixon signed a bill into law that extended the draft for two more years and committed the military to an All-Volunteer Force in 1973.¹⁷ During Nixon's campaign for President in 1968, he had promised to end the draft if elected. Once he assumed office, President Nixon convened the Gates Commission to determine the feasibility of an all-volunteer force.¹⁸ The Gates Commission called for an all-volunteer force with a draft on standby in cases of national emergency. Following this report, the Senate and House of Representatives accepted the bill by a measure of 2:1, and President Nixon signed it into law with a two-year transition time before it took full effect.¹⁹

As Jones took the office of CSAF, the All-Volunteer Force (AVF) was in effect for all services, but the USAF's perspective on retention was significantly different. In the first year of the AVF, the strength of the USAF was 99% of its planned goal.²⁰ While some authors attribute this

¹⁶ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 160.

¹⁷ Bernard Rostker, "I Want You: Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force" (RAND Corporation Publishing, Santa Monica CA. 2006), 4.

¹⁸ Rostker, "I Want You: Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force", 4.

¹⁹ Rostker, "I Want You: Evolution of the All-Volunteer Force", 4. On August 4 1971, the House of Representative approved the bill by a vote of 297 to 108. The Senate followed a month later with a vote of 55 to 30.

²⁰ James R. Schlesinger, *Annual Defense Department Report FY 1975, 1976*, (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1975), V-8.

to a higher than normal unemployment rate in the early 1970s and others cite the specialized training available in the USAF, it could also reflect a decreased recruitment goal.²¹

However, retention in the USAF was actually decreasing in the mid-1970s. From its low point in 1970 of 16%, retention had risen to 33% in 1972.²² However, with the departure of almost 15% of the pilots in the USAF in 1973, retention fell back to 20% as Jones took office as the CSAF.²³

Pilots returning from flying in Vietnam felt particularly alienated from the military and civilian leadership of the Air Force.²⁴ The majority felt they had executed their jobs correctly in the Vietnam War, but the military and civilian leadership had led a disjointed war effort.²⁵ These pilots and others soon left the service in large numbers for better-paying jobs in the civilian airline industry.²⁶

Ron Keys captured many of the grievances, including long hours, no promotion opportunities, and lack of leadership from superiors.²⁷ Keys was a young captain stationed at Nellis AFB, Nevada, when he composed the now famous “Dear Boss” letter. The initial task given to Keys by his immediate squadron leadership was to compose a list of issues affecting young officers in the USAF.²⁸ These issues were then to be sent to the TAC commander for review. Given the expected high

²¹ Walter J. Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue: a History of the United States Air Force, 1947-2007* (New York: Thomas Dunne, 2007), 227. Boyne discusses the USAF as an organization that had always been volunteer, as most of their applicants before the All-Volunteer Force were motivated by the threat of the draft into other services.

²² HQ USAF/DPFMA, Air Force Goal/Accession History and Reenlistment Rates, 1955-2001, February 2002. Cited additionally by McRory, *AF Retention Study*, 4.

²³ HQ USAF/DPFMA, Air Force Goal/Accession History and Reenlistment Rates, 1955-2001, February 2002. Cited additionally by McRory, *AF Retention Study*, 4.

²⁴ C.R. Anderegg, *Sierra Hotel: Flying Air Force Fighters in the Decade after Vietnam* (Washington, DC: Government Reprints, 2001), 64.

²⁵ Anderegg, *Sierra Hotel*, 64.

²⁶ Anderegg, *Sierra Hotel*, 190.

²⁷ Anderegg, *Sierra Hotel*, 190. Keys mentions that each leader in his chain of command has a master's degree and various professional military education degrees, but they lack any sort of leadership skills.

²⁸ Anderegg, *Sierra Hotel*, 67.

visibility of such a list, Keys composed it in the form of a letter, which he felt best spoke to the issues facing officers in the USAF as well as voicing concerns of those who had already left the service. The letter was forwarded by the TAC commander to Jones as the CSAF.²⁹ The honest feedback convinced those in leadership positions of the declining morale and other issues affecting retention.

A key portion of retention in the years following the Vietnam War was the leadership's ability to raise the quality-of-life for those in the service. For the purposes of this discussion, quality-of-life for the military is described as compensation, medical care, housing, operations tempo, and community services.³⁰ Each of these components is linked to the morale of the force. Morale decreases as the military is unable to meet the standard-of-living in specific areas, especially compensation, medical care, or housing provided in the civilian world.³¹ Instead of increasing spending on these areas in the USAF, budget cuts forced a decrease in quality-of-life components from \$17.1 billion to \$13.1 billion from 1972-1981.³² Leadership had to address the difference in civilian and military life to make the All-Volunteer Force appealing.

With decreasing budgets and morale, Jones had to choose between addressing the issues facing the airmen or modernizing the aging air assets of the USAF. From 1966-1974, the USAF budget decreased from almost \$90 billion to \$60 billion.³³ This was also occurring while the USAF was experiencing the loss of thousands of aircraft. Although the

²⁹ Anderegg, *Sierra Hotel*, 67. General Bill Creech, the TAC commander, flew Keys out to Langley AFB, Virginia to discuss the issues in person. The combination of humor and honest feedback grabbed general's attention throughout the USAF and has been reprinted in numerous sources as an eloquent rendition of issues facing the 1970s USAF.

³⁰ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 219. Operations tempo is defined by Boyne as the amount of time personnel are expected to be away from their homes.

³¹ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 219.

³² Lewis, *USAF Budget and Posture*, 18. While these numbers may seem high for the 1970s, these numbers are slightly inflated as they represent constant FY86 dollars. Additionally, these numbers do not include retirement pay, a significant operating cost of the military.

³³ Lewis, *USAF Budget and Posture*, 11.

combat loss rate was exceptionally low, 0.4% as compared to 2% in Korea and 9% during WWII, the loss of over 2200 aircraft throughout the Vietnam War forced the USAF to spend money replacing airplanes instead of modernizing the fleet or improving conditions for airmen.³⁴ Although Jones could have devoted a portion of the budget to aircraft modernization and a portion to personnel, he made force modernization his priority. Jones decided to improve the quality of the people and their lives through education opportunities.

Jones believed the USAF was a technologically dependent force, making its future dependent on the quality of its recruits. Based on the institution of the All-Volunteer Force, each service developed specific recruitment requirements to maintain its necessary manpower levels. For example, to meet these requirements, the Army began allowing applicants from lower-scoring mental- and physical-health categories.³⁵ Jones decided instead to raise the USAF standard.³⁶ As Jones later wrote in *Air Force Magazine*, less than one percent of his recruits scored below average on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.³⁷ To still meet his recruitment quotas despite higher standards, Jones developed educational programs for those in the service. It was his view that this would help to retain current airmen and also attract new recruits interested in educational opportunities. Such recruits could likely meet the needs of the technologically dependent Air Force while helping to avoid the less qualified applicants filling the Army's rolls.³⁸

Jones increased education opportunities for all ranks, including

³⁴ John Schlight, *A War Too Long: The USAF in Southeast Asia 1961-1975* (UP of Pacific, 2004), 103.

³⁵ James Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers* (Brassey, Washington, Potomac, 1997), 126. In addition, President Johnson had started Project 100,000 as a component of his Great Society Plan. Under this plan, poor and underprivileged youths would be allowed in the military despite lower intellectual and physical abilities.

³⁶ David C. Jones, "The Air Force is a Way of Life." *Air Force Magazine*, May 1977.

³⁷ Jones, "The Air Force is a Way of Life." *Air Force Magazine*, May 1977.

³⁸ Jones, Oral History Interview, 161.

under-graduate and high school programs.³⁹ These initiatives created an atmosphere of self-improvement and education within the Air Force. For example, Jones improved the availability of quality education within the Air Force with the Community College of the AF (CCAF). The school was originally envisioned as a professional military education tool for enlisted members of the Air Force.⁴⁰ Jones wanted this school to provide benefits to the entire force. Therefore, he worked to gain CCAF accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.⁴¹ Jones sought accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools most likely based on the CCAF's location at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. The CCAF would allow officer or enlisted job training, and other professional military education, to be used towards an accredited under-graduate or even graduate degree.⁴² Jones believed it was the duty of the USAF to offer the chance for improvement to all airmen.⁴³ As evidenced by the increase in officer and enlisted education levels, the airmen of the USAF took advantage of Jones' efforts.

Category	1976	1977	1978	1979	1976-1979 Improvement
Officers without bachelor degrees	5.6%	3.4%	2.3%	1.7%	330%
Enlisted members without high school diploma ⁶³	7.4%	5.3%	1.3%	1.3%	569%

Figure 15. Officer and Enlisted Education Levels 1976-1979

Source: Air Almanac, *Air Force Magazine*, 1976-1979

By 1978, the retention rate in the USAF had risen to 40% from its

³⁹ Jones, *Air Force Magazine*, May 1978.

⁴⁰ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 232.

⁴¹ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 232.

⁴² Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 232. The CCAF was finally accredited in 1980 while Jones worked with other services to incorporate civilian credit into military colleges.

⁴³ Jones, *Air Force Magazine*, May 1978.

low of 20% in 1973.⁴⁴ Not all of the credit belongs to Jones and his education efforts as CSAF. During this time, economic factors such as decreased hiring in the civilian airline industry convinced pilots who might have otherwise left the service to remain.⁴⁵ Jones' programs addressed education within the enlisted and officer corps. Jones' beliefs in the importance of people and their quality-of-life led to an increase of over 300% and 550% in both the officer and enlisted levels of education respectively, according to the Air Almanac from the *Air Force Magazine* from 1976-1979. However, as is possible with the Air Force today, some sources quote this rise in retention as a result of the downturn in economic conditions.⁴⁶

Parochialism - Missions

General John Ryan, CSAF from 1969-1973, believed that US withdrawal from Vietnam would allow the USAF to focus on its top mission in the Cold War, nuclear deterrence.⁴⁷ Under Ryan's leadership, the USAF pushed to maintain strategic superiority against the Soviet Union by expanding the quality and quantity of its strategic bombers and placing multiple, independently targeted, reentry vehicles (MIRVs) on its Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs).⁴⁸ This push was in response to a build-up by the Soviet Union that was perceived to threaten the US's strategic advantage by 1970.⁴⁹ In the previous three years, from 1967 to 1970, the Soviet Union's strategic missile arsenal

⁴⁴ HQ USAF/DPFMA, Air Force Goal/Accession History and Reenlistment Rates, 1955-2001, February 2002.

⁴⁵ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 233.

⁴⁶ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 223.

⁴⁷ Michael Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals: the Problem of Air Force Leadership, 1945-1982* (University of Michigan Library, 1998), 211.

⁴⁸ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 211. The MIRV (pronounced "merv") described the capability to place multiple nuclear warheads inside of one missile. This greatly improved survivability and effectiveness against Soviet defense systems and targeting problems.

⁴⁹ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 211.

had grown from 340 missiles to over 1,000.⁵⁰ Ryan finished his term as CSAF in July 1973. General George Brown, Ryan's replacement and Jones' predecessor, served only a year before being elevated to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Jones succeeded him as CoS of the Air Force in July 1974.⁵¹ Under Brown and Jones, the USAF broadened its focus outside of nuclear deterrence to include other aspects of airpower, such as conventional deterrence and conventional coercion.⁵² Jones' primary focus in broadening these missions was to include other services.

