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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES


Driven by Conflicting Agendas, an Analysis of Organizational Change at the National Defense
University

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Title: Driven by Conflicting Agendas, an Analysis of Organizational Change at the National Defense University

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Thesis: Had the senior leadership built a more inclusive team and used Kotter's model for organizational change at the National Defense University between 2011 and 2014, they could have prevented the pitfalls associated with the requirement to lower the operating budget, the differing views between the staff and the faculty on how to implement the Joint Education Transformation, and the unintended consequences resulting from restructuring the NDU as a subordinate element of the Joint Staff, J-7.

Discussion: The budget control act of 2011 led the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to reduce the budget at the National Defense University. Additionally, in an attempt to further rein in the National Defense University's spending, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs rewrote the National Defense University's mission statement in February 2012 in order to focus the organization primarily on teaching Joint Professional Military Education. These two actions required extensive reorganizational efforts at the National Defense University. The first organizational change reduced the National Defense University President position to a two-star flag officer billet and realigned the National Defense University as a subordinate element of the Joint Staff, J-7. The second aspect of organizational change required a complete transformation of the academic syllabus and calendar. The National Defense University President assembled his team and began implementing organizational change. However, during the process of organizational change, the National Defense University President met significant resistance. By the beginning of 2014, a large number of the faculty and staff were openly resisting, turn-over rates were high, accreditation objectives were not being met, and a number of highly skilled professionals resigned. This study seeks to understand what went wrong during the reorganization of the National Defense University between 2011 and 2014.

Conclusion: The reorganization of the National Defense University was ineffective because some of the senior leadership downplayed the concerns of subordinates and made too many top-down decisions in isolation. This resulted in a decline in not only the faculty and staff's cohesion, but a decline in productivity as well.

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Preface

Organizational Change is not new in the armed forces. As new weapons systems are procured, budgets flux, and organizational problems arise, commanders are expected to solve the problem. This topic intrigued me because, to date, there has not been an analysis of what happened at the National Defense University between 2011 and 2014. More importantly, how do we, as military officers, avoid the problems that occurred with the reorganization of the National Defense University? Lastly, I wanted to gain more knowledge of the dynamic of implementing change in a mixed – civilian and military – environment. In this regard, this study has helped me learn a lot about organizational change and leadership; even though a leader may know what he/she wants to do, he/she should always listen to and ask for suggestions from others – situational dependent, of course.

I would like to thank Major General Padilla for taking the time out of his busy schedule to talk to me about his organization and the struggles his faculty and staff encountered over the past few years. Also, my mentor, Doctor Chris Yung, for guiding my research and helping me understand more about civilian educators at military schools. Lastly, I would like to thank the Doctor Edward Erickson; he presented me with this topic and ignited my curiosity to study a topic that was relatively unexplored.

INTRODUCTION

Approximately one year prior to the tenure of the National Defense University president's being complete, he resigned. In an official announcement on July 22, 2014, the National Defense University (NDU) stated Major General Gregg Martin (United States Army) stepped aside because, "[h]e [Maj. Gen Martin] believed this was the right time for a new leader to guide the institution as NDU continued to prepare leaders for the challenges facing the U.S. Military."¹ The day prior to the announcement, the joint staff opened an investigation into a report that an individual had threatened Major General Martin's life. In January, the same year, there were reports of a toxic work environment at the NDU. In an article titled, *Life at NDU: Gen. Martin said to threaten to fire anyone who questions his plans*, well-known journalist, Thomas Ricks detailed the complaint from a staff member; "[a]t the meeting, General Martin said that he was laying out the way forward. He then emphasized that everyone working at NDU needed to support his effort. He continued, according to some NDU insiders, to threaten to move to terminate anyone who did not 'get on board.'"² In Major General Martin's response to the article, he attempted to give some context to the matter. Major General Martin explained that the National Defense University has been on the trajectory for academic and organizational change for quite some time and some of the staff may have "misinterpreted" his attempt to get everyone on board.³ However, for some of the staff, the National Defense University senior leadership made unlawful threats to their jobs and imposed a new and unrealistic timeline for academic change. It is clear by the articles published by Thomas Ricks at *Foreign Policy*, that there were problems with the cohesion of the staff at the National Defense University as they implemented organizational change.

The National Defense University, through its subordinate schools, teaches organizational change. In fact, Major General Martin studied organizational change in order to complete his doctorate; he wrote his dissertation on “Strategic Leadership and Institutional Change in a Complex Organization,” for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.⁴ While his dissertation did not specifically analyze a model for organizational change, he understood the challenges large organizations faced when instituting organizational change. Major General Martin’s study focused on the Army Corps of Engineers and he argued that their “organizational survival and eventual resurgence can be explained by the outcomes of decisions made by engineer elites.”⁵ It became clear during the reorganization of the National Defense University that Major General Martin and his selected senior leaders favored their own decisions and methods; furthermore, they often disregarded the input from subordinate faculty and staff. The senior leadership’s preference to make decisions in isolation hindered the effectiveness of the reorganization, caused the faculty’s cohesion to decline, and led to the resignation of two high-ranking individuals – and ultimately leading to Major General Martin’s decision to resign. Had the senior leadership built a more inclusive team using Kotter’s model for organizational change at the National Defense University between 2011 and 2014, they might have prevented the pitfalls associated with the requirement to lower the operating budget, the differing views between the staff and the faculty on how to implement the Joint Education Transformation, and the unintended consequences resulting from restructuring the NDU as a subordinate element of the Joint Staff, J-7.

METHODOLOGY

This paper will use Kotter’s model for organizational change to evaluate the reorganization of the National Defense University. This study will determine what methods were used in the reorganization of the National Defense University by evaluating the publicly

available primary and secondary source material. Then this paper will evaluate if and when those models were applied, analyze the outcomes, and make conclusions.

DESCRIPTION OF SOURCES

This paper will evaluate a wide range of sources in order to gain a better understanding of the National Defense University's organizational structure and decisions made by senior leaders. This author reviewed official documentation in the form of memorandums, White Papers, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instructions in order to understand the direction and guidance from senior leaders. Then, the author of this paper conducted interviews with faculty and staff members present during the reorganization to gain an understanding of how the proposed changes were going to be implemented. Furthermore, the author of this paper reviewed Board of Visitors' meeting presentations and notes to understand the methodology from the senior leaders. Finally, the author of this paper reviewed articles, books, and blogs of NDU insiders to understand the grievances from the faculty and staff.

