



INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES

**Independent Assessment of the Chairman of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff Report
on the Reconnaissance Strike Group**

James Thomason
James Blackwell
Mark Tillman
Tom Wallace

Please see the Addendum to this document.

June 2018
Approved for public release;
distribution is unlimited.
IDA Document NS D-9133
Log: H 18-000239

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENSE ANALYSES
4850 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, Virginia 22311-1882



The Institute for Defense Analyses is a non-profit corporation that operates three federally funded research and development centers to provide objective analyses of national security issues, particularly those requiring scientific and technical expertise, and conduct related research on other national challenges.

About This Publication

This work was conducted by the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA) under contract HQ0034-14-D-0001, project CA-6-4512, "Review and Assessment of Joint Staff Report Regarding the Reconnaissance Strike Group Concept (RSG)," for the Joint Staff, J8. The views, opinions, and findings should not be construed as representing the official position of either the Department of Defense or the sponsoring organization.

Acknowledgments

The author wishes to thank Jim Kurtz, Tom Allen, Ed Donnelly, and Bruce Simpson, for their thoughtful contributions to this publication.

For More Information:

Dr. James Thomason, Project Leader

jthomaso@ida.org, 703-845-2480

ADM John C. Harvey, Jr., USN (Ret), Director, SFRD

jharvey@ida.org, 703-575-4530

Copyright Notice

© 2018 Institute for Defense Analyses 4850 Mark Center Drive
Alexandria, Virginia 22311-1882 • (703) 845-2000

This material may be reproduced by or for the U.S. Government pursuant to the copyright license under the clause at DFARS 252.227-7013 (a)(16) [June 2013].

I N S T I T U T E F O R D E F E N S E A N A L Y S E S

IDA Document NS D-9133

**Independent Assessment of the Chairman of the
Joint Chiefs of Staff Report
on the Reconnaissance Strike Group**

James Thomason
James Blackwell
Mark Tillman
Tom Wallace

This page is intentionally blank.

Contents

A.	Introduction and Summary of Findings.....	1
1.	Background	1
2.	Summary of Findings	1
B.	Operational Merit	2
1.	Sufficiency.....	2
2.	Accuracy.....	2
3.	Validity	3
C.	Strategic Sufficiency	3
1.	Sufficiency.....	3
2.	Accuracy.....	3
3.	Validity	4
D.	Potential for Experimentation.....	4
1.	Sufficiency.....	4
2.	Accuracy.....	4
3.	Validity	4
E.	CJCS Recommendation.....	4
1.	Sufficiency.....	5
2.	Accuracy.....	5
3.	Validity	5
F.	Additional Information.....	5
G.	Abbreviations	5
H.	Addendum	6

This page is intentionally blank.

Independent Assessment of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Report on the Reconnaissance Strike Group

A. Introduction and Summary of Findings

1. Background

Section 1091 of the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) tasks the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) to submit a report on the Reconnaissance Strike Group (RSG), a proposed alternative Army operational concept and organizational design. The NDAA directs this report to include four items: operational merit of RSG, strategic sufficiency of RSG, potential for future experimentation, and CJCS recommendation regarding RSG. The NDAA tasks CJCS to select a Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC) to review and evaluate its report. The Joint Staff selected the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA). This document is IDA's independent assessment of the Joint Staff report.

IDA assessed each of the four Joint Staff report sections—operational merit, strategic sufficiency, experimentation potential, and CJCS recommendation—by three criteria that the Joint Staff provided to IDA:

- **Sufficiency.** Does the Joint Staff report address the full set of items that it was directed to assess, and does it do so in sufficient detail?
- **Accuracy.** Are the claims made in the Joint Staff report factually accurate?
- **Validity.** Are the arguments presented in the Joint Staff report valid (i.e., logical, evidence-based, and compelling)?