Following the Vietnam War, the USAF slowly embraced a more balanced conception of airpower, which entailed a relative decrease in the emphasis on strategic bombing. As was true with Admiral Zumwalt, General Jones attracted considerable internal opposition on this point. Some strategic bombing advocates believed that a focus on tactical airpower was akin to dividing airpower amongst the other services, thereby blunting its effects.⁵³ In addition, these same advocates believed the strategic forces would be capable of responding to any conventional threat, as they had done in Vietnam.⁵⁴ Despite these protests, the needs of the tactical community during the Vietnam War shifted the preponderance of pilots from SAC to TAC.⁵⁵ In comparison to the payload of a strategic bomber, it requires far more aircraft, and therefore pilots, to accomplish the same effects with fighter aircraft. In 1974, there were almost 3,000 attack/fighter aircraft in the inventory, as opposed to

⁵⁰ Robert Frank Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine* (New York: Ayer Co Pub, 1980), 336.

⁵¹ General Brown only served as the CSAF for one year after being called up to serve as the Chairman of the JCS. This replacement was on the normal timeline for the CJCS, but the USAF's timeline was not aligned to allow Brown the ability to serve a full term.

⁵² Worden, *Rise of the Fighter General*, 216.

⁵³ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter General*, 157.

⁵⁴ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter General*, 157. Amazingly, this is the same argument that led to the rise of SAC following WWII. The USAF's experiences in Korea and Vietnam had not influenced these SAC advocates to appreciate the limits of strategic airpower against a conventional or irregular force. Additionally, strategic bombing enthusiasts felt that more close air support would decrease USAF autonomy and increase the Army's stake in the employment of airpower.

⁵⁵ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter General*, 187.

less than 1,000 bombers.⁵⁶ Therefore, as this requirement grew, so did the number of TAC fighter pilots.

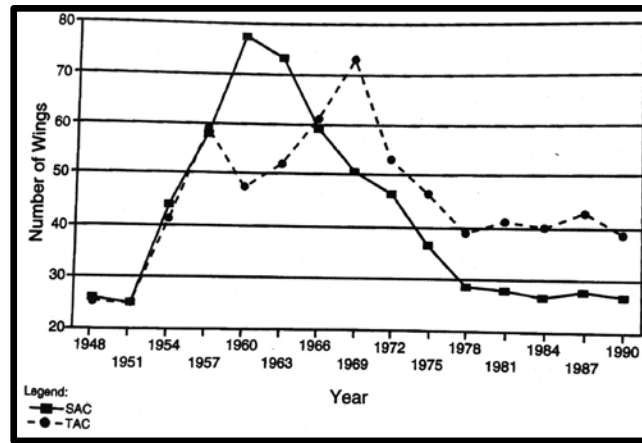


Figure 16. Number of Air Force Wings

Source: HQ USAF, *USAF Statistical Digest, FY 1948-1990*,
 Worden, *Rise of the Fighter General*, 189.

Jones was the first fighter CoS in what would later become known as the 'rise of the fighter generals.' Although Jones had a bomber background, he is remembered in most literature as a fighter general. Since 1961, all but one of the CSAFs had come from a bomber background.⁵⁷ From Jones' tenure to 2008, there was only one CSAF from a bomber community; the rest had a fighter background.⁵⁸ Interestingly, during this same time period from Jones until today, there has also only been one CSAF who went on to be Chairman of the JCS, not including Jones.⁵⁹ Before Jones, 30% of the Chairmen of the JCS had been from the USAF. Since the rise of the fighter community, this number has fallen to 10%. This suggests a possible parallel between the rise of the fighter general and the decline of the USAF's appeal to be chosen as the CJCS.

⁵⁶ Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals*, 188.

⁵⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff, "History of the JCS," edited by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1974-2010.

⁵⁸ Joint Chiefs of Staff, "History of the JCS," edited by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1974-2010.

⁵⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, "History of the JCS," edited by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1974-2010.

As a CSAF that had flown in both the SAC and TAC realms, he represented a transitional figure, attuned to the past and possible future missions and training requirements of the USAF. Based on his choices in training and integration, Jones had the whole DoD in mind for the future, not just the USAF.

Instead of developing capabilities within the USAF alone, Jones worked with both the Army and Navy to build a more integrated and capable military. Throughout the Cold War, all three services had engaged in an often-bitter rivalry over roles, missions, and assets. The Air Force and Navy had fought since the end of WWII on the nature of the national force structure and the assignment of the strategic nuclear mission.⁶⁰ The services disagreed on which assets were best suited to perform missions of strategic deterrence and force projection.⁶¹ With the Army, the Air Force had disagreements concerning the development and control of close-air-support assets.⁶² While the Air Force believed in centralized control of air assets, ranging from strategic to tactical, the Army wanted tactical control to be in the hands of ground commanders. Jones' efforts to integrate the doctrine of these services yielded great results with the Army and the Navy.

For both services, Jones stressed the development of integration

⁶⁰ Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals: the Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945-1950* (Brassey, Washington: Brasseys Publications, 1998), 24. General animosity has always existed between the services, but the disagreement detailed in *The Revolt of the Admirals* concerns the cancelation of the naval super-carrier program in favor of the USAF's B-36 program. The actual 'revolt' was based on this dispute and led to many admirals resigning. While this simple budget fight was a prelude to the battle over the strategic nuclear mission, it set the tone for future service interactions.

⁶¹ While the AF relied on the strategic bomber force, the Navy believed the aircraft carrier could perform the same mission against more robust threats, which would preclude the use of USAF bombers. Both sides were eventually included in the national strategy of nuclear deterrence. In the formation of the nation's nuclear triad, the USAF had control of two portions, the bombers and ICBM force, while the Navy had control of the submarine-based ballistic missile force.

⁶² Ian Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry And Air Power In The Vietnam War* (Fort Leavenworth: CreateSpace, 2006), 76. The main beginning of this disagreement, apart from the separation of the USAF from the Army, was the difference of opinion dictated by the control of air assets assigned to close support missions and army aviation capabilities. See Chapter 1 for a further discussion of the Howze and Disosway Boards.

efforts to improve capabilities in a time of declining budgets. In the years following the Vietnam War, other services were exceptionally sensitive with respect to their budgets.⁶³ Overall budgets had decreased for each service, except for the Navy, and they all guarded their declining resources jealously.⁶⁴ In 1965, the USAF had claimed 40% of the national defense budget, while the Navy and Army received 30% and 25% respectively.⁶⁵ From 1965 to 1986, the services' budget distribution averaged out to 34% for the USAF, 30% for the Navy, and 25% for the Army.⁶⁶ Even as the percentages remained mostly unchanged for that twenty-year period, the overall DOD budget declined \$31 billion dollars in constant 1986-dollars.⁶⁷ Therefore, it was critical for each service to guard programs and capabilities to maintain a hold on each portion of the budget.

Based on the declining budget, Jones understood the necessity of working together with the Army towards a common goal, especially in regions like Europe, where the threat was a conventional ground war with the Soviet Union.⁶⁸ The Army expressed an opinion similar to Jones' in FM 100-5, Operations, stating, "The Army cannot win the land battle without the Air Force."⁶⁹ Before Jones took over as the CSAF, General Brown worked closely with the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) to properly integrate the efforts of the air and land components.⁷⁰ Jones became a primary advocate of these changes, championing the development of both doctrine and specific aircraft to

⁶³ Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers*, 152.

⁶⁴ Department of the Navy, *Forecasted Naval Budget, 1969-1973* Navy Historical Center, Washington Naval Yard, 20374. <http://www.history.navy.mil/library/online/budget.htm>

⁶⁵ Lewis, *The USAF Budget and Posture over Time*, 15.

⁶⁶ Lewis, *The USAF Budget and Posture over Time*, 15.

⁶⁷ Lewis, *The USAF Budget and Posture over Time*, 11.

⁶⁸ Worden, *Rise of Fighter Generals*, 222.

⁶⁹ US Army Field Manual FM 100-5, 8-1. Cited by Worden, 222. This manual is seen as the end-product of numerous efforts from both the Army and Air Force to develop a properly integrated tactical agreement.

⁷⁰ Worden, *Rise of Fighter Generals*, 222.

suit the emerging integration.

In September 1975, Jones said the primary role for the USAF in Europe was close air support and air superiority.⁷¹ The Air Force worked with Army leadership in the development of Air-Land Battle the new doctrine for conventional ground warfare.⁷² Airland Battle doctrine was a shift from the Active Defense developed by the Army in 1976.⁷³ The main changes shifted the doctrine from a defensive to an offensive focus, highlighted maneuver above attrition, and brought back the operational reserve to Army doctrine.⁷⁴ The title “Airland battle” emphasized the need for close integration of Army and USAF assets. Although close air support remained a USAF mission, the Army retained its own organic air assets in the form of attack helicopters.⁷⁵ TRADOC formalized this publication as a means of including the efforts of both services from mission planning through execution.⁷⁶

Jones also worked with the Navy to develop the USAF’s contribution to sea control. Sea control, a Navy mission, entails being in command of the surface, subsurface, and airspace above a specified body of water.⁷⁷ Although the Navy had its own aviation assets, Jones understood that the AF, with its greater air assets, could contribute to the overall mission.⁷⁸ Working with CNO Admiral James Holloway, Jones assigned various assets within SAC, including the B-52, to

⁷¹ Jones, *Air Force Magazine*, September 1975. Cited by Edwards, *Joint General*, 74.

⁷² Jones, *Air Force Magazine*, September 1975. As discussed in Chapter 4, the Army played the primary role in the initial development of AirLand Battle Doctrine. However, its eventual success would not have been possible without the inputs and concessions from the USAF, the force that would make it possible.

⁷³ Romjue, *The Evolution of the Airland Battle Concept*, 24.

⁷⁴ Romjue, *The Evolution of the Airland Battle Concept*, 24. The initiative to bring back the operational reserve into Army doctrine meshed with Abrams’ policy of integrating the reserves into active Army units.

⁷⁵ Horwood, *Interservice Rivalry in the Vietnam War*, 189.

⁷⁶ Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers*, 175.

⁷⁷ Department of the Navy, *Naval Forces Vietnam, Monthly Historical Summary*. April 1977, 2.

⁷⁸ Jones, *Air Force Magazine*, Nov 1976, 1.

perform sea-control missions.⁷⁹ B-52s eventually became adept at aerial surveillance, mine laying, and other sea-control missions.⁸⁰ On 2 September 1975, Jones signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Admiral Holloway committing the Air Force to train for sea-control missions including electronic warfare, attack against surface units, and aerial mine-laying.⁸¹ Again, Jones' position as a transitional leader for the USAF was cemented in his ability to convince skeptical SAC commanders to embrace these missions. While SAC Commander General Russell Dougherty originally opposed the idea, Jones finally converted him.⁸² After examining the idea, Dougherty was forced to admit that SAC had capabilities that would be of great value to the Navy, although he worried that the actual sharing would still be very difficult.⁸³ In the end, Jones directed the development of training relationships, exercises, and a set of standard operating procedures between the Navy and USAF.⁸⁴ Additionally, Jones' first MOA with one of his sister services set off a flurry of MOAs between the USAF and Navy that continued after Jones' time in office.⁸⁵ General Charles Gabriel, Jones' successor as CSAF, used an MOA to establish a Navy-USAF training regime in multiple areas of responsibility.⁸⁶

The idea for better training started in the Vietnam War, where pilots began to recognize a drastic difference between combat and training; it would eventually be known as Red Flag. The initial thought was based on the adage from Vietnam that if a pilot could survive his first ten missions, his chances of surviving and contributing to the fight

⁷⁹ Jones, *Air Force Magazine*, Nov 1976, 1.