KOTTER'S MODEL

A quick search on Google will yield more than a dozen organizational change models. Kotter's model is one of the many organizational change models used to implement change at organizations. Kotter's model is also a model that the United States Marine Corps uses to teach Command and Staff students at the Marine Corps University. Additionally, the United States Army used Kotter's model to implement organizational change at an Army pilot training facility and helped the installation garner "the 2013 Commander in Chief's Award for Installation Excellence."⁶ Kotter's Model for Organizational change is an eight-step process designed in order to help leaders more effectively implement change. The eight steps in Kotter's model are:

1. *Establish a sense of urgency;*
2. *Form a strong guiding coalition;*
3. *Create a vision;*
4. *Communicate the vision;*
5. *Empower others to act on the vision;*
6. *Plan for and create short-term victories;*
7. *Consolidate improvements and maintain momentum; and*
8. *Institutionalize the new approaches*⁷

There are examples in the reorganization of the National Defense University where the senior leaders applied certain steps of Kotter's model, however, there are no references to the senior staff utilizing this model.

John Kotter designed the organizational change model to be a systematic guide to implementing change. Step one of Kotter's model for organizational Change deals with Establishing a sense of urgency. Urgency is necessary to avoid complacency; according to John Kotter, "With complacency high, transformations usually go nowhere because few people are even interested in working on the change problem."⁸ Step two – form a strong guiding coalition – is arguably the most important step in the model. Without a guiding coalition, leaders cannot effectively lead change, in fact, building a coalition is necessary to effectively implement the remainder of the steps in the change model. "No one individual, even a monarch-like CEO, is ever able to develop the right vision, communicate it to a large number of people, eliminate all the key obstacles, generate short-term wins, lead and manage dozens of change projects, and anchor new approaches deep in the organizations culture."⁹ Steps three and four require the guiding coalition to work together in order to create a vision for change and communicate that vision for future success. In order to accomplish step five of the organizational change model, leaders need to remove obstacles and encourage non-traditional thought in order to empower others to act on the vision created by the guiding coalition.¹⁰ Steps six – plan for and create short-term victories – is a method by which leaders of change capture data on the progress of the

changes made by the guiding coalition in order to reinforce the vision and reward individuals that positively influenced change.¹¹ Step seven – consolidate improvements and maintain momentum – uses the credibility of the changes in order to change old systems that do not fit the vision created by the guiding coalition. Finally step eight – Institutionalize the new approaches – is where the organization solidifies the changes and creates the “means to ensure leadership development and succession.”¹² It is important to note that during the reorganization of the National Defense University, if the senior leaders effectively began to use Kotter’s model,¹ they never got past step four – communicate the vision.

An example that demonstrates the utility of Kotter’s model for organizational change is when the National Defense University completed its reorganization after the resignation of Major General Martin. Major General Fred Padilla (United States Marine Corps) took command of a broken organization. Faculty and Staff were displeased; although Major General Martin had resigned, the National Defense University maintained the same trajectory for reorganization that he laid out. Not only were there numerous cuts to the organization, the faculty still had to implement vast academic changes. This cultural dilemma created a sense of urgency for the new NDU president, however, prior to changing anything, Major General Padilla prioritized his mission and listened to the grievances from the faculty and senior leadership. After spending some time just listening to the concerns from the faculty and staff, Major General Padilla assembled his team for organizational change. Major General Padilla’s executive council consisted of an inclusive representation of senior leaders from all of the subordinate colleges – a true guiding coalition as espoused in Kotter’s model for organizational change. This is in sharp

¹ During the interviews with NDU staff, faculty, and leadership provides no evidence that the leadership knowingly applied Kotter’s model for Organizational change. There is some evidence that the leadership implemented aspects of the model but the leadership has not claimed that the Kotter model served as the de facto template for change. Nonetheless even if the faculty unconsciously applied the model theirs was only a partial implementation.

contrast to how Major General Martin built his team. According to Major General Padilla, “Major General Martin built his team from a select group of retired and active duty army leaders who did not listen and made decisions in secret.”¹³ The next step for Major General Padilla was to create a vision that was not based entirely on guidance from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, rather was the result of a “collective analysis” from NDU’s executive council.¹⁴ By using the executive council, which consisted of an inclusive representation, to create the vision it was easier for the senior leaders to communicate their vision and empower others to act on this vision. For steps six through eight, Major General Padilla consistently engaged with his executive council to ensure the National Defense University maintained momentum and institutionalized new approaches. Major General Padilla’s actions directly enabled the faculty and staff at the National Defense University to reverse the organizational decline they had been previously experiencing.

Currently the National Defense University is doing more with less. In FY12, the National Defense University had a budget of \$97.8 Million, and it failed three inspections – Command Cyber Readiness, Management Internal Control Program, and Middle States Commission on Higher Education.¹⁵ Two years later, with a budget of \$87.6 Million, the National Defense University has satisfied all the requirements to return these programs into compliance.¹⁶ Major General Padilla attributes these successes to the cooperation from his executive council and the ability of the faculty and staff to work together listen to each-other.¹⁷

BACKGROUND

The decision to reorganize the National Defense University occurred before Major General Martin assumed the responsibilities as the National Defense University president (NDU-P). Furthermore, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instructions (CJCSI) 1800.01d

codified these changes. The official title of CJCSI 1800.01d is *Officer Professional Military Education Policy*, and the primary changes can be summarized as follows: “reassign JPME [Joint Professional Military Education] responsibilities based on disestablishment of USJFCOM; reassign JPME responsibilities based on reorganized JS J-7; and remove authorities to grant ‘single-phase’ JPME credit.”¹⁸ The CJCSI is the foundational document requiring reorganization of the NDU, however, the Department of Defense’s requirement to reduce the budget led to the CJCSI amendments.

President Obama’s decision to reduce the Department of Defense (DoD) budget, directly led to the reorganization of the National Defense University. President Obama enacted the Budget Control Act (BCA) in August 2011.¹⁹ The BCA would require automatic reductions to the DoD amounting to approximately \$497 billion between 2011 and 2021. The BCA, which reduced the DoD’s budget for FY12, forced the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to affect the first organizational change to the NDU in 2011. This decision had a dramatic effect on the organization of the DoD that rippled down to the National Defense University. At the recommendation of the Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, President Obama made the decision to disestablish the United States Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) in order to save money and align redundant functions concerning joint matters. In a statement regarding the disestablishment of USJFCOM Secretary Gates stated President Obama’s decision was, “another step forward in the reform efforts he has undertaken to reduce excess overhead costs, cut waste, and reform the way the Pentagon does business.”²⁰ The loss of USJFCOM resulted in the reallocation of a three-star flag officer to the joint staff, J-7. The J-7 is responsible for joint force development through its core functions; joint training and exercises, joint education, joint doctrine, joint lessons learned, and joint concepts.²¹ Immediately accompanying the decision to

disestablish the USJFCOM, the NDU became a subordinate element to the joint staff, J-7; however, the office of the NDU-P would retain three-star flag officer status until the July 2012 when the new tenure of NDU-P (Major General Gregg Martin) would begin. Consequently, these organizational changes not only were the result of external changes; there were to be more internal changes to the University after Major General Martin began his tenure (and these internal changes led to many of the disruptions to the day to day operations of the NDU staff which this paper will discuss in greater detail).

