

NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

## The National War College

# STRATEGIC STUDIES PROJECT



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THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE  
STRATEGIC STUDIES REPORT ABSTRACT

TITLE: Military Reforms: Organizational Trends in Reform  
of the Military Establishment  
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DATE: January, 1987

This paper gives a historical overview of reforms of the command, control, and coordination structure of U.S. military forces. It identifies trends that are common motivations behind various reform movements. It also attempts to identify common characteristics of the organizational changes themselves in order to provide a suggestion as to future directions.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Lieutenant Colonel Robert J. Neilan, USA, is an infantry officer, commissioned through Officer Candidate School in 1966. He completed his baccalaureate studies in philosophy at the University of Nebraska, Omaha and holds a Master of Arts in management from Central Michigan University. He has served overseas in Vietnam and Germany. He first developed an interest in joint service issues while on the staff of the Commander in Chief, Pacific. He has also served on the Army Staff. Lieutenant Colonel Neilan is a 1987 graduate of the National War College.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

You will be shocked at the serious deficiencies in the organization and procedures of the Department of Defense and the Congress. If we have to fight tomorrow, these problems will cause Americans to die unnecessarily. Even more, they may cause us to lose the fight.

Barry Goldwater<sup>1</sup>

With these words, an ageing Senator led the successful fight for major legislation to overhaul the nation's defense structure. How did the establishment get to be in such condition? How long has it been this way? What has been done in the past to address these problems? Is what Congress prescribes the most effective remedy? This paper will attempt to answer these questions by means of a brief historical review of organizational trends in the United States military. Some factors will appear as common elements in the motivations leading to reform. These include changes in the United States position on the world stage, the advent of new technologies, and a desire for economical defense.

There will also appear some interesting characteristics in the nature of the changes themselves. The effort to maintain and enhance civilian control over the uniformed Services has tended to fragment the organization functionally while simultaneously pushing toward Service unification. Analysis of these tendencies may provide some insight into future directions.

Military reform, of course, involves a panoply of issues from procurement to personnel. This study is limited to the questions surrounding command, control, and coordination of military forces in peace and war. Command and control refers to the structure by which the orders and directions of the Commander in Chief are conveyed to the operating forces. Coordination relates to the way in which the efforts of the various Armed Forces are focused in

order to produce the most desirable result for the nation.

## CHAPTER II

### TRENDS TOWARD UNIFICATION, 1789-1945

The nation began its history under the Constitution with a unified military organization. For the first nine years, from 1789 to 1798, there was a single military department, the War Department. The Secretary of War was the President's single agent for all matters involving the minuscule army and virtually nonexistent navy. In John Adams' administration, the Federalists embarked on a buildup of naval capability because there was a growing threat of war with France. The Fifth Congress established the Navy Department and Maryland's Benjamin Stoddert became the first Secretary. For the next 149 years, the President, as Commander-in-Chief, was the point at which the United States military power was coordinated.<sup>2</sup>

For most of the Nineteenth Century, there were few occasions and little need for joint action on the part of the two services. The principal exception was the Civil War campaign in the West where the cooperation between Grant and naval officers such as Foote and Porter was an essential ingredient for the successful attacks on the Confederacy in that theater. The first actual "unified" command in the field was exercised by the Commander-in-Chief himself. In May of 1862, Abraham Lincoln personally directed the efforts of Commodore Louis M. Goldsborough and General John E. Wool in the capture of the port of Norfolk which, by then, had been abandoned by the Confederates. The intrepid President even conducted a personal reconnaissance of potential landing sites.<sup>3</sup>

The war with Spain in 1898 and the resultant changes in America's position in the world brought major pressures for reform. The record of cooperation between the Army and the Navy

during that conflict was abysmally poor (as was much of each service's performance). Early war planning was conducted independently and without coordination. At one point, the Army set a date for an invasion of Cuba and failed to inform the Navy which was providing the ships and the escorts. The operation was postponed. Throughout the war, President McKinley was the point at which conflicts between the services--even the most petty--were resolved. He was the arbitrator and mediator.<sup>4</sup>

After the war, there was widespread sentiment for reform to correct these problems. But there were other forces at work as well. The United States entered the new century with a significantly enhanced position in world affairs. This new role required a more sophisticated foreign policy and a flexible, capable military component of national power. Additionally, far-flung new territorial possessions brought additional burdens for governance and defense. The newly enlarged military services engaged in jurisdictional disputes over the overseas territories.<sup>5</sup> There was a clear need for some formal mechanism for coordinating military plans and operations.