⁸⁰ Robert Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine* (New York: Ayer Co Pub, 1980), 536.

⁸¹ Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine*, 536.

⁸² Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine*, 537.

⁸³ Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine*, 537. The concept of the B-52 contributing to sea control missions was fought for numerous commanders of SAC. The commander that replaced Dougherty, General Richard Ellis, believed that the use of the B-52 in Navy missions was a detriment to its nuclear deterrence mission.

⁸⁴ Jones, *Air Force Magazine*, Nov 1976, 1.

⁸⁵ Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine*. 539.

⁸⁶ Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine*. 539.

went up drastically.⁸⁷ Therefore, pilots wanted the chance to fly those first ten missions in training, before combat. From that idea, the Red Flag exercise was born.⁸⁸ Red Flag was envisioned to be an ideal training exercise against realistic targets and threats, including the opportunity to plan with pilots from other squadrons.

The concept for Red Flag came from Air Force Captain James Suter. While assigned to Nellis AFB in the late 1960s, Suter imagined a realistic war game, but he was unable to gain support for his ideas.⁸⁹ In 1972, however, Suter was assigned to the Pentagon, where access to high-ranking individuals from all the services allowed him to sell the concept.⁹⁰

While Suter's initial leadership did not initially agree on the program, Jones learned of it through the Suter's briefs to the Army.⁹¹ Suter's original plan had been to brief the TAC staff, all the way up the chain of command to the TAC commander, General Robert Dixon. After being rebuffed several levels down the chain of command, Suter took his plans to the Army. He briefed Army Chief of Staff General Frederick Weyand, who took the concept to Jones. Jones loved the plan and directed Suter to immediately brief it to TAC. Although not responsible for the idea's birth, Jones is a major reason of why the plan was re-born after defeat in the USAF chain of command.⁹²

Red Flag was an instant success. Over 500 crews trained within the first six months.⁹³ This training allowed pilots to fly against realistic threats; the potential advantage to other services was immediately

⁸⁷ Anderegg, *Sierra Hotel*, 90. Although the 'ten-mission rule' was a common belief, most sources describe it as a cliché more than fact.

⁸⁸ Anderegg, *Sierra Hotel*, 92.

⁸⁹ Lt Col James Slife, *Creech Blue: Gen Bill Creech and the Reformation of the Tactical Air Forces, 1978-1984* (Maxwell AFA, AL, Air University Press, 2004), 19.

⁹⁰ Slife, *Creech Blue*, 19.

⁹¹ Slife, *Creech Blue*, 93.

⁹² Slife, *Creech Blue*, 16.

⁹³ Boyne, *Air Force Magazine*, Nov, 2000, 46.

apparent to Jones.⁹⁴ Jones saw Red Flag as a way to increase integration among other services and ensure that all forces were properly trained. In a letter to the USMC Commandant, Jones said, “I believe Red Flag is an important first step in placing *our tactical forces* on the leading edge of war readiness.”(emphasis added)⁹⁵ With Jones’ support, Red Flag became the training ground for assets from each service, and it remains that way today.⁹⁶

Jones stressed the needs of the nation above the promotion of his service. AirLand Battle, the new sea-control training events, and Red Flag represent rare and positive instances of inter-service cooperation following the Vietnam War. In contrast, whereas Zumwalt focused primarily on the Navy’s core missions, Jones worked to enhance cooperation between the services and thereby improve the capabilities of all. His work decreased parochialism and provided effective integration for the entire Department of Defense.

Modernization

During the Vietnam War, the USAF was forced to spend an average of \$13 billion dollars from its budget to account for aircraft losses.⁹⁷ As the war wound down and finally ended, the Air Force budget for research and development of new aircraft shrank from \$9 billion from 1962-1966 to \$5 billion from 1972-1976.⁹⁸ According to Secretary of the USAF John Stetson, the decade from 1966-1976 witnessed a decrease by half in the USAF’s ability to secure new assets.⁹⁹ Yet despite this adverse

⁹⁴ Walter Boyne, *Air Force Magazine*, 46.

⁹⁵ Jones, Letter from CSAF to USMC CC, 16 Jan 76. Cited in Edwards, 71.

⁹⁶ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 69. At a current day Red Flag, squadrons can expect to devote a portion of their training to time-sensitive-targeting and Close Air Support in the context of a counterinsurgency effort.

⁹⁷ Lewis, *The US Air Force Budget and Posture*, 27.

⁹⁸ Lewis, *The US Air Force Budget and Posture*, 27.

⁹⁹ John Stetson, SecAF, *Air Force Magazine*, 1977.

environment, Jones was able to begin plans for the USAF of the future.

Jones worked on providing the necessary budget to aircraft currently coming online while still allocating other scarce dollars towards research and development of possible future aircraft. The E-3 Sentry, also known as the Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) first began testing in October 1975 based on Jones' self-proclaimed zealotry over it.¹⁰⁰ When the AWACS program faced cancelation due to other initiatives, including a ground-based mobile air-defense system, Jones convinced Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger to retain the AWACS as the USAF's primary defense system.¹⁰¹ The AWACS is still in use today for both early-warning, deconfliction of airborne aircraft, and communications relay. During this time, there was also a debate regarding the proper allocation of the Air Force's budget for future fighters. Jones had previously supported higher-cost fighters such as the F-15E, while SecDef Schlesinger supported a lower-cost fighter such as the F-16, often called the lightweight fighter.¹⁰² When Schlesinger asked Jones in mid-1975 what it would take for the USAF to support a lower-cost fighter, as opposed to the higher-cost variant, Jones saw an opportunity to expand his force structure in an era of declining budgets and forces.¹⁰³ He answered that he could support the lightweight fighter if the SecDef increased the force structure of the Air Force by four additional wings of aircraft.¹⁰⁴ Schlesinger and Jones shook on it, and the USAF gained both the four additional wings and the F-16 Flying Falcon, but the USAF also paid for this increase by the delay of the F-

¹⁰⁰ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 247.

¹⁰¹ James R. Schlesinger, *Annual Defense Department Report FY 1975, 1976*, (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1975), 69.

¹⁰² Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 248.

¹⁰³ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 248. This question came at a time of great debate within the USAF concerning high-cost fighters such as the F-15E Strike Eagle and the low-cost fighters such as the F-16 Flying Falcon. Jones had previously demonstrated the intent to budget accordingly to begin production on the F-15E, but he saw this question as an invitation from the SecDef to expand his force without directly asking for more personnel or funds.

¹⁰⁴ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 248.

15E development until the early to mid-1980s.¹⁰⁵ Finally, Jones also worked with William Perry, Director of the Defense Advanced Research Agency, to initiate the “Have Blue” stealth program.¹⁰⁶ Have Blue was the prototype for what became the F-117 Stealth Fighter.¹⁰⁷

Jones pursued Air Force modernization in some unconventional realms. In the late 1970s, the USAF was already thinking about military conflict in space. Jones issued a letter on the USAF’s space policy and included issues such as weapons-systems development and military operations in space as being among the USAF’s most critical future concerns.¹⁰⁸ His prescience was demonstrated the next year when President Jimmy Carter released a Presidential Directive that highlighted the military’s role in the future of space operations.¹⁰⁹ Additionally, Jones also created the Checkmate strategy team as a division of the Air Directorate of Plans in the Pentagon. The successor to this team would go on to plan the air war against Iraq in 1991.¹¹⁰

While Jones did not list modernization as a primary goal, nor discuss it as a major issue while in office, he record speaks to the magnitude of changes he was able to oversee. Despite a 50% decrease in his research and development budget, Jones began plans and brought others to fruition for aircraft that still fly today.¹¹¹

Civil-Military Relations

After the Vietnam War, a common perception within the Air Force

¹⁰⁵ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 248.

¹⁰⁶ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 247.

¹⁰⁷ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 247.

¹⁰⁸ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 270. The role of the military in the development of space and the use of space-based weapons is still discussed at the highest levels today.

¹⁰⁹ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 270.

¹¹⁰ Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 292.

¹¹¹ Lewis, *The US Air Force Budget and Posture*, 27.

was that civilians had not allowed the USAF to win.¹¹² Leaders throughout the USAF believed that unrestricted bombing against the North Vietnamese earlier in the war could have ended the war much sooner. At the same time, civilian leaders believed that earlier unrestricted bombing might have led to an expanded conflict involving either China or the Soviet Union. Jones believed that this difference of opinion was continuing to poison civil-military relations and he undertook to renew the Air Force's commitment to civilian control of the military.¹¹³

As Jones took office as Chief of Staff, President Nixon was in the final days of his fight to hold onto office in the Watergate scandal.¹¹⁴ Jones was just one month into his term when President Nixon resigned in August 1974, and Vice-President Gerald Ford became the President. Ford had high esteem for the military and worked more closely with his service chiefs than his immediate predecessors had.¹¹⁵ Ford had a "warm spot in his heart for the military," and Jones was able to use this in building a relationship with the President.¹¹⁶ Jones used this collegiality to understand the President's guidance, not to attempt to curry favor in decision-making or funding.

In contrast, President Jimmy Carter entered office in January 1977 less sympathetic to the military because of his perception of the Vietnam War.¹¹⁷ Jones remembers feeling compelled to inform the new president as clearly as he could about the current state of the military and its future.¹¹⁸ Unfortunately, much of the time he spent with the president was perceived in some quarters as currying favor for the B-1 program.

¹¹² Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldiers*, 56.

¹¹³ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 178.

¹¹⁴ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 139. Jones discusses the limited access he and the other service chiefs had to President Nixon in the final days of his presidency.

¹¹⁵ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 201.

¹¹⁶ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 201.

¹¹⁷ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 218.

¹¹⁸ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 218.

The B-1 grew out of the ashes of the B-70, cancelled by SecDef Robert McNamara when Jones was promoting it before Congress. The USAF still claimed it needed a faster, more capable strategic bomber to replace the B-52.¹¹⁹ To develop the requirements of a new bomber, Jones, then a colonel, and LtCol Jim Allen conducted a six-month study in 1963 known as the Advanced Manned Strategic Aircraft (AMSA) study.¹²⁰ These requirements eventually became the core capabilities of the B-1.¹²¹ Based on Jones' requirements, the USAF issued a request-for-proposal (RFP) that gathered designs and information concerning a new bomber.¹²² Rockwell International won the contract to build a prototype for the B-1 in June 1970.¹²³

The B-1 was plagued with cost overruns throughout its initial development. As Rockwell began building its prototype in 1970, the USAF became concerned about cost overruns due to the increasing cost of the aircraft's avionics, radar, and countermeasures.¹²⁴ During the course of these discussions, Rockwell decreased the number of planned prototypes from 5 to 2 and slipped its production schedule by over a year.¹²⁵ Finally, in an attempt to bring the program back on track, John McLucas, the Secretary of the USAF, set up an independent review panel in August 1973 to determine new cost saving measures.¹²⁶ Despite the

¹¹⁹ Nick Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder: Money, Politics, and the B-1 Bomber* (Princeton Univ Pr, 1989), 35.