The internal organizational changes related to streamlining the organizational structure of the National Defense University due to reduced budgets: Major General Martin directed steps toward the internal reorganization of the NDU in a memorandum dated Nov 16, 2012. In this memorandum, Maj. Gen Martin stated, “As part of our transition toward becoming truly ‘One University,’ we will have to examine ways to eliminate redundancies and boost efficiency and effectiveness while ensuring our governance structures are streamlined and facilitate more effective decision-making.”²² This memorandum went on to detail nine specific areas that needed organizational focus and further detailed a task and purpose for each corresponding area. The internal organizational changes described as Major General Martin’s “One University” plan would later grow to encompass academic changes.

The academic changes that were part of the “One University” plan at the National Defense University began to change with the decision by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), General Martin Dempsey, to realign the academic functions of JPME in order to prevent a single phase JPME as well as align the curriculum for JPME taught at the subordinate schools of the National Defense University. General Martin Dempsey’s method to prevent a single phase JPME was to direct JPME students to complete JPME in two-phases from separate

institutions, in order to be considered JPME complete.²³ This direction would be in the form of a White Paper from the CJCS dated July 16, 2012. The purpose of the White Paper was to develop future leaders with the intent that joint education will:

- Lead the way in the renewal of our commitment to the Profession of Arms with leadership as its foundation;
- Prepare the leaders of Joint Force 2020 to be adaptive, innovative, critical thinking leaders capable of operating in complex and unstructured environments.
- Provide the foundation for leaders to be able to understand the security environment, change, and transitions;
- Provide the foundation to design and execute campaigns at the operational level in pursuit of strategic objectives; Establish and sustain mission command throughout the force;
- Enable jointness through the integration of diverse service cultures and approaches;
- Maintain our competitive learning advantage through:
 - Mastery of fundamentals of the art and science of war;
 - Intellectual curiosity, coupled with openness to new ideas;
 - Operational adaptability (to include critical thinking, prudent risk acceptance and rapid adjustment fueled by continuous assessment) - fundamentally, the ability to deal with the unexpected by making sound choices based on measured risk;
 - The ability to properly balance the art of command with the science of control, to include the ability to create trust relationships with seniors, subordinates and partners;
 - Skills in negotiations, culture and language;
 - An understanding of intelligence- both its capabilities and limitations;
 - The ability to process information into knowledge, then share that knowledge, and act on it.
- Attract and maintain civilian and military faculty members who are among the very best and brightest of their contemporaries.
- Expand access and opportunity to populations outside of conventional classrooms, pursuing legislative authorities as needed.²⁴

It would take approximately eighteen months for the senior staff at the National Defense University to provide guidance to the subordinate colleges on how they would implement the recommended JPME changes into the curriculum. The curriculum changes would be initially called the “Break Out Plan (BOP).” Once the academic plan had a basic platform for implementation, the NDU-P renamed it the “Joint Education Transformation (JET).” The JET reorganized the curriculum into three phases and required each of the subordinate schools to

break their syllabus apart in order to fit into the proposed timeline by phase. The first phase would be a six week NDU *Strategic Leader Foundational Course*. Phase one would essentially be the “foundation of principles that will be recurring themes throughout each student’s year of learning at NDU.”²⁵ The second phase is twenty-seven weeks long and is the *College Core Curriculum*. This is where “each student will learn to be the best in the world at his or her core competency, as expressed through the mission of each college.”²⁶ In the final phase, *Student-Tailored Professional Development: Electives and Capstone*, students will be able to choose electives that align with their future goals or assignments.²⁷ One key advantage to the JET was that the subordinate colleges would be able to align their calendars in order for the students to be able to take advantage of lectures or lecturers that would not normally be available due to scheduling conflicts with the other colleges. This turned out to be a great source of friction to the staff’s cohesion due to the implementation timeline and the method in which the leadership at NDU delivered the implementation timeline. The senior staff at the National Defense University introduced the JET to the faculty and staff in April 2014 in the form of a pamphlet; the staff set the timeline for implementation of the JET three months later, at the beginning of academic year 2014-2015. Finally, the JET and the “One University” plan would be referred to the “Whole of NDU,” when Maj. Gen Martin would reference the combined efforts of NDU’s reorganization.

BUDGET REDUCTIONS

The Budget Control Act of 2011 resulted in a decrease in direct funding from the Department of Defense to the National Defense University. The reduction in funding triggered the need to reorganize the National Defense University. NDU’s budget would be reduced from 98 million dollars in FY12 to 85 million dollars in FY13. To put this 13-million-dollar reduction into perspective, of the 45.3-billion-dollar reduction required of the Department of Defense, six

billion dollars was to be reduced from the Research Development Test and Evaluation (RDT&E) budget; the RDT&E budget for FY13 shrank to 69.4 billion dollars from 75.3 billion dollars.²⁸ The reduction of the National Defense University's budget of approximately 13 percent was slightly higher than that of RDT&E, however, other appropriations within the Department of Defense budget were reduced by greater than 20 percent. Regardless, the director of joint force development, J-7, made the decision to reduce NDU spending by 13 million dollars. The senior leadership at NDU needed to make a decision on where those reductions were to take place at NDU. Ultimately, the methods by which the staff at NDU chose to implement the budget reductions provided the foundation for the decline in cohesion for both the faculty and the staff. The direction to reduce the budget from higher-headquarters established a sense of urgency amongst the senior staff at the National Defense University; this would have been a perfect opportunity to capitalize on Kotter's model and create a guiding coalition.

The senior leadership at the National Defense University chose to form a coalition of leaders inside the senior staff to make the decisions about the budget reductions, instead of a true guiding coalition. This resulted in numerous decisions being made for the subordinate colleges without their knowledge or consent. In, *Managing Organizational Change*, Helen Campbell describes a guiding coalition as, "a group of influential people who can influence and monitor views and activities in their area and either fix problems or refer them to the driver."²⁹ In the case of the senior staff at the National Defense University, Major General Martin's team consisted primarily of retired Army or active duty Army officers, and not representation from the subordinate college deans.³⁰ The NDU-P and senior staff made many decisions about the budget without regard for the influential members' opinions at the subordinate colleges.