This document only considers the Joint Staff report and does not perform modeling, analysis, simulation, or assessment of RSG itself. IDA evaluated a version of the Joint Staff report that the Joint Staff provided to IDA on April 3, 2018. IDA submitted its independent assessment to the Joint Staff on June 6th, 2018.

2. Summary of Findings

IDA concludes that the Joint Staff report is insufficient.

The Joint Staff report addresses all four sections—operational merit, strategic sufficiency, experimentation potential, and CJCS recommendation—tasked by the NDAA.

Where possible to verify, the Joint Staff report is accurate. It advances a coherent overall position: that the actual performance of RSG is less than the claims of its proponents, that the best parts of RSG already are addressed by ongoing Joint initiatives and studies, and that on the basis of the previous two points, CJCS recommends no further action on RSG.

However, the Joint Staff report does not adequately support its conclusions. The NDAA tasks the Joint Staff to conduct analyses, yet the Joint Staff Report often states conclusions without presenting or citing analysis. For example, the report claims that RSG is less flexible for simultaneous multi-location deployment but provides minimal evidence in support of this claim. Similarly, the report claims that extant initiatives (e.g., Dynamic Force Employment) capture the best parts of RSG and obviate the need for further action, but it does not substantiate this claim. The Joint Staff report argues that a lack of transparency and fidelity in the modeling of RSG by Burke-Macgregor Group (the originator of the RSG operational concept and organizational design) prevented the Joint Staff from drawing definitive conclusions. IDA concurs that the lack of transparency of the Burke-Macgregor Group's modeling is problematic but disagrees on the implication. This lack of transparency, in fact, heightens the importance of rigorous, independent analyses that are tasked in the NDAA and that are mostly missing from the Joint Staff report. The Joint Staff report should substantiate its position more effectively. This information could be provided directly in the report or be attached as a classified appendix.

B. Operational Merit

This section contains IDA's assessment of the Operational Merit portion of the Joint Staff report. IDA used the assessment criteria of sufficiency, accuracy, and validity.

1. Sufficiency

The section corresponds to an explicit tasking in Section 1091 of the 2017 NDAA. It engages with the main recommendations of the Burke-Macgregor report. It conducts cost and effectiveness analyses. However, it does not do so in sufficient detail. Some key conclusions—most notably, the suitability of RSG for simultaneous multi-location deployment and the Joint Force Initiatives claimed to supersede RSG—are stated with little apparent supporting analysis.

2. Accuracy

The section accurately depicts the main elements of the Burke-Macgregor report's recommendation, but a lack of supporting evidence limits the verifiability of Joint Staff claims. For example, the Joint Staff report claims that extant Joint Force initiatives (i.e., Dynamic Force Employment, Global Force Integration, and Force Design) obviate the need for the adoption of RSG. However, the Joint Staff report either entirely omits or provides an unsatisfactorily high-level description of these initiatives and does not provide a detailed

account of how they relate to RSG. As a consequence, the accuracy of the Joint Staff's claims regarding the initiatives cannot be verified.

3. Validity

The section is of limited validity. The portion dealing with the Puma fighting vehicle cites a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) report to generate a cost estimate; however, the Joint Staff report does not document how its cost estimate was reached nor does it address the merits of Puma by other measures such as effectiveness, supportability, and the like. The portion dealing with command and control simply asserts that extant Joint Force initiatives supersede RSG and then provides minimal argument or evidence in support of this assertion. Similarly, the portion dealing with the ability of RSG to maintain readiness asserts an important conclusion—that RSG is less flexible under certain conditions than the current force structure—without supporting evidence or argument. These omissions detract from the validity of the conclusions of the section

C. Strategic Sufficiency

This section contains IDA's assessment of the Strategic Sufficiency portion of the Joint Staff report. IDA used the assessment criteria of sufficiency, accuracy, and validity.

1. Sufficiency

The section nominally corresponds to an explicit tasking in Section 1091 of the 2017 NDAA but, in substance, repeats conclusions from the preceding Operational Merit section. Presumably, the NDAA would not separately specify assessments of operational merit and strategic sufficiency if it intended for them to be one and the same. Thus, it is not clear that the section addresses what it was mandated to address.

