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THE JCS (JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF) ROLE IN PLANNING
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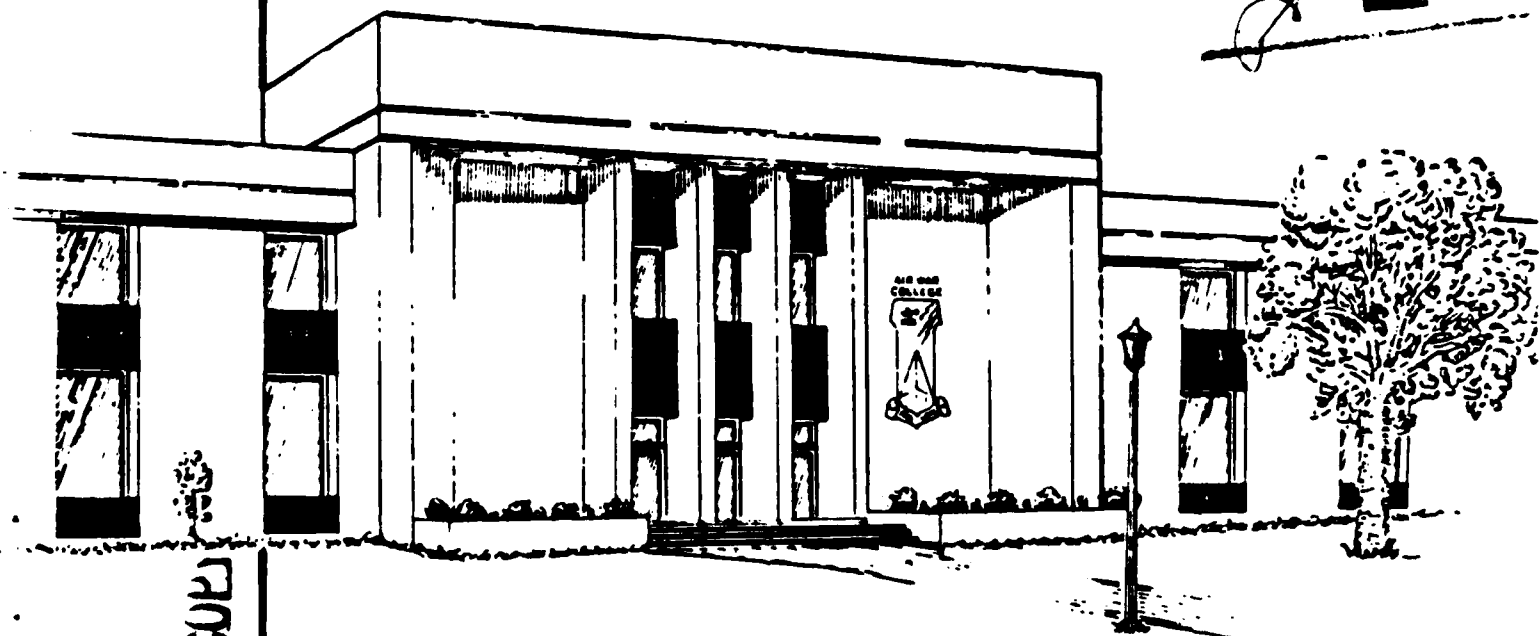
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By COLONEL ANTHONY N. WHITE

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THE JCS ROLE IN PLANNING, PROGRAMMING AND BUDGETING

by

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A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE RESEARCH
REQUIREMENT

Research Advisor: Colonel Richard D. Clark

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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AIR WAR COLLEGE RESEARCH REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: The JCS Role in Planning, Programming and
Budgeting

AUTHOR: Anthony N. White, Colonel, USAF

→ *This document* *Joint Chiefs of Staff*
Provides a description of current JCS activities
in planning and programming which contribute to the
resource allocation decision making process. In the
author's view, the lack of fiscal reality throughout
the planning effort creates conditions which denigrate
the planners product during subsequent resource
allocation phases. Two changes to enhance the role of
the JCS in the planning and programming phases are
suggested.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel Anthony N. White (M.B.A., University of Arkansas) has been involved in many facets of the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) throughout much of his military career. He has served in assignments at the Air Staff, two MAJCOMS, and numerous installation level positions where resource allocation decisions were made. His Professional Military Education includes the Squadron Officers School, Air Command and Staff College, and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. Colonel White is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1986.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) is a formal, annual, structured sequence of events leading to the development, approval, and execution of resource allocation or budget decisions. PPBS is a Department of Defense (DOD) process involving formally defined phases and participative interaction by various organizational elements, including the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

Since the introduction of PPBS in 1961 by Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara, the system has been evolutionarily modified to meet the needs of senior DOD officials. The Reagan administration has attempted to strengthen the PPBS role of the operational commanders in chief (CINCs) and JCS, and thereby alter the once dominant roles of the service and DOD headquarters staff. Nonetheless, the role of the JCS in PPBS is rather limited. Principally, the JCS has focused on threat analysis and projections of force structure requirements that are considered necessary to achieve national military strategy.