The decision to reduce the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) by 40 percent by the senior leadership is an example of the disregard for the influential members' opinion. Major General Martin's "Good-to-Great" philosophy, along with influence from the joint staff became the deciding factors in the reduction of the INSS. The "Good-to-Great" philosophy originates from Major General Martin's understanding of the book, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...And Others Don't*, by Jim Collins.³¹ However, some faculty members believe Major General Martin's understanding may be misplaced. Some staff understood his concept of "Good-to-Great" to focus on one area, and that singular focus is what will make the company great. This became apparent when Major General Martin gave a speech detailing his plans to implement the guidance from the Joint Education White Paper that General Martin Dempsey wrote to streamline joint education. One faculty member at INSS, stated, "Major General Martin's guidance focused primarily on teaching JPME at the colleges of the National Defense University; by focusing on one area at a time, NDU could go from "good-to-great.""³² The reductions to research are contrary to what many higher education experts believe to be important to the integrity of higher education. In a board of visitors meeting held on October 27th-28th, 2011, Dr. Binnendijk – the INSS director – believed research functions bring money to the university, "It is good for the University to have these centers because they attract people and money."³³ Furthermore, research departments create knowledge, which is fundamental to a university.³⁴ Regardless, the senior leadership decided to reduce the research budget to focus on teaching.

The focus on teaching became apparent when the joint staff recommended reductions to the research department at the INSS. In an article titled "Cutting School," Michael Peck details

the research areas that were going to be cut in order to make way for the university to reduce costs and focus on teaching JPME; the proposed reductions include:

- Redirecting the Center for Strategic Research to concentrate on JPME, which would save almost \$1 million and eliminate seven jobs, plus one officer reassigned.
- Focusing the Center for Applied Strategic Learning, which conducts war games, on JPME, saving \$1.5 million and eliminating eight jobs.
- Concentrating the National Defense University Press on JPME, which would save \$660,000 and eliminate four jobs.
- Evaluating other NDU organizations, including the Center for Complex Operations, the Center for Transatlantic Security Studies, the Center for Technology and National Security Policy, the Conflict Records Research Center, and the Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs for their actual cost to NDU (and presumably for future cuts).³⁵

The reductions were also detailed in a memorandum from the NDU-P titled, *NDU Next Steps and way ahead*. The NDU-P created a sense of urgency with this memorandum— step one in Kotter’s model for change – as it clearly set the stage for the problems the university faced and clearly detailed a task and purpose for each of the proposed changes.

Unfortunately, there were some unintended consequences that the memorandum from the NDU-P – titled, *NDU Next Steps and way ahead*, November 16, 2012 – did not quite address in order to properly affect organizational change at NDU. The second step in Kotter’s model for change is to build a guiding coalition. There were two tasks inside the memorandum that led the staff’s cohesion to decline. According to some staff and faculty members, the first task, “Realign the Center for Applied Strategic Learning (CASL) under Academic Affairs,”³⁶ reduced the scope of the director’s responsibility and the organization under his control of the INSS as the CASL used to be a subordinate element of INSS.³⁷ The director of INSS was one of the high-ranking staff to resign his position at the NDU; the decision to reduce the research staff from 20 to 12 (with the potential for future reductions to staff under consideration) and remove a whole department were factors in the INSS director’s decision to resign.³⁸ The second task, “Finalize

Title 10 Civilian Compensation Policy for NDU,”³⁹ created a poor work environment for the Title 10 faculty and Staff.

The result of the Title 10 compensation policy left some faculty and staff members, particularly in the INSS, fearful of losing their jobs due to further cuts. In a memorandum regarding Title X renewal package, the NDU-P made a clear distinction that teaching is the primary focus of the National Defense University. The memorandum stated, “As you and your staff consider the renewal, keep in mind the NDU mission and what we do: educate, develop, and inspire national security leaders of wisdom, character and strength who are ready to meet the needs of the nation. (Strategic Goal One NDU Strategic Plan).”⁴⁰ The term research, is notably absent from this memorandum. According to some INSS staff members, the new director, Colonel Timothy Vuono (USA Ret.), directed the remaining staff member to do whatever they could to prove they were assisting in teaching functions at the National Defense University subordinate schools.⁴¹ Staff members at the INSS began to contact the subordinate schools to find opportunities to conduct classroom instruction in order to attempt to solidify their job security. Dr. Christopher Yung, one such staff member, stated that “while the subordinate colleges were receptive, they did not always open the door to additional instruction.”⁴² In a Board of Visitors (BOV) meeting held in December 2012, the scribe detailed the actions internal to INSS to support teaching functions, “Col. Vuono noted that MS [Middle Schools] commended NDU’s research components and that the research arm is currently moving to become more integrated and supportive of the teaching mission.”⁴³ The modification to the Title 10 compensation policy was not the only area concerning compensation that hindered the ability of the staff to build a guiding coalition.

In addition to the Title 10 compensation policy, contract lengths were altered due to the budget reductions. Numerous faculty and staff members had three-year contracts that were coming to an end the National Defense University decided to not only reduce some employees' contract lengths to one-year, but they also took the opportunity to negotiate lower salaries for many of the faculty and staff. One INSS staff member described this decision as creating an environment where employees began to resent the institution. In a discussion at the BOV meeting in 2012, Ms. Lynn Simpson, a senior advisor at NDU, described these concerns in regards to retention and hiring at the NDU; "An important element is hiring, developing, and retaining the right people. There is another component of talent management and that is compensation."⁴⁴ However, in contrast to the realization that compensation is a big part of talent management, the NDU senior staff made the decision to offer lower salaries to employees who required new contracts. Dr. Yung observed that, "some members declined the reduction to their salary, while others accepted the reduced salary as a stop-gap until they found another job and a not insignificant number did leave NDU for other positions."⁴⁵ The decision to primarily allow one-year contracts created a hindrance on the University's hiring process. It would become more difficult to retain or hire new faculty and staff with limited budget and short-term contracts. The senior staff at the National Defense University would find it more difficult to retain, let alone build, a guiding coalition in order to more effectively implement change, when many of the faculty and staff became frustrated with the institution's compensation policies.

In addition to complicated compensation policies, sequestration became another factor in the declining cohesion of the staff. The looming effects of sequestration further compounded the compensation issues that were beginning to plague the National Defense University because there were too many unknowns outside of the control of NDU. The BCA of 2011 created the

need for sequestration. Sequestration would result in automatic reductions and furloughs of civilian staff and faculty. Some federal employees were set to be furloughed for anywhere between 30 and 60 days in order to reduce the government's expenditures for FY13.