The section's reliance on assessments from the preceding Operational Merit section also cause it to inherit the problem of insufficient detail. The Joint Staff report claims that Burke-Macgregor Group's limited detail of analysis and modeling prevents proving the strategic sufficiency of the RSG concept. IDA concurs on the inadequacy of Burke-Macgregor Group's modeling but notes that it does not preclude the Joint Staff from conducting its own analyses in line with Congressional direction, which are mostly missing from the Joint Staff report.

2. Accuracy

The section largely restates claims made in the Operational Merit section. Issues in that section regarding the difficulty of verifying accuracy when the Joint Staff report provides little evidence or citation also apply to this section.

3. Validity

The section largely restates claims made in the Operational Merit section. Issues in that section regarding the need for more evidence-based and compelling analysis also apply to this section.

D. Potential for Experimentation

This section contains IDA's assessment of the Potential for Experimentation portion of the Joint Staff report. IDA used the assessment criteria of sufficiency, accuracy, and validity.

1. Sufficiency

The section corresponds to an explicit tasking in Section 1091 of the 2017 NDAA. It states a position (that no further experimentation is needed) and provides justification for it (RSG is inadequate, and the Joint Staff is already conducting experimentation). However, the Joint Staff report does not provide sufficient detail for key elements of its argument. It claims that recent Deputy Secretary of Defense National Defense Strategy (NDS) implementation guidance has led the Joint Staff to initiate a series of studies related to force redesign but does not provide detail on exactly what this guidance was or what studies are being conducted or how these studies relate to RSG.

2. Accuracy

The aforementioned lack of detail means that the accuracy of this section cannot be assessed. Without access to the cited implementation guidance and more specific information about ongoing studies and experimentation programs, no reader—whether IDA or Congress—can verify the accuracy of the Joint Staff's depiction of them in relation to RSG.

3. Validity

The section is of mixed validity. The Joint Staff's position—that RSG does not perform to the level claimed by its proponents, that the Joint Staff already is conducting experimentation, and that no further action is needed—is logical. However, it is not compelling or evidence based because little analysis or evidence is presented in support of these claims.

E. CJCS Recommendation

This section contains IDA's assessment of the CJCS Recommendation portion of the Joint Staff report. IDA used the assessment criteria of sufficiency, accuracy, and validity.

1. Sufficiency

The section corresponds to an explicit tasking in Section 1091 of the 2017 NDAA. It provides an overall recommendation—that no further action be taken on RSG—and provides justification for this recommendation, largely by summarizing previous points.

2. Accuracy

The section is accurate. It accurately summarizes what the Joint Staff did and what conclusions were reached.

3. Validity

The CJCS recommendation is based on the findings of previous sections (i.e., Operational Merit, Strategic Sufficiency, and Potential for Experimentation). As such, the validity of this section inherits the problems identified by IDA for those sections.

F. Additional Information

IDA’s task was to independently assess the Joint Staff report as directed by the 2017 NDAA and by the assigned criteria of sufficiency, accuracy, and validity. IDA was not tasked to write or assist in writing the Joint Staff report. For that reason, this document assesses the Joint Staff report by the aforementioned measures but otherwise refrains from commentary. IDA separately provided to the Joint Staff informal suggestions for improvement upon perceived deficiencies identified in this report.