¹²⁰ USAF Oral History Interview - Jones, 64.

¹²¹ Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 111.

¹²² Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 48. The original company behind the B-70, North American Aviation, had developed many successful lessons learned concerning the structure, capabilities, and payload of a new bomber. Rockwell successfully integrated these lessons learned into their plans for the B-1.

¹²³ John McLucas, and Lawrence R. Benson, *Reflections of a Technocrat: Managing Defense, Air, and Space Programs During the Cold War* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air UP., 2006), 130.

¹²⁴ McLucas, Benson, *Reflections of a Technocrat*, 131.

¹²⁵ McLucas, Benson, *Reflections of a Technocrat*, 131.

¹²⁶ McLucas, Benson, *Reflections of a Technocrat*, 131. The job of the panel was to determine the way forward for the B-1. Their report identified numerous risks regarding the B-1's future development and concluded it needed more development, testing, and funding.

fact that expected costs for the 240-bomber fleet had risen from \$11 billion dollars to \$19 billion dollars during development, Rockwell rolled the first B-1 off the line on 26 October 1974.¹²⁷

Costs of the B-1 after its initial roll-out ceremony spiraled out of control. Soon after Jones became CSAF, SecDef Schlesinger told him the B-1 was a viable program until the costs reached \$100 million per aircraft.¹²⁸ Soon, after still more modifications for increased speed and nuclear shielding, the costs increased to almost exactly \$100 million per aircraft.¹²⁹ Then, the USAF decreased its planned fleet size from 240 to below 200, which resulted in an increase in cost per aircraft above the ceiling of \$100 million.¹³⁰ In response to these increases and rising inflation, President Jimmy Carter chose to cancel the B-1 program in June 1977.¹³¹

Jones did not appeal or publicly fight against this decision.¹³² After supporting the bomber for years, from the B-70 through the design and testing of the B-1, Jones changed course and bowed to the intolerable cost increases based on the direction given by SecDef Schlesinger. While Jones still believed the USAF needed this new bomber, he could not countenance the increased cost above the SecDef's given limit. Representative William Chappell, a member of the House Defense Appropriations Committee and supporter of the B-1, was furious

¹²⁷ Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 118. However, it would not reach the operational inventory until 1 October 1986. Even then, USAF was forced to admit it had several technical issues that prevented it from being mission ready. These figures represent constant 1988 dollars.

¹²⁸ Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 119. These figures, in contrast to the \$19 billion dollars for development, are in 1974 dollars.

¹²⁹ Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 121.

¹³⁰ McLucas, *Reflections of a Technocrat*, 132.

¹³¹ McLucas, *Reflections of a Technocrat*, 132.

¹³² Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 173. What Jones also knew was that the plan for the USAF called for keeping the four existing B-1s in service for testing. This proved fortuitous as President Reagan decided to procure 100 B-1s in 1981 to provide a modern bomber until the B-2 Stealth Bomber was on-line.

with Jones' perceived lack of support for the program.¹³³ It is possible that Representative Chappell did not understand or receive the guidance from Schlesinger concerning the cost limitation. But Jones also understood that no single platform was indispensable to the Air Force.¹³⁴ His decision to quietly accept the President's decision cemented his position as a transitional figure away from the 'bomber-mafia' and towards better civil-military relations.

A common cry from the bomber leadership, including the SAC commander, following the cancelation of the B-1 was that Jones was not insubordinate enough.¹³⁵ Nick Kotz described Jones' response in the following passage: "The commander-in-chief had made a decision. As long as Jones served as chief of staff, the USAF would follow and respect that decision. It would not attempt, publicly or secretly, to undermine the President in Congress. Nor would it collaborate with any congressional attempt to overrule the decision. Jones would testify in support of the President's decision even though he disagreed with it."¹³⁶ When Jones was later appointed Chairman of the JCS by President Carter, the leadership of SAC denounced Jones' as having sacrificed the B-1 to his own personal ambition.¹³⁷ Writing in the *Washington Post*, former SecDef James Schlesinger came down on Jones' side. He believed that "debasing general officers for the decisions, judgments or efforts of their civilian superiors is an act of cowardice and spite."¹³⁸ Many, however, felt that Jones should have resigned in protest.

Jones did not believe in resignation in protest. In July 1981, Army

¹³³ Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 172. Chappell was a representative for Florida that would gain or lose thousands of jobs based on the decision to continue or cancel the B-1 program.

¹³⁴ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 218.

¹³⁵ James R. Schlesinger, "The Charge against General Jones." *Washington Post* 1 January 1981, 1.

¹³⁶ Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 173.

¹³⁷ Schlesinger, "The Charge against General Jones," 1.

¹³⁸ Schlesinger, "The Charge against General Jones," 1.

General Volney Warner retired in protest of decisions made by the SecDef and the JCS regarding the national command structure.¹³⁹ General Warner was attempting to reorganize a command within the Army to be closer to its operational areas¹⁴⁰ When this request was denied by the Secretary of the Defense, General Warner retired and began a campaign denouncing the civilian administration and the JCS for its lack of support. General Warner believed that by making his views on the structure of the military public, he could help demonstrate how in need of reorganization the military was based on internal strife and reporting issues.¹⁴¹ Unfortunately, this message was lost in Warner's other criticisms of the JCS and Warner lost credibility in Jones' eyes.

Jones believed an officer could resign in protest if called upon to do something immoral or directed to follow an ill-advised order without the chance to voice his or her objections.¹⁴² In his case, Jones felt he had his day with the President and he stood ready to support the President's decision. He felt it was presumptuous of an officer to place himself on a pedestal and claim to be the only member of the government who knows the correct answer. Jones believed that the keys to success in civil-military relations were compromise and consensus.¹⁴³ It was wrong, he felt, to resign in protest and criticize from outside the service while still claiming an insider's mantle of knowledge and authority. This "is what democracy is all about," he said. "I can disagree, but it's different from criticizing."¹⁴⁴

Jones would continue his focus on civil-military relations while in the office of the CJCS until 1982 and during his retirement. His focus

¹³⁹ Richard Halloran, "Penetrating the Pentagon." *New York Times* 18 April, 1982.

¹⁴⁰ Halloran, "Penetrating the Pentagon." *New York Times* 18 April, 1982. Warner believed the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force should be under a command in the Pacific or Europe as most of the units he trained were going to these locations.

¹⁴¹ Halloran, "Penetrating the Pentagon." *New York Times* 18 April, 1982.

¹⁴² USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 178.

¹⁴³ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 179.

¹⁴⁴ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 184.

on joint advancements for the DoD would eventually lead to one of the greatest joint ventures in the military, the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986.¹⁴⁵ In doing so, he helped repair the damage done to civil-military relations during the Vietnam era.

Conclusion

Jones' leadership for the USAF through the middle 1970s can serve as an example for future leaders. In each major problem area of the Air Force, *retention, parochialism and missions, modernization, and civil-military relations*, Jones' addressed his service's specific problems and the larger issues faced by the Department of Defense in general. His primary leadership tenets were: the battle will be a joint affair, the USAF is a technologically dependent force that demands modernization, and good civil-military relations are critical in war and peace.

As the initial CoS in the 'rise of the fighter generals,' Jones often found himself at odds with entrenched leadership within the USAF, especially those in SAC. His background as both a bomber and fighter pilot allowed him to speak to both groups with credibility. Additionally, this broad understanding of the variety of Air Force missions prepared him for the consensus required when dealing with other services.

Jones' largest contribution during his time as the CSAF was encouraging integration across multiple services. Prior to Jones' tenure, the bomber community had held the role of the CSAF almost since the birth of the USAF. During that time, the fledgling service experienced service rivalries with both Army and Navy.¹⁴⁶ As the first CSAF with

¹⁴⁵ House, *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986* (Washington, DC: GPO, 1986. Public Law 99-433), 1. Jones fought for a reorganization of the CJCS prior to his retirement and fought effectively for the Goldwater-Nichols Act after he left office.

¹⁴⁶ Jeffrey G. Barlow, *Revolt of the Admirals: the Fight for Naval Aviation, 1945-1950* (Brassey, Washington: Brasseys Publications, 1998), 85. Horwood. *Interservice Rivalry*, 173.

more than a bomber background in 17 years, Jones understood the joint nature of warfare and sought to integrate the other services' interests and abilities with those of the Air Force. From pushing against the SAC commander for B-52s to perform sea control to inviting the Marines to participate in Red Flag, the betterment of the DoD rested higher in Jones' mind than the needs of the USAF.

Next, while Jones never stated modernization was a priority during his time as CSAF, he pushed research, development, and deployment of assets still in the inventory today. Despite reduced funding for research and development, he helped launch the program that led to the F117 Stealth Fighter. He also was able to increase the force structure within the USAF by agreeing with SecDef Schlesinger on the initial deployment of the F-16 Fighting Falcon. These assets, and other advances such as space policy, AWACS, and the Checkmate planning cell, are still used by the USAF today.

Finally, Jones set the standard for civil-military relations in the post-Vietnam era. After the cancelation of the B-1 program, Jones was encouraged by other military and civilian leaders to protest the decision by President Carter. Jones believed that protesting a legal order from the Commander-in-Chief was against the basic code of being an officer in the US military.¹⁴⁷ Jones believed that Carter had heard his reasons for keeping the B-1, and after the decision, it was Jones' job to support him. He felt that officers who resigned in protest misunderstood their role in civil-military relations and had an almost egotistical view of their part in it; Jones believed that the civil-military relationship was built on compromise and consensus.¹⁴⁸ He believed in the separation of the civilians and the military, and he defined the role of the military member in the relationship with the President.¹⁴⁹ Jones best defined this role by

¹⁴⁷ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 178.

¹⁴⁸ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 179.

¹⁴⁹ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 184.

saying:

It seems to me that it is very presumptuous that somebody in the military can set themselves up on a pedestal, that they have the answer to the country, that the President who has just been elected on a platform of cutting the defense budget, is somehow so wrong that we are in this pedestal position, that we know the answers in this country. This country is built on compromises and consensus. It is up to the military to make its case, and then salute smartly once that case is made.

Jones led the USAF through a crisis during the mid-1970s by stressing education, integration, and subjugation. While the problems in the USAF following the Vietnam War were different than those in the USAF today, Jones' principles and beliefs may still prove valuable.



Chapter 5

The USAF Today – What can we learn?

The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on.

- Walter Lippmann

Introduction – The USAF Today

The purpose of this chapter is to explore how the USAF of today can learn from the crisis the military faced after the Vietnam War and whether leadership lessons from previous service chiefs can provide applicable guidance. This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the USAF from the 1990s until today. This discussion will provide context for the issues facing the USAF today. Much like the military after Vietnam, the USAF today is facing four critical problems, which may develop into an organizational crisis. Although the reasons for and effects of the problems are different today, *retention, parochialism and missions, modernization, and civil-military relations* are still major concerns for the USAF. This chapter provides a discussion of each issue as well as recommendations based on the actions of former service chiefs.