Fortunately, these automatic reductions were supposed to begin on January 2, 2013, but were delayed due to the American Tax Payer Relief Act of 2012. In a speech to the National Defense University in April 2013, Secretary of Defense, Charles Hagel, made it clear there were still more cuts required by stating, "[W]e will have to do more. Across-the-board reductions of the size we are looking at will demand that we furlough civilian personnel, which could affect morale and may impact productivity."⁴⁶ These remarks by the Secretary of Defense were presented to an audience composed primarily of civilian personnel. At the conclusion of the speech, the civilian staff made it clear that they were concerned about the uncertainty of the effects of sequestration as furloughs and budget cuts were the predominate theme when Secretary Hagel opened the floor for questions. It is important to note that the National Defense University did a good job disseminating information as it became available. Regardless, this uncertainty regarding compensation and sequestration was a factor in the ability to build a guiding coalition, unfortunately, the National Defense University could do little to affect the outcomes of sequestration.

On the other hand, the National Defense University could have affected the reductions to the research component of the INSS in order to develop a vision – Kotter's third step in the organizational change model – across the whole of NDU's reorganization. The reduction to research is in sharp contrast to how a civilian school envisions the structure of higher education. When speaking on the matter of research at the National War College Dr. Howard Wiarda, author of the book, *Military Brass vs. Civilian Academics at the National War College*, states

“[E]specially at the graduate level, research and teaching are and must be intimately related.”⁴⁷

Although Dr. Howard Wiarda’s referenced his experiences from more than 20 years ago, the disconnect still remained; the senior leadership decided to reduce the research functions of the university. Dr. Gerald Mitchell, an associate professor at the NDU, made it clear that the faculty became concerned about the reduction to the research element; when discussing poor decisions made by the leadership of NDU he stated, “The J7 forwarded a Joint Staff Action Process (JSAP) directing NDU to focus on JPME and to divest from the many centers and research activities that had been developed over the past ten to fifteen years.”⁴⁸ Additionally, during a follow-up inspection on the National Defense University’s accreditation warning, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) expressed concerns in regards to the decision to reduce the research staff.⁴⁹ While further reductions to the research arm of the National Defense University were possible, some members of the INSS research staff believe that NDU-P realized the utility of the research department when Major General Martin received assistance in the form of academic support and advice from INSS on how to effect institutional change to the university; this realization in the importance of Institutional research potentially saved the jobs of those still being considered for reductions at INSS.⁵⁰ Had the NDU-P sought assistance earlier on, more jobs might possibly have been saved and the whole of NDU could have helped to develop the vision for organizational change.

It might be considered an exaggeration to state it this way, but the National Defense University’s leadership decisions to make cuts were dictatorial in nature and did not reflect an environment conducive to effective organizational change. While budget reductions were the instigating factor in the decision to reorganize, the leadership at NDU could have done a better job to create a guiding coalition, and develop the vision for organizational change. The decisions

made in regards to the budget cuts, resulted in a decline of the cohesion of the team and set the stage for further conflict at the National Defense University.

DIFFERING VIEWS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE FOR THE JET

The Joint Education Transformation (JET) became the most publicized aspect of the reorganization of the National Defense University. The faculty's dissatisfaction resulted in a numerous faculty members reaching out to the online journal, *Foreign Policy* to air their grievances with the JET and NDU as a whole. The JET was the final element in the transition from the "One University" plan, to the "Whole of NDU" philosophy. Elements vital to the creation of the Joint Education Transformation originated from two sources, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education report from an institutional evaluation conducted on March 25-28, 2012 and the Joint Education White Paper dated July 16, 2012. The MSCHE report noted that, "NDU lacks learning and program objectives capable of transcending the component colleges to represent common, university-wide objectives."⁵¹ The ability to transcend the component colleges became clear with the announcement that the JET would align the teaching functions of phase one across all of the subordinate colleges of NDU. Although the, Joint Education White Paper provided guidance to focus primarily on teaching JPME it did not provide a timeline for implementation. In a speech to the NDU-BOV on December 10, 2012, Lieutenant General Flynn, Director J-7, stated, "[w]e are also currently undergoing a reexamination of joint education."⁵² Unfortunately, NDU would not begin significant efforts to revamp the curriculum until the NDU-P held a meeting in January 2014 detailing the "Break Out" plan (JET), with the intention of implementing the initiative in six months. The NDU-P describe a rushed timeline for the implementation of the JET at an all-hands meeting. This provoked several concerns for the staff that led to a deeper decline in the staff's cohesion.

The concerns regarding the implementation timeline of the JET became a large factor in the inability of the faculty and staff to effectively accomplish organizational change across the whole of NDU. Immediately after the meeting where the NDU-P detailed changes to the academic curriculum some of the faculty members wrote an e-mail to *Foreign Policy*. In the article titled, *Life at NDU: Gen. Martin said to threaten to fire anyone who questions his plans*, Thomas Ricks states, “At the meeting, General Martin said that he was laying out the way forward. He then emphasized that everyone working at NDU needed to support his effort. He continued, according to some NDU insiders, to threaten to move to terminate anyone who did not ‘get on board.’”⁵³ Although Major General Martin explained in his response to Thomas Ricks that the NDU senior leadership had been working on the details of the plan for months, the faculty felt the announcement to change the curriculum was abrupt. Moreover, 96 faculty members addressed these same concerns in regards to the abruptness of the plan in a memorandum addressed to the NDU-P. In this memorandum, the faculty stated, “While we have serious concerns about the processes used to arrive at a decision, and the decision itself, we are most concerned about the rapidity of the proposed changes that risk diminishing the quality of the NDU educational experience for the Class of 2015 as well as NDU’s current students. Moreover, a rushed transformation could damage NDU’s standing and reputation.”⁵⁴ Major General Martin acknowledged the concerns and produced a pamphlet describing the importance of implementing the JET on the proposed timeline. In this pamphlet, Major General Martin reaffirmed that the timing proposed is sufficient, “Further delay will push any meaningful change and execution of directed changes beyond the tenure of our current CJCS and NDU-P, which would effectively mean re-starting the clock.”⁵⁵ This unsupportive response by senior leaders at

NDU to address the concerns of the faculty, further degraded the capability of the staff to be a more cohesive team and effect change across the whole of NDU.