The purpose of this paper is to determine if the JCS's role in resource allocation is adequate or inadequate. To accomplish this purpose my study will review how the JCS performs their planning and examine

their impact and influence on programming. Finally, this study undertakes an examination of deficiencies and shortcomings and offers recommended improvements. Budgeting is not examined because the JCS is not integrally involved, nor should they become involved to any great extent.

CHAPTER II

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF ROLE IN PLANNING

This chapter describes the role of the Chairman, JCS, and his joint staff in the planning phase of PPBS. Addressed herein is the statutory basis and tasking for JCS planners, the key documents that the JCS feeds into PPBS, and how it fits together in the PPBS process.

The opportunity for the JCS to significantly influence national defense policy is markedly enhanced due to their statutory role as defense planners. They are the senior military advisors to the President and Secretary of Defense. The JCS are tasked, by law, to:

Prepare strategic plans and provide for strategic direction of the Armed Forces; and review the major materials and personnel requirements of the Armed Forces in accordance with strategic and logistic plans (1:1).

Two key JCS planning documents are annually developed for this purpose and they feed planning information into the PPBS. These documents are the Joint Intelligence Estimate for Planning (JIEP) and the Joint Strategic Planning Document (JSPD).

The JIEP, published almost a full year before the programming cycle begins, contains intelligence estimates for the short and mid-range periods (1 to 10 years). The JIEP contains a global, as well as specific regional appraisals of the world situation and the military threat to the security and vital interests

of the United States and our allies. The threat is developed using intelligence inputs from all the services, JCS and the Defense Intelligence Agency. This threat analysis forms the basis for the development of other Joint Strategic Planning System documents.

The second key JCS document for the planning phase of the PPBS is the JSPD. Using the JIEP and inputs from the services and the unified and specified commanders, a "planning force" is developed by the JCS. The JSPD contains a comprehensive threat synopsis relative to U.S. interests and objectives worldwide as well as JCS recommendations regarding military strategy to achieve these national objectives in the mid-range period. Included is a summary of the JCS "planning forces" required to execute the national military strategy with a reasonable assurance of success. It is provided to the President, the National Security Council and the Secretary of Defense (SecDef) in September, at the start of the Office of Secretary of Defense (OSD) planning cycle. The JSPD's "planning force" is not resource constrained but it is nonetheless designed to influence the development of the Defense Guidance (DG) by the OSD staff.

The SecDef has formed the Defense Resources Board (DRB) to help him manage both the PPBS and systems acquisition processes. The DRB is an executive

level corporate board of directors for DOD. Its function and membership has been expanded by Secretary Weinburger. Planning issues, particularly those relating to the DG development, are now an integral function of the board. DRB membership consists of the Deputy SecDef as chairman, selected, key OSD officials, the Associate Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the service secretaries. The Chairman, JCS, is the only military member of the DRB. However, the service chiefs attend virtually all meetings and the unified and specified commanders have for several years been invited to attend selected DRB sessions.

An essential purpose of the DG is to guide resource allocation decisions during the following PPBS phases. The DG document readdresses the threat assessment and provides guidance in the areas of policy, strategy, forces and resource structure, and it also fiscally constrains funding levels. Throughout the DG refinement phase the DRB undertakes an active role in constructing the final guidance. The final version of the DG is the principal link between the planning and programming phases of PPBS and it concludes the planning phase of PPBS.

CHAPTER III

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF ROLE IN PROGRAMMING

The second phase of PPBS is programming. During this phase the military services and Defense Agencies prepare their respective Program Objective Memorandum (POM), based on the Defense Guidance (DG). The respective POM inputs represent program proposals for forces, manpower, equipment, logistics, and operating support to meet the DG objectives. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) initiates a review of the various POM inputs upon their receipt in May. This chapter focuses on the resource allocation role of the JCS during this particular juncture of the defense budget development. The key documents used in this review phase are the JCS prepared Joint Program Assessment Memorandum (JPAM), one-page issue summaries, and the issue books used by the Defense Resources Board (DRB).

The JPAM is the first document produced by the JCS that focuses specifically on the programming force structure. The JPAM provides the SecDef with a joint assessment, aggregated from unified and specified commanders' inputs, along with the JCS joint staff analysis of the military services and Defense Agencies composite POM's. This JPAM assessment provides the JCS an opportunity to evaluate the composite force balance

and capabilities to execute national military strategy in view of the threat. JCS has the opportunity to comment on conflicting service approaches to a common problem. The JPAM includes an updated risk assessment and makes recommendations concerning defense capabilities that can be improved within alternate funding profiles. Additionally, the JPAM assesses SALT-constrained force levels, evaluates nuclear weapons stockpiles, and analyzes security assistance programs. At this stage the JPAM assessment offers the JCS an opportunity to considerably influence the composite military force structure.

The second series of key POM review documents used by OSD are the collection of one-page major issue summaries. These inputs may be submitted by the chairman, JCS, or any other member of the DRB. The proposed issues generally result from non-compliance with the DG, disagreement with service proposals, or more cost effective alternatives. Those unresolved issues that are of direct interest to senior decision makers go to the DRB for resolution.