G. Abbreviations

CBO	Congressional Budget Office
CJCS	Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff
FFRDC	Federally Funded Research and Development Center
IDA	Institute for Defense Analyses
NDAA	National Defense Authorization Act
NDS	National Defense Strategy
RSG	Reconnaissance Strike Group

H. Addendum

June 21, 2018

Addendum to IDA Document D-9133 (Review and Assessment of Joint Staff's Report Regarding the Reconnaissance Strike Group Concept)

Under Task CA-6-4512, IDA provided a draft independent review of the Joint Staff's (JS) draft review of the RSG to the JS on 6 June 2018. The JS made some adjustments and additions to its draft review of the RSG and offered IDA its revised report for another assessment on June 20, 2018. Deadlines, however, did not permit IDA to conduct another full assessment. IDA sent its completed independent review IDA Document D-9133 NS to the Joint Staff on June 19th. D-9133 is based upon the JS's earlier, draft review. The next several paragraphs offer a brief addendum to D-9133, based upon IDA's quick review of the JS's revised report of June 20th.

While there is more that the JS could do to provide fully sufficient supporting evidence for all the claims in its review, the JS's new version is an improvement in providing some supporting evidence along the lines IDA suggested in its 6 June review. For example, the classified material that the JS has shown to IDA -- and that the JS states it intends to draw upon in a classified appendix to the report it submits to Congress -- details an extensive set of Dynamic Force Employment (DFE), Global Force Management Data Initiative (GFM-DI) and Joint Force Design/Development: Competitive Area Studies activities now underway in DOD.

In addition, the JS indicated to IDA that the JS did in fact review much of the BMG modeling evidence regarding the RSG concept that BMG provided to the Department of the Army and to RAND in the context of their Section 1091 assessments. Further, the JS told IDA that it did not find enough compelling evidence through that review to warrant DOD undertaking further experimentation or modeling with regard to RSG at this time. Nevertheless, IDA recommended to the JS that it remain open to assessing and exploiting any significant new evidence that the BMG might provide concerning the value of the RSG concept for DOD.

Overall, IDA assesses the JS's revised report as providing adequate though not fully sufficient supporting evidence for its key claims.

IDA POC: Dr. Jim Thomason, Director, Strategy and Risk Program and Assistant Director, Strategy, Forces and Resources Division, Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA)

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YY) xx-06-2018		2. REPORT TYPE Final		3. DATES COVERED (From – To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Independent Assessment of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Report on the Reconnaissance Strike Group			5a. CONTRACT NO. HQ0034-14-D-0001		
			5b. GRANT NO.		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NO(S).		
6. AUTHOR(S) James Thomason James Blackwell Mark Tillman Tom Wallace			5d. PROJECT NO.		
			5e. TASK NO. CA-6-4512		
			5f. WORK UNIT NO.		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Institute for Defense Analyses 4850 Mark Center Drive Alexandria, VA 22311-1882			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NO. IDA Document NS D-9133 Log: H 18-000239		
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Joint Staff J8 Warfighting Analysis Division JS-J8, The Pentagon, Room 2B852A			10. SPONSOR'S / MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) Joint Staff-J8		
			11. SPONSOR'S / MONITOR'S REPORT NO(S).		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Please see the addendum to this document.					
14. ABSTRACT IDA's Task was limited to assessing the JS report; we did not perform separate modeling, analysis, or simulation. We drew on our core competencies in analyses of force structure, organizational constructs, force postures, concept development, operations analysis, experimentation, acquisition planning, cost analysis and risk assessment. The JS report addresses all four sections—merit, sufficiency, experimentation potential, and CJCS recommendation—tasked by the NDAA. Where possible to verify, the JS report is accurate. The JS report advances a coherent overall position: that the actual performance of RSG is less than the claims of its proponents, that the best parts of RSG already are addressed by ongoing Joint initiatives and studies, and that therefore CJCS recommends no further action on RSG. However, the JS report does not adequately support its conclusions. IDA assesses that the JS Report is lacking.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Reconnaissance Strike Group, National Commission on the Future of the United States Army, Sufficiency, Accuracy, Validity, Operational merits, Strategic Sufficiency, Experimentation					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT U	18. NO. OF PAGES 14	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Col Charlie H. Kim
a. REPORT U	b. ABSTRACT U	c. THIS PAGE U			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (Include Area Code) (703) 697-8651

This page is intentionally blank.