The communication between the NDU-P and the faculty afforded the perfect opportunity for NDU senior leadership to take advantage of two steps in Kotter's model for organizational change, steps three and four. Steps three and four of Kotter's model for organizational change are, develop a vision and communicate the vision. It became clear from the communication that the faculty wanted to cooperate and provide input to the JET, however, the senior staff did not recognize the utility of the recommendations. The inability for the faculty and staff to come to terms could be in part due to the inherent distrust of the senior leadership by the faculty, or inability of the senior leadership of NDU to trust that the curriculum changes could transcend an administration. The faculty's distrust of the staff made it difficult for the NDU-P to appropriately communicate the vision. One faculty member, who chose to remain anonymous, details the reason why some faculty members did not want to get on board with the new curriculum; "[t]he NDU staff – which teaches no students and has no academic expertise – has no purpose beyond gaining control of component schools and curricula about which it knows nothing."⁵⁶ When the NDU-P and senior staff recognized the dissatisfaction the faculty espoused, they should have taken a step-back to figure out how to more appropriately create a guiding coalition in order to develop and communicate the vision.

Unfortunately for the faculty, the majority affected most by the proposed changes were not part of the guiding coalition. It seemed as if numerous high-ranking officials at subordinate colleges were not part of the guiding coalition. Concerned faculty made numerous recommendations in an attempt to be a part of the guiding coalition. Furthermore, the faculty felt as that they had already made numerous improvements to their universities curriculum. The

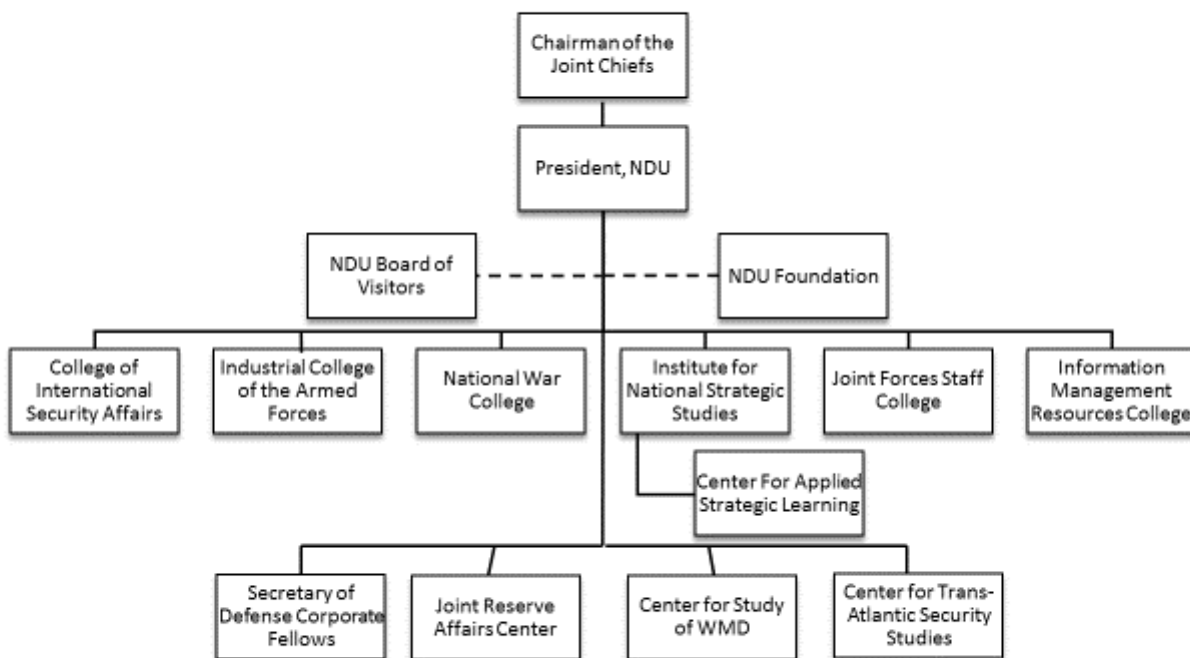
memorandum from the faculty to the NDU-P, dated 25 November 2014, detailed the changes the staff already made in regards to the curriculum; “Within the last 24 months, CISA, the Eisenhower School, and NWC all have conducted bottom-up curriculum reviews that have made significant changes in course organization, materials, and structure, and we are in the process of implementing the results of those reviews.”⁵⁷ This raises the question, why were subordinate colleges making curriculum changes in the two years prior to the announcement of the “Break Out plan” if the senior leaders at NDU were working on curriculum changes during the same time period? The guiding coalition that senior leaders at NDU built did not include the affected faculty members, or appropriate subordinate college deans. Even still, the faculty made it clear that they desired to work with the NDU-P and senior leaders to ensure curriculum changes were appropriately implemented, however, they were frustrated with the say-do gap. Later in the memo addressed to the NDU-P, the staff stated, “Faculties, who possess the experience, expertise, and understanding necessary for sound decisions about NDU’s teaching mission, believe they should be fully consulted and engaged in this process — before final decisions are made. To date, they have not been.”⁵⁸ The decline in the cohesion of the faculty due to the differing views on the implementation timeline of the JET did not happen in a vacuum; in addition to the JET and budget reductions, the challenges the staff faced during the internal and external organizational changes led to additional hindrances to the faculty and staff’s cohesion.

UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF REORGANIZATION

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed the reorganization of the National Defense University as a subordinate element of the J-7 in August 2011. In a speech to the Board of Visitors, Lieutenant General Flynn stated, “[J-7] is also responsible to the Chairman for producing a product – joint warfighting capabilities.”⁵⁹ Lieutenant General Flynn then went on