Introduction – The USAF Today

From the 1990s until today, the USAF has been involved in four major contingency operations. The first contingency operation was Operation Desert Storm (ODS). This operation's objective was to remove

Saddam Hussein's Iraqi forces from Kuwait.¹⁵⁰ Next, the USAF participated in Operation Allied Force, designed to stop the slaughter of ethnic Albanians by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the province of Kosovo.¹⁵¹ Finally, the USAF was a part of Operations Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Iraqi Freedom (OEF, OIF).¹⁵²

From 16 January to 18 February 1991, the US was the lead country in a coalition to drive invading Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. For five-and-a-half months following Iraq's decision to invade Kuwait, the US and Coalition forces built up capabilities in theater under Operation Desert Shield.¹⁵³ The air war that began on 17 January 1991 was designed to gain control of the air, conduct strategic attacks on targets deep in Iraq, and attack surface forces that might impede or threaten US and coalition forces.¹⁵⁴ In all, the USAF and other Coalition air forces conducted over 35,000 strikes against leadership, command-and-control operations, air-defense systems, and Iraqi ground forces.¹⁵⁵ Despite the early focus from campaign planners on strategic targets such as the Iraqi leadership, over 66% of the strikes were against Iraqi ground forces.¹⁵⁶ While some military members called the air offensive a revolution in warfare based on its lopsided victory over Iraqi forces, Thomas Keaney and Eliot Cohen opposed this notion in *Revolution in Warfare? Airpower in the Persian Gulf*.¹⁵⁷

Keaney and Cohen argue that true revolutions in warfare are not based on emergent technology. Instead, revolutions in warfare are based

¹⁵⁰ Philip E. Auerswald, ed., *Iraq, 1990-2006: A Diplomatic History through Documents* (3 vols. Cambridge, England.: Cambridge UP, 2009), 361.

¹⁵¹ Peter Gray, and Sebastian Cox, *Air Power History: Turning Points from Kitty Hawk to Kosovo* (Portland, OR: Routledge, 2002), 318.

¹⁵² Steve Call, *Danger Close: Tactical Air Controllers in Afghanistan and Iraq* (Williams-Ford Texas A&M University Military History Series, Texas A&M UP, 2010), 22.

¹⁵³ Thomas Keaney, Eliot Cohen, *Revolution in Warfare?: Air Power in the Persian Gulf* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Inst Pr, 1995). 1.

¹⁵⁴ Keaney and Cohen, *Revolution in Warfare?*, 45.

¹⁵⁵ Cox and Gray, *Air Power History*, 272.

¹⁵⁶ Cox and Gray, *Air Power History*, 272.

¹⁵⁷ Keaney and Cohen, *Revolution in Warfare?*, 188.

on new organizations and behavior in warfare that produce a significant effect or a paradigm shift.¹⁵⁸ The opinions of Army and USAF officers differed. Army officers understood the preparation of the battlefield, but they felt the decisive element lay in the ground offensive.¹⁵⁹ The USAF claimed simply that air power had been decisive.¹⁶⁰ In reality, according to Ben Lambeth, the true revolution in military affairs came from the clear political goals, the disciplined approach to achieving those goals, and the combined planning of military professionals.¹⁶¹

Less than a decade after Saddam Hussein's surrender and withdrawal from Kuwait, the USAF was involved in OAF. OAF was fought primarily for humanitarian reasons based on the plight of the Kosovar Albanians.¹⁶² The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) had fought against the majority Serbians throughout the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia since 1991. Serbian forces began ethnic cleansing in 1999 in an attempt to remove supporters from the KLA.¹⁶³ The North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO's) mission was to end the violence between the two sides.¹⁶⁴ In January 1999, 45 Kosovar civilians were killed in the small city of Racak.¹⁶⁵ Following this event, OAF began on 24 March 1999 and lasted for 79 days, with the intent of compelling Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to stop his forces from ethnic cleansing. The USAF flew 38,004 sorties, which included 10,484 strike missions.¹⁶⁶ The officer in charge of the air campaign, Lt General Michael Short, later said that NATO was planning on using the attacks to demonstrate the

¹⁵⁸ Keaney and Cohen, *Revolution in Warfare?*, 188.

¹⁵⁹ Benjamin S. Lambeth, *The Transformation of American Air Power* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell UP, 2000), 118.

¹⁶⁰ Cox and Gray, *Air Power History*, 314.

¹⁶¹ Lambeth, *The Transformation of American Air Power*, 152.

¹⁶² Michael Kometer, *Command in Air War: Centralized Versus Decentralized Control of Combat Airpower* (Maxwell AFB, AL: www.MilitaryBookshop.co, 2010), 96.

¹⁶³ Kometer, *Command in Air War*, 96.

¹⁶⁴ Kometer, *Command in Air War*, 96.

¹⁶⁵ Dag Henriksen, *NATO's Gamble: Combining Diplomacy and Airpower in the Kosovo Crisis, 1998-1999* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute, 2007), 7.

¹⁶⁶ Cox and Gray, *Air Power History*, 336.

coalition's resolve.¹⁶⁷

While the US and NATO expected that USAF capability and its previous demonstrations in ODS would convince Milosevic to immediately cease all hostilities, he did not. From the end of ODS until OAF, the USAF was seen as the preferred military power by many policy makers in Washington DC based on its lower risk of collateral damage and lower risk to forces than typically seen when using a conventional land force.¹⁶⁸ As the USAF attempted to deter the Serbians from conducting ethnic cleansing, coalition leaders realized that the Serbian capability to disperse and hide prevented even the most accurate weapon from achieving its goal.¹⁶⁹ The USAF's lesson emerging from OAF sounded eerily close to the lessons from Vietnam. USAF leaders concluded that the right way to use air power included massive strikes early in the campaign against the enemy leadership with parallel attacks on infrastructure.¹⁷⁰

The USAF's focus on the military aspects of OAF, without an attempt to understand its integration with the political aspects of the fight, led to an incoherent effort to achieve NATO's objectives. Air strategists concluded after OAF that the USAF had been the decisive arm of military power in stopping ethnic cleansing.¹⁷¹ In contrast, political leaders following the conflict decided the military strategy had been ineffectively and inefficiently combined with the political goals.¹⁷² Based on the political limits on the conflict, the lack of ground troops and a UN security team, the strategy used by the USAF did not provide a suitable link between the allowable means and the desired ends.¹⁷³ However, this did not stop the USAF from exiting the conflict with a familiar feeling of

¹⁶⁷ Henriksen, *NATO's Gamble*, 4.

¹⁶⁸ Henriksen, *NATO's Gamble*, 190.

¹⁶⁹ Kometer, *Command in Air War*, 99.

¹⁷⁰ Henriksen, *NATO's Gamble*, 191.

¹⁷¹ Cox and Gray, *Air Power History*, 342.

¹⁷² Henriksen, *NATO's Gamble*, 194.

¹⁷³ Kometer, *Command in Air War*, 98.

being politically restrained from achieving a decisive victory.¹⁷⁴

OEF and OIF, the next engagements for the USAF, did not have the same political constraints. Following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the US led a coalition to oust Al Qaeda from its safe haven inside of Afghanistan. Initially, this plan involved inserting teams of Special Forces soldiers into Afghanistan to link up with Afghan rebels.¹⁷⁵ These small teams worked closely with the USAF to attempt to destroy Al Qaeda and eventually push the Taliban out of power.

Additionally, in the opening days of OIF, the USAF led the initial strikes of 'Shock and Awe' to prepare Iraq for a ground assault.¹⁷⁶ Multiple sources discussing the USAF in the opening years of OIF state that the integration of USAF support to Special Forces and other Army ground units has led to increased unity of effort between the services.¹⁷⁷

Unfortunately, the argument over the decisiveness of each branch, ground and air, continued. Ground advocates worried that the political leaders would become convinced that technological supremacy could take the place of ground forces, thereby providing a "high-tech, bloodless victory."¹⁷⁸ According to Ben Lambeth in *The Transformation of Air Power*, while the relative power of the USAF has increased dramatically with the advent of precision weapons and unmanned aircraft, it is wrong for military or political leaders to expect technology to solve every problem, or to reduce conflict to a bloodless affair.¹⁷⁹

The USAF today confronts challenges in some ways similar, or analogous, to the problems that confronted the service in the 1970s. Both forces found themselves in the middle of an incongruence of national military policy and political objectives. However, after a B-52

¹⁷⁴ Henriksen, *NATO's Gamble*, 194.

¹⁷⁵ Steve Call, *Danger Close*, xvi.

¹⁷⁶ Steve Call, *Danger Close*, 97.

¹⁷⁷ Steve Call, *Danger Close*, 25.

¹⁷⁸ Lambeth, *The Transformation of Air Power*, 283.

¹⁷⁹ Lambeth, *The Transformation of Air Power*, 283.

mistakenly flew across the country with six nuclear weapons in 2007, and a year later the DoD discovered it had accidentally shipped cone fuses for nuclear warheads to Taiwan, the USAF replaced the COS to shift the service's vector.¹⁸⁰ The new COS, General Norton Schwartz, represented a change from the pattern of recent decades, as he was the first COS with an airlift background and the first COS without a fighter background since General Jones' tenure ended in 1978.¹⁸¹ The new chief faces some of the same problems today that Admiral Zumwalt, General Abrams, and General Jones faced in the mid-1970s.

Retention

The USAF problems with retention in the 2010s are not a mirror image of the problems faced by the services following the Vietnam War. In the 1970s, Zumwalt, Abrams, and Jones were facing a severe decline in recruiting and retention based on changes in the culture of the US and an unfavorable war. The USAF's current problem with retention is based on instability.

As seen in figure 17 below, USAF retention rates have vacillated over the last 10 years about six or seven points above and below a fairly high average. The main driver of change appears to have been the national economic down-turns of 2001 and 2008.

¹⁸⁰ Reese Schonfeld, *The Undoing of T. Michael Moseley: A Cautionary Tale about the Military/Industrial Complex*, www.cnn.com 15 April 2008.