Encouraged by the Secretary of War, Elihu Root, the Army and Navy agreed to establish a committee to foster "cooperation and mutual understanding."<sup>6</sup> The Joint Army and Navy Board first met in 1903 with four senior officers from each service including General Samuel B. M. Young, the Army's first Chief of Staff, and Admiral George Dewey, the hero of Manila Bay. Although the Board had no staff and lacked any direct authority, it remained the principal vehicle for interservice coordination until 1942.

At the same time, Root was also engaged in forcing badly needed internal reforms on an unwilling Army. Drawing on the work of Emory Upton, the Dodge Commission, and others, he streamlined the lines of authority from the Secretary of War by abolishing the ambiguous position of Commanding General of the Army and replacing it with the Chief of Staff. He broke the back of the powerful bureau chiefs with the formation of the General Staff Corps. All

of these changes were wrought only after difficult Congressional battles in which many elements of the Army used all of their considerable influence to prevent and delay the changes.<sup>7</sup> The Navy underwent no similar overhaul, a circumstance which had implications for the Navy's resistance to future unification efforts.

During World War I, new elements surfaced to reinforce the need for unity of effort in military endeavors. In the field, new concepts arose for joint operations and unity of command; while at home, Army-Navy competition for scarce resources strained the nation's industrial and mobilization capability. The arrival of airpower on the battlefield spurred discussion of the role of the new weapon over land and sea. All these elements, coupled with postwar economy drives led to new unification efforts. During the next several years, a number of bills and resolutions were introduced in Congress proposing various unification schemes, but none passed. The Services themselves made only modest efforts to strengthen the Joint Board by providing staff support. An Army and Navy Munitions Board and, later, a Joint Economy Board made some effort to eliminate costly duplication. Although these agencies were, on the whole, ineffective, they did provide a base on which to build when World War II demanded true joint effort.<sup>8</sup>

The requirement to deal with the British Chiefs of Staff Committee on equal footing led to the birth of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Arcadia Conference shortly after Pearl Harbor. At that conference, Churchill and Roosevelt approved the establishment of the Combined Chiefs of Staff to provide the overall strategic direction of the war. The senior army, navy, and air (The Royal Air Force was already an independent service.) officers of each country were members. In July, 1942, Roosevelt's Chief of Staff, Admiral William D. Leahy was added. Very soon, the JCS made the rather large organizational step from coordinating matters with the British to providing overall direction to U. S. forces. This was accomplished without any formal executive or

legislative charter. The direct relationship between the Chiefs and Roosevelt made this possible. The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy filled primarily administrative and mobilization roles. Throughout the war, a host of committees and agencies grew up under the JCS. Particularly after the U. S. was "outstaffed" by the British at the Casablanca Conference in early 1943, the value of full-time joint staff organizations was recognized.<sup>9</sup>

There were efforts during the war to look for permanent organizational remedies. A House select committee, chaired by Clifton A. Woodrum, met in 1944 to study postwar military organization. Army Chief of Staff, General George Marshall, who had presented a proposal to the JCS in the previous year, sent his deputy, General Joseph T. McNarney, to present a plan to the Woodrum Committee. This "McNarney Plan" called for a single cabinet department for the Armed Forces and a "United States Chiefs of Staff" headed by the President's Chief of Staff. It also called for a separate Air Force. Army and Army Air Force witnesses supported the plan but the Navy convinced the Committee to postpone action until after the war. At the same time the JCS was completing its own study. Chaired by retired Admiral J. O. Richardson, the Special Committee for Reorganization of the National Defense interviewed hundreds of officers in all services including leading combat commanders overseas. This report went even farther than McNarney because it recommended a single commander of the Armed Forces under a single civilian secretary. Richardson himself disagreed with the conclusion and filed a minority report.<sup>10</sup>

There are some common threads apparent in the early trends toward unification. Many of the factors which sparked organizational change were variations on the same themes. For example, the more the United States became involved in world affairs, the more it needed a larger, more flexible, and more responsive military establishment. Technology, especially

airpower, drastically complicated the business of war and blurred the neat distinctions of past service roles. And in the wake of each expensive war, the nation looked for more efficient means to provide for the common defense. After World War II, the pressures were exponentially more acute and the result was the reforms of 1947 and the "Battle of the Potomac."