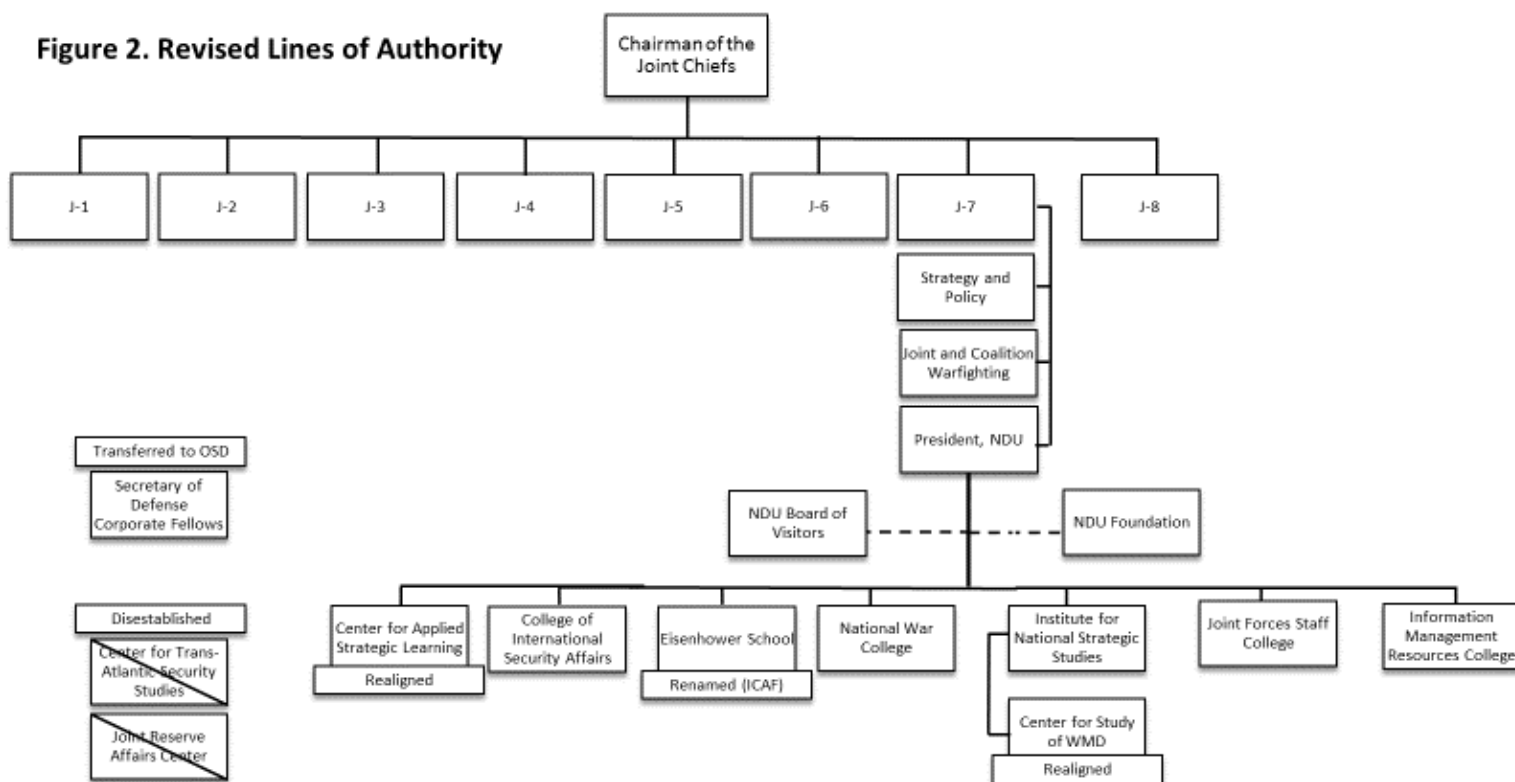
to give examples of how NDU grew from 136 to 211 faculty and the budget increased from 60 million dollars to over 140 million dollars including reimbursables.⁶⁰ With the current Budget restrictions that were placed on the J-7, the National Defense University would have to make reductions to areas that did not support the production of the joint warfighter. Furthermore, the recent change to CJCSI 1801.01c would make the J-7 the authority over all matters at the National Defense University. The resultant organizational changes would remove the direct-line authority the NDU-P previously had with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs (figure 1) and make the National Defense University a part of a larger organization with competing interests (figure 2). This transition of the National Defense University would have unintended consequences to the cohesion of the faculty and staff and impact the effectiveness of additional changes to the organization.

Figure 1. Previous lines of Authority



Source: Author; based on the information contained in, *NDU Next Steps in the Way Ahead Memorandum*, 16 November 2012.

Figure 2. Revised Lines of Authority



Source: Author; based on the information contained in, *NDU Next Steps in the Way Ahead Memorandum, 16 November 2012*.

There were problems from the beginning of the reorganization of the National Defense University as a subordinate element of the J-7. To begin with, the National Defense University did not establish standard operating procedures to work with the J-7, nor was the J-7 capable of providing the administrative support an organization with the scope of NDU would require. During the board of visitors meeting in 2011, Vice Admiral Rondeau – the NDU-P from 2009 to 2012 – stated, “Previously [prior to the reorganization], NDU had no admin office and no instructions or procedures for admin activities.”⁶¹ Moreover, the CJCSI 1801.01c would require all administrative functions be routed through the Director Joint Force Development, J-7. According to CJCSI 1801.01c, the “Director for Joint Force Development, Joint Staff (DJ-7) is responsible for the following...serving as the principal Joint Staff point of contact for NDU

matters, which include establishing CJCS NDU policy.”⁶² Prior to the reorganization, the staff could coordinate directly with different agencies at the joint staff. Once the National Defense University became a subordinate element to the J-7 it not only added an extra layer of coordination, it forced the staff and faculty to comply with the additional administrative requirements of the J-7.

One member of INSS described an example of the complexities involved with being a subordinate element of J-7. When he attempted to coordinate an official visit involving thirty Chinese General/Flag Officers to NDU and the Pentagon— as he had done in the past — the cognizant J-7 staffing officer was not pleased that the NDU staff had apparently not realized that new processes had been put in place for J-7 staff to oversee all NDU activities and functions. The J-7 staff officer sent his request back for not including the J-7 directly in the process. Then, the J-7 requested NDU resubmit the package and route it through the J-7 with recommendation letter on behalf of the Director Joint Force Development, and a memorandum explaining why NDU made the request in the first place, since the J-7 and Director were unfamiliar with the process. In addition to the requirements of the J-7, the National Defense University required a new staffing process as well, since the request needed approval from the NDU-P’s boss before it was to be submitted to the J-7 staff. Furthermore, this created layers of bureaucracy between subject matter experts and approval authorities. The lack of standard operating procedures between the newly established J-7 and NDU, is an example of how the reorganization of the NDU as a subordinate element of the J-7 complicated the day-to-day lives of the faculty and staff—and the example just provided is a single example. The everyday administrative activities of NDU was similarly compounded for virtually hundreds of other such routine activities on a daily basis enduring for a number of months.

Through the J-7, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs marginalized the ability of the NDU-P to lead the National Defense University through the reorganization process. All of the decisions made about the reorganization and curriculum changes were the result of direction from, or coordination with the J-7 and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The amendment to CJCSI 1800.01d added the role Deputy Director, Joint Staff, for Military Education, effectively removing or complicating the following responsibilities formerly belonging to the NDU-P:

- Review and recommend JPME revisions.
- Administer the PAJE.
- Coordinate NDU PME student body size and composition with NDU and the Services.
- Coordinate the periodic review of JPME curricula for the Chairman.
- Coordinate for the Joint Staff on reports dealing with military education.
- Coordinate with NDU on the execution, funding, and annual review of PINNACLE, CAPSTONE, and KEYSTONE.⁶³

Since the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff wanted the focus of NDU to primarily teach JPME, the NDU-P was obligated to follow the Chairman's guidance. In fact, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff wrote the mission statement for NDU in February, 2012. Lieutenant General Flynn echoed everything that the chairman directed, continuing to pressure the NDU-P to complete the organizational and academic changes. Major General Martin's frustration became evident when Vice Admiral Vivian Crea asked about the relationship between the J-7 and NDU; the scribe reported that Major General Martin replied, "the short answer is that he[NDU-P] reports directly to the Director of the J-7. It's collegial and friendly, but also a tough professional relationship."⁶⁴ Unfortunately for the university, the NDU-P had to answer to two bosses and there is no information that the NDU-P resisted the pressure from higher-headquarters.