Finally, the major unresolved issue summaries are sorted into seven issue book categories for DRB action. The end result of this three-month review is the Program Decision Memorandum.

CHAPTER IV

DEFICIENCIES AND RECOMMENDED IMPROVEMENTS

Several significant deficiencies in the present process detract from the JCS's ability to adequately perform a necessarily vital role in resource allocation decisions. This chapter identifies those shortcomings that degrade JCS's influence in PPBS and outlines several proposals to rectify these deficiencies.

The planning phase is critical to the translation of broad national security goals and objectives into a fiscally constrained and balanced program of military forces. Despite the opportunities for the JCS to emerge as the prominent planner, the system has failed to perform usefully. Ineffective planning for resource allocation has existed for a considerable period of time throughout the entire defense establishment. There is broad agreement that the first "P" of PPBS is silent (2:6).

A major weakness results because there is a significant gap between planning and fiscal reality. JCS planning documents are largely ignored by OSD and the services, or at least greatly underutilized, because they are not meaningfully utilized to solve policy, strategy, or program issues that arise due to fiscal constraints. Planning is not adequately linked to future PPBS related decisions:

. . . Joint military planning is not constrained by realistic projections of future defense budgets consequently, the primary JCS planning document are fiscally unrealistic and therefore largely ignored in the programming and budgeting process. Instead, national military force planning results from loosely coordinated, parallel dialogues between OSD and each of the individual service departments. This often results in disparate plans that do not optimize the potential contribution of each military service to national strategic objectives (3:38).

Therefore, national military strategy is seldom articulated by senior military advisors in a credible manner and this perpetuates incongruent planning, particularly in the realm of the DG. Since the JSPD supplies little, if any, utility, the DG suffers, as noted by the Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies. The value of formulated and balanced strategy is thus severely undermined with this absence of realistic fiscal constraints.

Establishing fiscal constraints is a key first step to enhance the use of planning documents in the subsequent programming and budgeting phases. The Chairman, JCS should change the system and institute fiscal constraints on the JSPD. This would require the JCS to set military priorities in a more realistic manner and a more utilitarian product would result. Fiscal funding targets could be supplied by OSD or JCS could produce their own projections. The important point is that efforts must be made to render meaningful funding projections. This proposal would still require the JSPD to be an input to the DG, thus allowing for a

continuation of the existing measure of civilian control and oversight. If this realism is achieved then the military services and Defense Agencies could and would rely jointly on the DG and the JSPD during the subsequent programming and budgeting phases. Ideally this approach would restore the JCS to their envisioned role as strategic planners because the DG would be solidly underpinned by the JSPD or a well articulated alternative approach would surface within the OSD civilian community that would provide the SecDef with more reasonable approaches than presently exist. In either case it certainly would better integrate JCS planning efforts. Most importantly, fiscally realistic JCS planning would serve as a useful measure for strategy and force structure analysis, all of which is presently missing. This recommendation could be implemented by the JCS without any legislative changes.

The assessment opportunities afforded the JCS by the JPAM, one-page issue summaries, and DRB membership, rely heavily on a good initial product by the JCS planners. The JPAM, in particular, must really assess, not simply restate the JSPD, as it essentially does now. Obviously, if the fiscally constrained JSPD approximates both the DG funding level and is in line with the DG's policy and strategy then it already provides a reasonable baseline for the JCS to again use

for their JPAM analysis. If either of these two conditions are missing then the JPAM analysis must be a totally fresh look. The JPAM assessment must deal in terms of program alternatives to the composite POMs instead of placing a major emphasis on seeking additional funding. At this juncture of the process the JPAM assessment is key because it sets the stage, from the JCS planner's perspective, to guide meaningful military strategy and it guides the chairman's actions through the remaining issue paper review cycle.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

On balance, the PPBS has been an enduring and flexible process since its inception in 1961. At the JCS level the singular greatest shortcoming is attributed to the lack of fiscal reality, which results in the planning process being a largely wasted effort. The JCS should function as the preeminent military planners, but several major changes are required to strengthen and enhance their role. Because of existing flaws the JCS has not consistently provided the policy and guidance underpinnings necessary to formulate a meaningful national military strategy. Strengthened JCS planning in support of the PPBS could well be the missing link.

Once the hard choices are confronted and made in the planning phase, the JCS is truly in a posture to guide military strategy. As the PPBS process flows through each phase, the JCS, OSD, and the military services can better assess alternative program decisions in light of the policy and strategy structure adopted during the initial planning stage. To do otherwise one would expect to accomplish less than optimal results or to improve known shortcomings.

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1. Ronald C. Baker, The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Department of Defense Decision Making Process, Maxwell AFB, Ala: Air Command and Staff College, 1970), p. 1.

2. Donald B. Rice, Defense Resource Management Study: Final Report, The Rand Corp., 1979, p. 6.

3. Toward a More Effective Defense, Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies, p. 38.

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