### CHAPTER III

#### THE REORGANIZATIONS OF 1947 AND 1949

As World War II concluded, there was near universal agreement that some change was needed in the nation's defense structure. Although the United States initiated a precipitous demobilization after the Japanese surrender, Soviet behavior and the power vacuums of Europe and Asia quickly brought home the need for a continued military capability. At the same time, there was a dawning realization that American interests were linked to other nations around the world and, therefore, future conflict was likely to be the collective effort of allies fighting common foes. Recent experience in coalition war had demonstrated how difficult the coordination and planning functions had become. Additionally, future conflicts were likely--and hopefully--to be fought outside the U.S. These overseas conflicts emphasized the need for joint air, land, sea coordination.

Technology changed war dramatically. Airpower, mechanized ground combat, and, above all, the advent of atomic weapons severely complicated the task of the warrior and blurred the traditional distinctions among Service roles and missions. Moreover, the cost of fighting this kind of war coupled with a desire of the American people to return to production of peacetime goods, generated demand for an economical defense effort.

All these factors brought into clear focus by the recent war experience, produced an almost universal consensus that there was a need for change, if only to legitimize the institutions that produced the victory. But the form and extent of the reforms engendered controversy. All Services agreed on the need for unified command of forces in the theater of operations. A more difficult issue to resolve was the nature of the Washington establishment which would supervise the war effort and run things in peacetime.<sup>11</sup>

The proposals considered by Congress and the Joint Chiefs during the war stimulated a response from the Navy. James Forrestal replaced unification proponent Frank Knox as Secretary of the Navy. He commissioned Ferdinand Eberstadt, a former chairman of the Munitions Board, to study the issues. The study produced a plan that retained separate, Cabinet-level Service Departments but provided a coordination framework composed of a National Security Council and a National Security Resources Board. The Joint Chiefs of Staff would have been given statutory legitimacy and a small Joint Staff, but was not given any budget role or authority over the Services.

The Army's position had evolved into a plan that was presented to Congress by Lieutenant General J. Lawton Collins, Chief of Staff of Army Ground Forces. The Collins plan described a Department of Defense headed by a Secretary of the Armed Forces. The uniformed establishment would be headed by the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, who would be the chief military adviser and the executive for the Secretary. The U.S. Chiefs of Staff retained the wartime membership of Service Chiefs and the Chief of Staff to the President, but added the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces as presiding officer. The role of the U.S. Chiefs was strictly advisory. Importantly, Service budgets would be sent to the President through the Secretary of the Armed Forces with comments by the U.S. Chiefs. Both the Collins and Eberstadt plans envisioned a separate Air Force.<sup>12</sup>

The reasons for the sharp differences between Army and Navy positions are complex. The Navy had not experienced the Root reforms that had streamlined the Army earlier in the century. Therefore, Naval officers were uncomfortable with the centralization of authority which flowed from the degree of unification in the Collins Plan. Army officers, on the other hand, had enjoyed fairly good success with the hierarchical organization within the War Department. The extension of those principles to the entire defense establishment seemed a logical step.

The unification debate had also been intricately tied to sensitive roles and missions disputes. Some Army and Army Air Force officers, as they argued for reorganization and an independent Air Force, also included recommendations for separating Naval Air from the Navy and paring the Marine Corps down to a mere guard force. Because of this linkage, the Navy retained an understandable wariness of all reorganization efforts, particularly those proposals which lacked ironclad Congressional protection of the roles of Naval Air and Marines.

All the Services realized the importance of control of the budget in peacetime, particularly in the changed world that America faced. The Navy realized that it would be in a battle with the Air Force for the lead position in America's postwar defense, especially in regard to atomic weapons. Navy leaders felt more confident conducting that battle in Congress with the help of their allies than within a Defense Department. Conversely, the Army was concerned that its rather more mundane role might pale in comparison to the more glamorous Navy and Air Force.