This inability or unwillingness for the NDU-P to question the direction from higher, limited the NDU-P's ability to properly build a guiding coalition. When the NDU-P introduced an initiative to change an aspect of the organization, the NDU-P emphasized the requirement from higher before explaining the reason for the required change. When Major General Martin introduced the "One University" initiative to senior leaders, he stated, "In the short term, this will allow us to align NDU to the guidance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff."⁶⁵ When there were outcries concerning the JET implementation timeline, the NDU-P's first statement in the pamphlet addressing these concerns, referred to the Chairman's direction to change the curriculum. The NDU-P dedicated half of the next page in the pamphlet to the Chairman's guidance. The senior leadership had a vision for the academic and organizational change and it aligned unquestionably with the guidance from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. While the senior leadership and NDU-P espoused an openness to assistance from subordinates, they effectively marginalized the input from subordinates that opposed the reorganizational methods by invalidating their concerns. In the "frequently asked questions" section of the JET pamphlet the faculty and staff's concerns were dispelled as being misplaced, or simply referenced the Chairman's guidance as the primary reason for the proposed changes. The senior leadership wanted to build a guiding coalition of faculty and staff that wanted to align with their vision. Some faculty members that opposed the vision of the senior leaders felt threatened and addressed their concerns in an open forum utilizing *Foreign Policy*. In response to concerns from the staff Major General Martin stated, "[i]t has come to my attention that some were concerned by my remarks on the importance of moving forward as one team on the curriculum revision. It was not my intent to cause concern for anyone's position at the university, but rather to build a team approach to this important transformational effort."⁶⁶ The dictatorial nature of the senior

leadership and the references to the Chairman's guidance effectively negated the need to build a guiding coalition and left little room for creative thought for the reorganization.

The negative effects of the reorganization transcended the external organizational changes and also created problems for the internal reorganizational efforts. Acting on the direction from the Chairman and the J-7 the "One University" initiative required numerous internal changes to the organization. This "One University" plan would remove the majority of the administrative functions at the subordinate colleges and realign them to the National Defense University. The "One University" plan would also disestablish two research centers, transfer one fellow, and realign the Center for Applied Strategic Learning and the Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction (see figure 2). Unfortunately, the dictatorial trend continued amongst the leadership at NDU. Gerald Mitchell points out, "The NDU staff has grown by 184 positions under the 'One NDU' concept, while JFSC has lost 41 positions...Once again, the commandants and deans of the component colleges have protested to no avail. The answer is 'don't be disloyal;' 'don't fight the plan;' 'you are not being a team player.'"⁶⁷ The dictatorial actions by the senior leadership, created hindrances to the cohesion of the faculty and staff and did not provide an effective platform to implement organizational change.

ANALYSIS

In order to effectively implement change, an organization should work together towards a common goal. The director of the joint staff and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff expected the National Defense University to conduct academic and organizational change in short succession. The senior leadership at NDU understood their commander's intent and formed the team to implement both academic and organizational change. This team made the majority of the decisions regarding change and when conflict arose the leadership demonstrated

a “say-do” gap. On numerous occasions, the senior leadership told the faculty and staff that they wanted their input. However, every documented case where a subordinate made a recommendation to the “One University” plan or the JET, the senior leadership did not act on the recommendations, they would send out official documents restating why the leadership’s decisions were correct, and sometimes, use the faculties words against them. This “say-do” gap and the inability of the senior leadership to engage with their subordinates led to division between the senior leadership and the faculty and staff.

The division between the senior leadership and faculty and staff resulted in the formation of two groups at the NDU, those who wanted to implement organizational change and those who resented it. In the eyes of those that resented the reorganization, the senior leadership acted as elites and made top-down decisions in isolation or were self-serving; from the 96 faculty members, “we have serious concerns about the process used to arrive at a decision;”⁶⁸ from Gerald Mitchell, “an organization lead by perhaps power-hungry, self-serving persons;”⁶⁹ lastly, from an anonymous faculty member, “[t]he most recent command climate survey was a remarkable exercise in distrust.”⁷⁰ Helen Campbell, states, “[f]undamentally these two groups are driven by conflicting agendas and organizations must find ways for them to work together in harmony with common goals if the long-term benefits are to be achieved.”⁷¹ Unfortunately for the National Defense University, the conflicting agendas of the select group of senior leaders and the faculty could not reconcile their differences and two high-ranking members resigned before the NDU-P resigned.

In total, three high-ranking officials resigned during the reorganization of the National Defense University between 2011 and 2014, the dean of faculty at the National War College; the INSS director, and the NDU-P. Additionally, a significant number of faculty and staff were

either laid off or sought employment elsewhere due to problems with their contracts as a result of the budget reductions. Had the senior leadership understood the ramifications of their decisions, they could have prevented the loss of quality employees and more effectively implemented organizational change. Helen Campbell makes it clear in her argument, “If the change is poorly managed or the potential negative impact is significant, those who can do so easily (usually your top performers) will leave the organization. Others will reduce their productivity and make future attempts to change a lot harder.”⁷² Due to the poorly managed organizational change at the National Defense University, the dean of faculty and the director of INSS resigned. While it is unclear why the NDU-P resigned, the reduced productivity of the faculty made it more difficult for the senior leadership to implement change.

CONCLUSION

The ineffectiveness of the reorganization at the National Defense University might have been mitigated, provided the senior staff appropriately utilized Kotter’s model for organizational change. The senior leadership at NDU effectively disregarded the formational steps of Kotter’s model for organizational change by not including the right people to nurture the reorganization. Many of the decisions about the reorganization were made in isolation and often times marginalized the input from subordinates. Furthermore, the senior leaders were dictatorial and not seemingly concerned with building a guiding coalition. The end result was the resignation of three high-ranking officials, high rates of attrition amongst the faculty and staff, elimination of some organizations within the NDU, and reduction of pay of some NDU employees. Had the senior leadership properly utilized Kotter’s model for organizational change and built a more inclusive team, they might have prevented the pitfalls associated with the requirement to lower the operating budget, the differing views between the staff and the faculty about how to

implement the Joint Education Transformation, and the unintended consequences resulting from restructuring the NDU as a subordinate element of the Joint Staff, J-7.

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