¹⁸¹ Department of Defense, Official Biographies. www.defense.gov/bios

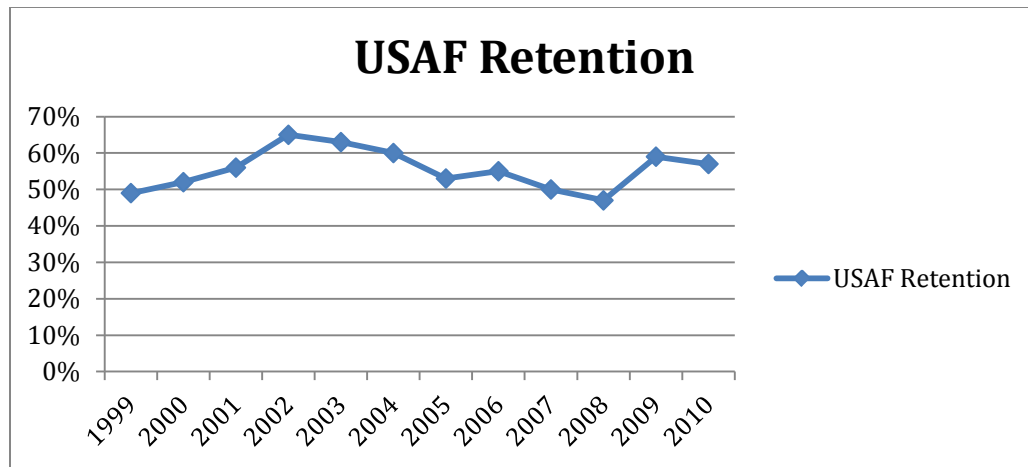


Figure 17. USAF Retention Rates 1999-2010

Source: HQ USAF/DPFMA, *Air Force Goal/Accession History and Reenlistment Rates, 1955-2001*, February 2002. Military Leadership Diversity Commission, Retention Study, HQ/AF, AF Times

The beginnings of OEF or OIF do not seem to have had an immediate impact, though the rates crept down over the course of much of the 2010s.¹⁸² Additionally, the pay structure of the military has steadily increased since 1999, including the addition of several Special Retention Bonuses (SRBs).¹⁸³ For example, a new recruit in 1999 received \$959.40 per month before taxes. In 2011, that same recruit would be paid \$1,467.60.¹⁸⁴ That is an increase of over 50% in just over twelve years. This does not include SRBs for specific officer and enlisted career fields. In 2008, the USAF spent \$53 million on bonuses to retain airmen and officers in thirty-seven career fields. That number increased to \$136 million in 2009.¹⁸⁵

In 2008, the reenlistment rates for the USAF fell to their lowest levels since the beginning of OEF and OIF. The USAF's goal during 2008 was to reach 58% retention for airmen with less than six years in the

¹⁸² HQ USAF/DPFMA, *Air Force Goal/Accession History and Reenlistment Rates, 1955-2001*, February 2002.

¹⁸³ Defense Finance Accounting and Service (DFAS) – Pay charts from 1999-2011.

¹⁸⁴ Defense Finance Accounting and Service (DFAS) – Pay charts from 1999-2011.

¹⁸⁵ Erik Holmes, *Re-enlistment rates plunged in 2008*, Air Force Times, November 2008.

service.¹⁸⁶ After reaching and exceeding this goal in 2006 and 2007, the USAF fell short in 2008, with only 47% of those airmen remaining in the service.¹⁸⁷

Then, beginning in 2009, the retention rates for the USAF climbed again back to levels near 60%. In March 2009, Dr. Curtis Gilroy, Director, Accessions Policy, Officer of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness testified to the Military Personnel Subcommittee for the House Armed Services Committee.¹⁸⁸ His testimony, given less than a year after the fall in retention, makes it clear that he understands retention may not be based on the internal affairs of the service.¹⁸⁹ In his testimony, Dr. Gilroy argued there was a link between the economic conditions in the US and the retention in the services. He forecast that retention would immediately rise in 2009 based on the US's economic issues in 2008 and rising unemployment.¹⁹⁰ In fact, Dr. Gilroy recommended the removal of over \$150 million from the services' budget based on the ability to decrease funds from recruiting efforts.¹⁹¹

Then, in 2011, the USAF was forced to cut over 400 officers based on reductions in force and cost-cutting measures.¹⁹² From 2008-2011, the USAF swung between a retention slump, to meeting their quota, and finally to forcing members out. The numbers above do not indicate the same type of crisis faced by the USAF following the Vietnam War. The issue facing the USAF today is its inability to forecast, or correctly

¹⁸⁶ Holmes, *Re-enlistment rates*, November 2008.

¹⁸⁷ Holmes, *Re-enlistment rates*, November 2008.

¹⁸⁸ House, House Armed Services Committee, Testimony, Dr. Curtis Gilroy, 3 March 2009, 52.

¹⁸⁹ House, House Armed Services Committee, Testimony, Dr. Curtis Gilroy, 3 March 2009, 52.

¹⁹⁰ House, House Armed Services Committee, Testimony, Dr. Curtis Gilroy, 3 March 2009, 52.

¹⁹¹ House, House Armed Services Committee, Testimony, Dr. Curtis Gilroy, 3 March 2009, 52.

¹⁹² *USAF Pink Slips more than 400 Officers*. Fox News. www.foxnews.com/politics/2011/11/02/air-force-pink-slips-more-than-400-officers.html

handle, the declines or the surges in retention. Despite pay increases and special bonuses, the USAF cannot precisely calibrate its retention rates in the face of volatility in the national economy. While it may seem normal for a service to have difficulty in predicting its future retention, current budgetary constraints increases the importance of such a discussion. Given Dr. Gilroy's recommendation to cut \$150 million dollars from the services' respective budgets, service chiefs and other leaders are concerned about retention.¹⁹³

While the problems and efforts of Zumwalt, Abrams, and Jones do not directly correlate to fluctuating USAF's retention, the leadership practices of the previous service chiefs can still be beneficial. Following any major conventional effort, there is usually a draw-down in the forces and budget of the US military. In the 1970s, the service chiefs experienced both this draw-down and reduction in addition to flagging retention numbers. Today, the retention fluctuates up and down based on the US's economic environment. The practices of these previous service chiefs should drive the leadership of the USAF today towards a proper strategy on how to counteract uncertainty in retention.

Abrams' driving concern in each of his changes to the Army was to provide a measure of stability. While his direct attempts to increase retention focused on money, such as the Variable Re-enlistment Bonus, his Total Force Concept affected retention through stability.¹⁹⁴ As a result of Abrams' Golden Handshake agreement with SecDef Schlesinger, Congress set the Army's manning level at 780,000, rather than allowing it to decrease further, or increase based on future changes.¹⁹⁵ Instead of the Army reacting to the shifts in the economic situation of the US, Congress dictated a level of stability by setting its force levels based on the international situation at the time. According to the national defense

¹⁹³ House Armed Services Committee, Testimony, Dr. Curtis Gilroy, 3 March 2009, 51.

¹⁹⁴ Lewis Sorley, *Thunderbolt: General Creighton Abrams and the Army of His Times*, (2nd ed. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2008), 68.

¹⁹⁵ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 363.

authorization bills from each year, the allowed strength of the USAF has changed every year from 2001 to 2011 by anywhere from 1% to 10%, which equates to a difference of between 3,200 to 32,000 airmen each year.¹⁹⁶

Rather than changing force structure based on the ability to retain airmen, increasing size in a down-turning economy and reducing size in a rising economy, the USAF should learn from Abrams' concept of stability. The USAF needs to first determine its appropriate manning to meet the tasks described by the National Security Strategy and the National Military Strategy, which are two documents used to express the national and military strategies of the US. As a result of this analysis, the USAF must petition Congress to set the force levels based on the historic or forecasted needs of the USAF, and do not change them unless the political needs of the country change. While the ability to set the force levels is outside the job description of the CoS, his role of organizing, training, and equipping the forces requires an understanding of the necessary force levels. With that, the CoS can attempt to persuade the Secretary of the AF, the President, and Congress to set force levels appropriate to the mission requirements. Then, given a stable force level, the CoS can exercise his influence over recruitment and retention.

In the immediate future, the USAF and other services may see a decrease in retention based on increases in sexual assaults. In early April 2012, the Cable News Network (CNN) reported that a high number of women in the armed forces were the victim of sexual assault.¹⁹⁷ Despite the DoD's zero tolerance policy for sexual assault, there were 3,191 assaults reported in 2011.¹⁹⁸ The Pentagon expects the actual number is closer to 19,000 based on the fact that most assaults are not

¹⁹⁶ House, RY12 National Defense Authorization Bills, 2.

¹⁹⁷ David Martin, *Rape Victims say military labels them 'crazy.'* CNN.com

¹⁹⁸ Office of the Secretary of Defense. Transcript of news briefing, 18 Jan 2012. www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=4959

reported.¹⁹⁹ This leaves almost 16,000 unreported sexual assaults during 2011. This problem is somewhat analogous to the instances of racial prejudice and harassment that Zumwalt encountered and stopped. Zumwalt's first step in understanding and coping with this problem would be a retention study group much like the one he used for the instances of racism in the fleet. These groups today could be used to encourage reporting and ensure assaulted members of any service receive the attention they need.²⁰⁰

By using Abrams' and Zumwalt's ideas about stability and study groups, the USAF could plan appropriately for future force levels based on known force requirements and a safe environment to increase recruitment and retention.

Parochialism – Missions

While the USAF following the Vietnam War was tasked to provide missions from strategic nuclear deterrence to close-air-support, the USAF of today is split between even larger varieties of missions. According to DoD Directive 5100.01, which details the functions of the DoD and its major components, the mission of the USAF as of 21 December 2010 is to “organize, train, equip, and provide air, space, and cyberspace forces for the conduct of prompt and sustained combat operations, military engagement, and security cooperation in defense of the nation, and to support the other Military Services and joint forces.”²⁰¹ The directive goes on to list cyberspace as a mission category for all three services, not only the USAF. This same directive also outlines the functions of the USAF within that mission.

In addition to maintaining nuclear air and missile forces in support

¹⁹⁹ Office of the Secretary of Defense. Transcript of news briefing, 18 Jan 2012. www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=4959

²⁰⁰ Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 199.

²⁰¹ Department of Defense, Directive 5100.01, 21 December 2010, 33.

of the US's strategic deterrence, there are eight other functions of the USAF. The first of these functions includes the ability to conduct offensive and defensive operations to gain and maintain air superiority.²⁰² Next, the USAF must conduct global precision attack, which includes both strategic attack and close air support. The functions also include the ability to conduct offensive and defensive operations to gain and maintain space superiority.²⁰³ However, this directive does not mention the ability to conduct operations or maintain supremacy in cyberspace. Therefore, while the DoD lists cyberspace dominance as a mission for the USAF and the other services, the USAF does not list it as a function. In the missions of the other services, cyberspace dominance is also mentioned, but only the Navy also recognizes it as a function.²⁰⁴

In comparing the missions of the USAF and the current budget plans for the USAF in 2012, it is clear there is some incongruity. The USAF's budget brief for the fiscal year of 2012 lists as its third priority the need to modernize its cyberspace inventory, organizations, and training.²⁰⁵ However, the only programs listed under the force structure and organizational improvements are the improvements to flying systems such as the MC-12 or the F-35.²⁰⁶ Under test and evaluation in the USAF's budget, there is also no mention of cyberspace. Instead, research and development for the USAF's plan in 2012 focuses on an improved airborne tanker and ground training for air controllers.²⁰⁷ The same is true of the force structure plans and major procurements. While the USAF has a stated mission to gain and maintain supremacy in

²⁰² Department of Defense, Directive 5100.01, 21 December 2010, 34.

²⁰³ Department of Defense, Directive 5100.01, 21 December 2010, 34.

²⁰⁴ Department of Defense, Directive 5100.01, 21 December 2010, 32.

²⁰⁵ Secretary of the AF, AFFMC, FY12 Budget Brief www.saffm.hq.af.mil/budget/pbfy12.asp

²⁰⁶ Secretary of the AF, AFFMC, FY12 Budget Brief www.saffm.hq.af.mil/budget/pbfy12.asp

²⁰⁷ Secretary of the AF, AFFMC, FY12 Budget Brief www.saffm.hq.af.mil/budget/pbfy12.asp

cyberspace, it is not planning any major forces, procurement, or research in this area. For comparison, the planned budget for cyberspace operations in 2012 was \$2 billion dollars.²⁰⁸ Other initiatives with lower priorities, based on the 2012 budget brief, have a much higher budget. The acquisitions section, which sits below cyberspace in the listed priority, has a planned budget of \$22.5 billion dollars in 2012.²⁰⁹ Despite the high cost of procurement, if cyberspace is to join air supremacy as a primary concern of the USAF, cyberspace initiatives should receive more than 10% of a lower priority initiative's budget.

Much as Zumwalt focused the Navy on sea control during his tenure as CNO, the current USAF is focused on air supremacy. Gaining and maintaining air superiority has always been a fundamental mission of the USAF. It is still listed within its primary mission and as a primary function of the force.²¹⁰ The USAF plans to purchase 22 F-35As, with a primary focus of air superiority, during 2012, which makes up less than 20% of its proposed acquisitions.²¹¹ However, with a possible high cost of \$400 million dollars per aircraft depending on the total number purchased, the F-35A will consume 62% of the aircraft procurement budget.²¹² In addition, the F-22, another platform designed for air superiority, combines with the F-35A to cover \$9.8 billion of the \$19 billion dollars the USAF has set aside for operational systems development.²¹³ Despite the mission requirement to maintain an offensive and defensive space capability, and the requirement to act and

²⁰⁸ National Defense Industrial Association. "Air Force to Increase Cyber-Security Spending." 7 June 2010. <http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?ID=136>

²⁰⁹ Office of the Secretary of the AF, AFFMC, FY12 Budget Brief www.saffm.hq.af.mil/budget/pbfy12.asp

²¹⁰ Department of Defense, Directive 5100.01, 21 December 2010, 34.

²¹¹ Office of the Secretary of the AF, AFFMC, FY12 Budget Brief www.saffm.hq.af.mil/budget/pbfy12.asp

²¹² Office of the Secretary of the AF, AFFMC, FY12 Budget Brief www.saffm.hq.af.mil/budget/pbfy12.asp

²¹³ Office of the Secretary of the AF, AFFMC, FY12 Budget Brief www.saffm.hq.af.mil/budget/pbfy12.asp

defend in cyberspace, the priority for the USAF is air supremacy. While air supremacy is a valid mission for the USAF's resources, the argument for the level of resources is based on the perceived capabilities and intentions of a single country: China. This is akin to Zumwalt's exaggerated claims of the Soviet Union's capabilities to forward his own agenda of sea control.

Zumwalt fought for an increase in the Navy's budget for sea control based on his exaggerated forecast for the future threat of the Soviet Navy and his own background in the surface Navy. The USAF could learn from his experience. According to numerous articles and journals, the US sees China as a possible peer competitor, much as the US viewed the Soviet Union during the Cold War.²¹⁴ However, just as Zumwalt did not accurately portray the strengths of the USSR in sea denial, the current view of China does not adequately describe its capabilities or intentions.²¹⁵ For scoping purposes, this discussion will not delve into the long-term intentions of China, and it will only compare capabilities of the USAF and China. The USAF is procuring forces to remain ahead in its air superiority capability. The Chinese, however, are attempting to gain and maintain a lead in cyberspace.²¹⁶ According to an article by Ben Lambeth, cyberspace is the most probable military operating area in which the US is meeting a peer competitor currently.²¹⁷ Lambeth suggests that China's People's Liberation Army currently targets unsecure U.S. transmissions in cyberspace.²¹⁸ While the USAF lists cyberspace as a portion of its current mission, the budget plan for 2012

²¹⁴ President of the United States, "National Security Strategy." Washington DC, May 2010. The NSS discusses future growth with China while also saying it must remain wary of their interests. Although this does not match the nuclear rhetoric of the Cold War, it does indicate a possible future of conflict.

²¹⁵ Henry Kissinger, *On China* (Penguin Press, New York, 2011), 23. This early section of Kissinger's book discusses the Chinese aversion to all-or-nothing combat, and he instead describes Chinese elaborate multi-year maneuvers, including economic initiatives.

²¹⁶ Ben Lambeth, *Airpower, Spacepower, and Cyberpower* (NDU Press, March 2006), 3.

²¹⁷ Lambeth, *Airpower, Spacepower, and Cyberpower*, 3.

²¹⁸ Lambeth, *Airpower, Spacepower, and Cyberpower*, 3.

demonstrates a lack of resolve for the US in researching, developing, and procuring cyber-capabilities.²¹⁹

Each service lists cyber space as a mission-related realm, but only the Navy lists it as a function of their service.²²⁰ Based on the example from Jones, the best possible way forward might be to allow a joint solution. This does not mean the USAF, Navy, and Army should increase their cyber capabilities in an attempt to be the predominant force. Just as the strategic capabilities of the nuclear triad are bound together under the umbrella of the functional command of Strategic Command (STRATCOM), cyber capabilities from each force should be grouped to provide a coherent, joint capability with respect to cyber space.²²¹ Otherwise, each service will increase its demand on the DoD budget to promote its own cyber capabilities to meet the requirement of their mission statements given in DoD Directive 5100.²²²

Modernization

The USAF's budget today can be described not only as shrinking; it can also be described as unstable. Much like the service chiefs following Vietnam, the USAF budget today is less than it was a year ago. However, it is also approximately 4% higher than six years ago.²²³ In the previous six years, the USAF's budget has risen approximately 15% and then declined approximately 10%.²²⁴ Figure 2 below demonstrates the instability in the USAF's budget over the last half decade, with each column representing the budget of the USAF in then-year dollars.

²¹⁹ Department of Defense Directive 5100.01, 21 December 2010, 34. Secretary of the AF, AFFMC, FY12 Budget Brief www.saffm.hq.af.mil/budget/pbfi12.asp

²²⁰ Department of Defense Directive 5100.01, 21 December 2010, 32.

²²¹ STRATCOM is a functional command, which means various components are linked together by functionality instead of geographic location or service.

²²² Department of Defense Directive 5100.01, 21 December 2010, 33.

²²³ USAF FM-Budget Briefs from 2008-2012.

²²⁴ USAF FM-Budget Briefs from 2008-2012.

However, inflation during this same time period only averaged 2.2%, which would only account for shifts in the budget of approximately \$1.4-2 billion dollars.²²⁵

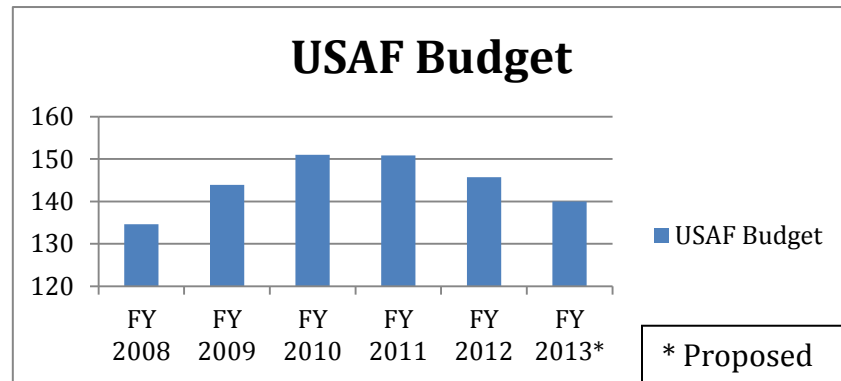


Figure 18. USAF Budget 2008-2013

Source: USAF FM Budget Briefs 2008-2013

When compared to the decreasing budgets of the 1970s, the budget of the USAF over the last six years does not seem to indicate a crisis, but instability can also be a challenge. Given the USAF's priority needs for 2012-2013, the instability of the budget has left other regions severely lacking.²²⁶ From 2011 to 2012, the USAF's budget for procurement decreased from \$24.2 billion dollars to \$22 billion dollars, a decrease of almost 10%.²²⁷ This amounts to a decrease in the planned number of F-35A purchases from 22 to 19, and the number of C-130J aircraft from 8 to 1.²²⁸ Additionally, the USAF had to decrease its purchase of its newest light-mobility aircraft from 15 to 0.²²⁹ The instability of the budget makes it difficult for the USAF leaders to plan its force structure, which results in such large changes in requested-versus-procured platforms. The service chiefs of the 1970s faced a similar problem with their decreasing budgets.

From the Vietnam era, the best lesson for the USAF of today is to

²²⁵ Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Historical Inflation Rates, 1914-2012." http://inflationdata.com/Inflation/Inflation_Rate/HistoricalInflation.aspx

²²⁶ USAF FMC, Budget Rollout Brief 2012.

²²⁷ USAF FMC, Budget Rollout Brief 2012, USAF FMC Budget Rollout Brief 2011.

²²⁸ USAF FMC, Budget Rollout Brief 2012.

²²⁹ USAF FMC, Budget Rollout Brief 2012.

focus on the core capabilities and missions. Zumwalt focused on a single mission that did not accurately reflect the enemy threat. In fact, it is possible to argue that he built up the Soviet threat to justify his insistence on a larger surface fleet. In contrast, Abrams and Jones focused their procurement on the core missions of the services. Abrams used increased research and development funds during his tenure to provide the future equipment of the Army including, the M1A1 Main Battle Tank and the AH-64 Apache.²³⁰ Jones endured a 50% decrease in his research-and-development budget throughout his tenure and still procured aircraft such as the F-16, A-10, and F-117.²³¹ From both the Army and USAF, these research, development, and procurement plans matched closely with the missions of the service.

Given the instability in the budget, and the promise of further decreases in the following years, the USAF of today should retain its ability to provide the central missions dictated by the DoD. Based on the 2013 planned budget, procurement will decrease by over 10% from \$21.4 billion dollars to \$18.4 billion dollars. To focus on its core mission the USAF is planning to procure 19 F-35As during this time. This will account for almost 50% of the USAF's budget for asset procurement. While this aircraft is certainly capable of accomplishing multiple missions, including interdiction, it cannot cover the full gambit of the USAF's core missions. A more complete strategy, like the one employed by Jones, which concentrated on core missions based on national policy, would encompass purchasing the aircraft required to address the USAF's core capabilities.

By committing almost 50% of the procurement budget towards the purchase of only one main asset, the strategy resembles more of what Admiral Zumwalt would call a High-Only approach, rather than his recommended High-Low approach, which advocated a balanced fleet, or

²³⁰ Department of Defense, Annual Report 1975, 101. Sorley, *Thunderbolt*, 335.

²³¹ Lewis, *I Want You*, 27. Boyne, *Beyond the Wild Blue*, 247.

that of Jones' or Abrams' balanced approach for their respective services.

Civil – Military Relations

In the Vietnam era, political leaders increasingly understood the utility of military forces primarily in terms of the ability to deter the outbreak of war, while military leaders tended to remain focused on preparing the services to employ their forces as efficiently and effectively in the event of war. Today, this relationship is based on competing notions of threat and force structure. In the years after the fall of the Soviet Union, the threat of nuclear war fell precipitously. However, this did not ease the tension between the military and its civilian leaders. According to Suzanne Nielsen and Don Snider in *American Civil-Military Relations*, military leaders today must be capable of providing non-partisan, honest, and educated advice.²³² Based on their examination of the current civil-military relations, military leaders and civilian administrations do not always agree on the most advantageous use of force.²³³ For example, the armed services still prepare for a major conventional war while Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and other senior civilian leaders have tried to move the force structure toward a leaner, more flexible posture capable of force projection anywhere in the world.

In 2008, this disagreement came to a head while determining the required force structure for the USAF. In an October 2007 speech to the Association of the US Army, SecDef Robert Gates said the military of the future in the US must be able to fight unconventional wars, such as it has seen in Iraq and Afghanistan.²³⁴ At the same time, USAF officials

²³² Suzanne C. Nielsen, and Don M. Snider, eds., *American Civil-Military Relations: the Soldier and the State in a New Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2009), 291.

²³³ Nielsen, and Snider, *American Civil-Military Relations*, 291.

²³⁴ Lolita C. Baldor, "Gates Envisions an Army Designed to Fight Future Wars," Associated Press, *Seattle Post*, 2007.

were trying to raise the number of F-22s purchased from 183 to 277 or even 380.²³⁵ USAF leaders, including then-CSAF T. Michael Moseley, saw the primary threat not from smaller countries that might engage in a lower-scale battle but from the larger nations. In Moseley's 2007 White Paper, detailing a strategy for the USAF in the next two decades, Moseley described the "ascendant powers – flush with new wealth and hungry for resources and status...posturing to contest US superiority."²³⁶ Just as Admiral Zumwalt exaggerated the capabilities and intentions of the Soviets in pursuit of a larger fleet, Moseley uses China as a basis for an increased number of air superiority fighters.

This difference of opinion led to the public admonishment of a four-star general working under General Moseley.²³⁷ In early February 2008, the White House approved the 2009 budget, which included the purchase of 183 F-22 Raptors at an estimated \$140 million dollars per aircraft.²³⁸ After this decision was made by the Bush administration, USAF General Bruce Carlson told reporters that the USAF was committed to funding the purchase of 380 aircraft, in clear opposition to the civilian administration.²³⁹ Although he distanced himself from Carlson's comments by claiming the USAF's full support of the administration's budget, Moseley claimed he could justify the higher number through operational analysis.²⁴⁰ Secretary Gates countered that "the aircraft is only intended to fight 'near peer' competitors, Pentagon code words for China and Russian," which Gates did not consider an imminent threat.²⁴¹ Again, the USAF appears to base the need for an

²³⁵ Peter Spiegel, "Fighter Dispute Hits Stratosphere" *Los Angeles Times*. 15 February, 2008.

²³⁶ Chief of Staff US Air Force, "The Nation's Guardians, America's 21st Century Air Force: CSAF White Paper." CSAF/USAF, 2007, 4.

²³⁷ Peter Spiegel, "Fighter Dispute Hits Stratosphere."

²³⁸ Peter Spiegel, "Fighter Dispute Hits Stratosphere."

²³⁹ Peter Spiegel, "Fighter Dispute Hits Stratosphere."

²⁴⁰ Peter Spiegel, "Air Force insists there is no fighter rift," *Los Angeles Times*, 16 February 2008.

²⁴¹ Peter Spiegel, "Fighter Dispute Hits Stratosphere."

air-superiority fighter on a perceived threat, but the civilian leadership does not share in the same understanding of the threat's imminence.

There is more than a slight similarity between this current civil-military discussion and the discussion between the USAF and the civilian leadership in the 1970s. The B-1 program was touted as being the aircraft to replace the B-52, giving the USAF a faster, more capable aircraft.²⁴² Likewise, the F-22 is seen as the replacement for the F-15 Eagle, bringing a more capable aircraft to the air-superiority mission.²⁴³ While Jones supported the administration's decision, he faced opposition from both sides of the civil-military discussion.²⁴⁴ This is in contrast to 2008, when Moseley and the Secretary of the Air Force Michael Wynne testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee that the decision to limit the number was wrong. When asked by the Chairman, Senator Carl Levin, to offer their personal assessments, both agreed the DoD plan for the F-22 was not enough.²⁴⁵ According to Nick Kotz's description of the B-1 affair, Jones was able to keep from publically criticizing the administration because he knew there was a plan to keep four B-1s in service for testing and he was aware of other programs, such as the F-117, in development.²⁴⁶ General Moseley, however, resigned on 6 June 2008, based on a myriad of issues. While most sources point directly to the mishandling of nuclear weapons as the cause of the resignation, other sources indicate the resignation was due to both the F-22 disagreement and the nuclear-weapons mishap.²⁴⁷

The best lesson for the USAF today is to follow General Jones'

²⁴² Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 35.

²⁴³ Michael Bruno, "USAF Leaders Prefer More F-22 Raptors," *Aviation Weekly*. <http://www.aviationweek.com/Article.aspx?id=/article-xml/F22-111208.xml>

²⁴⁴ James R. Schlesinger, "The Charge Against General Jones" *Washington Post*, 1 January 1981, 1.

²⁴⁵ Bruno, "USAF Leaders Prefer More F-22 Raptors," <http://www.aviationweek.com/Article.aspx?id=/article-xml/F22-111208.xml>

²⁴⁶ Kotz, *Wild Blue Yonder*, 173.

²⁴⁷ Tom Brook, "Nuclear Mishaps Lead to AF resignations" *USA Today*, 6 June 2008. Josh White, "Senators seek deeper AF Investigation" *Washington Post*, 25 April 2008.

example by accepting political decisions and then moving forward to best equip the USAF of the future. Jones believed it was his job to simultaneously deliver the best military advice and support the civilian administration's decisions.²⁴⁸ After President Carter had heard the arguments for keeping the B-1 and decided to cancel the program, it was Jones' job to support him. Jones believed that officers resigning in protest misunderstood the importance of compromise and consensus in the civil-military relationship.²⁴⁹ Although Moseley did not resign in protest of a particular decision, his inability to accept the civilian administration's decision regarding the number of F-22 aircraft put a strain on his relationship with his civilian leaders. Rather than continuing to trumpet a poor decision, Moseley and Secretary Wynne would have both been better served to accept the decision and decide the best future for the USAF in terms of force structure and strategy.

Conclusions

The USAF today may be entering a period of organizational crisis. Unlike the crisis of the military following the war in Vietnam, this one is mainly built on uncertainty. The USAF today is experiencing a draw-down that closely resembles the military's experience after the Reagan administration's build-up of military forces during the Cold War. With this draw-down comes an uncertainty within the USAF concerning its authorized strength, retention, mission, budget, and force structure. While a good civil-military relationship could decrease the service's instability, the USAF's recent protesting of civilian policies and nuclear errors have caused that relationship to deteriorate. Despite the differences between the service chiefs following the Vietnam War and the CSAF today, the lessons from Admiral Zumwalt, General Abrams, and

²⁴⁸ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 178.

²⁴⁹ USAF Oral History Interview – Jones, 179.

General Jones may still apply.

In each chapter and section above, the best results came from a belief in the importance of the men and women within the services and from a loyalty to the needs of the US above a service. Therefore, the decisions for the USAF today should be based on the needs of the US. The US needs a USAF capable of performing its core missions of air superiority, strategic attack, and close air support in a cost-effective manner. Additionally, it needs to incorporate an understanding of possible peer-adversaries such as China into the creation of its force structure. Based on the analysis of the military's organizational crisis of the 1970s, this will bring out a more concerted effort to develop a cyber-force capable of accomplishing the missions and functions described in the DoD Directive 5100.01.²⁵⁰

This examination of the leadership practices guiding service chiefs following the Vietnam War has helped identify several key lessons that may be applicable today.

First, *retention* will almost always fluctuate for the US military. It is not the job of the service leaders to chase the appropriate numbers. Instead, the service chiefs must create an environment that simultaneously meets the needs of the nations while appealing to potential recruits. History has shown that this can be accomplished through incentive pay and advertising, but a poor economy can be even more effective

The issue of *parochialism and missions* is also going to continue throughout the services. As the political and technological landscape changes, services will tend to focus inwardly to protect their budgets. Unfortunately, history has shown that some of the most highly-ranked leaders, such as Admiral Zumwalt, use inter-service rivalries and political allegiances to build their own budgets during times of fiscal

²⁵⁰ Department of Defense, Directive 5100.01, 21 December 2010, 33.

constraint. However, the right leaders for the country, such as General Jones, have allowed the needs of the country to drive decisions above the needs of a service. At that level of leadership, the chief's allegiance should belong to the nation and not to a particular service. Despite the historical record that indicates the opposite, this should be the rule and not the exception.

Modernization will continue to be important in the fast-paced world of technological innovation. Nations unwilling to dedicate funds to this endeavor will be overtaken by those that do. The Vietnam service chiefs proved that the best technique in a period of uncertainty and economic hardship was to focus on the core missions of each service, while identifying and matching particular strengths of possible future enemies.

Finally, the health of *civil-military relations* in the United States will influence the success of the US military in the future. History is replete with examples of poor civil-military relations leading to poor performance in conflict. Most importantly, this history has shown that the best way to repair these relationships is through a personal understanding of the other side's argument. By understanding both sides of the argument, civilian and military leaders can improve their chances of finding the best solution together.

Acronyms

AAH – Advanced Attack Helicopter
ABM – Anti-Ballistic Missile
ACTOV – Accelerated Turnover to Vietnamese
ARVN – Army of the Republic of Vietnam
AWACS – Airborne Warning and Control System
AVF – All Volunteer Force
CCAF – Community College of the Air Force
CIA – Central Intelligence Agency
CJCS – Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
COMNAVFORV – Commander of the Naval Forces in Vietnam
CNN – Cable News Network
CNO – Chief of Naval Operations
CO – Commanding Officer
COIN – Counter Insurgency
CoS – Chief of Staff
CSAF – Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force
DoD – Department of Defense
FEAF – Far East Air Force
FM – Field Manual
FONL – Flag Officer Newsletter
FORSCOM – Forces Command
FRY – Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
ICBM – Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile
I-HAWK – Improved Home All the Way Killer
JCS – Joint Chiefs of Staff
JCSM – Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum
KLA – Kosovo Liberation Army
MACV – Military Assistance Command, Vietnam
MIRV – Multiple Independently-targetable Reentry Vehicles
MOA – Memorandum of Agreement

NADEC – Naval Decision Center
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OAF – Operation Allied Force
ODS – Operation Desert Storm
OEF – Operation Enduring Freedom
OIF – Operation Iraqi Freedom
RAND – Research and Development
RDJTF – Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force
SAC – Strategic Air Command
SALT – Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty
SAM – Surface-to-Air Missile
SEALORD – Southeast Asia Lake Ocean River Delta Strategy
SecDef – Secretary of Defense
SRB – Special Retention Bonus
STRATCOM – Strategic Command
TAC – Tactical Air Command
TFW – Tactical Fighter Wing
TOW – Tube-launched, Optically-Guided, Wire-commanded
TRADOC – Training and Doctrine Command
UCMJ – Uniform Code of Military Justice
US – United States
USA – United States Army
USAF – United States Air Force
USMC – United States Marine Corps
USN – United States Navy
USS – United States Ship
WW – World War
XO – Executive Officer

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