Altruistically, the Navy argued that over-centralization presented a grave risk to the long-standing American principle of civilian control over the military. Congress was warned that concentrating too much power in a single military leader could threaten democratic institutions. The Army pointed out the gains in efficiency and effectiveness that could be achieved from eliminating duplication and streamlining operations.<sup>13</sup>

Some writers have also pointed to cultural differences stemming from the nature of service in the two organizations. Navy officers are seen as having developed in an environment fostering independent action with little requirement for coordination and little personal supervision by superiors. In the Army, the emphasis is on teamwork and cooperation; the chain of command is intimately involved in day-to-day operations. Thus, there are differing attitudes toward centralization.<sup>14</sup>

Whatever the reasons, the fight before Congressional

Committees and in the press was long and bitter. President Truman leaned strongly toward the more centralized proposals, but was unsuccessful in preventing a parade of Navy and Marine witnesses from presenting the opposing view on Capitol Hill. Two issues were central to the dispute. First, of course, was the establishment of a separate Air Force which the Navy viewed as a threat to Naval and Marine aviation. The second, and more basic issue concerned the organizational level at which coordination would occur and decisions would be made. The Navy-supported Eberstadt Plan envisioned coordination at Cabinet level, with Service Secretaries resolving issues in the National Security Council. Unresolved problems would go to the President for decision. In the Army scheme, coordination would be within the Department of National Defense and decisions would be made by the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces or the Secretary. Thus, the President would be provided a single military point of view.

Since the debate showed no signs of resolution, Truman directed Robert Patterson--then Secretary of War--and Forrestal to negotiate their differences and present him with unresolved issues. Truman reviewed the findings and decided in favor of a separate Air Force and against a single Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. Even after this Presidential decision, Patterson and Forrestal had to appoint a committee to draft mutually acceptable legislation. General Lauris Norstad and Admiral Forrest Sherman led the effort to develop a blueprint that was acceptable to both Service Secretaries and to the President. Truman submitted proposed legislation to both Houses of the new 80th Congress in February, 1947.<sup>15</sup>

After several more months of debate and hearings, Congress passed the National Security Act (Public Law 253) on July 25, 1947. On September 17, 1947, James Forrestal was sworn in as the first Secretary of Defense. Although the law stopped far short of the highly centralized proposals recommended by the Army, it represented a watershed in the development of American national

security structure. The importance of nonmilitary security issues was recognized by the establishment of the National Security Council (NSC) and the National Security Resources Board (NSRB) to coordinate government-wide defense programs. The Central Intelligence Agency was created to operate under the NSC and to coordinate national intelligence activities.

In the military arena, the Services--including a separate Air Force--were brought together into a single structure although not under a Cabinet department. The Cabinet-level Secretary headed the "National Military Establishment" that included the three Service Departments which remained executive departments of the government. The Service Secretaries were given seats on the NSC and the NSRB and had the right to go directly to the President on budget or other issues. The Secretary of Defense had a very small staff and very vaguely defined authority. The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) was given legal status with the three Service Chiefs and the Chief of Staff to the President as members. The JCS was also given a small (100 member) Joint Staff. The Act also created a War Council (forerunner of today's Armed Forces Policy Council) to advise the Secretary of Defense.<sup>16</sup>

The JCS as a body was assigned the role of principal military advisor to the President and the Secretary of Defense. It was also charged with developing joint plans and coordinating military education. The only operational responsibility was to establish unified commands. The JCS elected to use the method of assigning a Service Chief as "executive agent" for each of the unified commands. Public Law 253 assigned no budget responsibility or authority to the Joint Chiefs.<sup>17</sup>

Secretary Forrestal, whose views against centralization were strongly reflected in the 1947 law, had not been in office long before he realized its shortcomings. In his first annual report, he pointed to a need for a single officer to speak for the JCS as his advisor and for more specific authority for the Secretary. He was instrumental in having the National Military Establishment

added to the scope of the Hoover Commission's study of the Executive Branch. The head of the military task force was none other than Forrestal's old friend, Ferdinand Eberstadt. The study's recommendations undoubtedly reflected the Secretary's views. The key proposals were a substantial increase in the authority of the Secretary of Defense at the expense of the Service Secretaries and the addition of a position designated the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>18</sup>

With the support of Forrestal and President Truman, Congress incorporated most of the changes in a 1949 amendment to the National Security Act. The National Military Establishment became the full fledged Department of Defense and the Services were reduced in status to non-Cabinet "Service Departments" and the Secretaries stripped of their authority to go directly to the President. They were required to administer their Departments "under the authority and direction" of the Secretary of Defense and they lost their seats on the National Security Council. A Chairman was added to the JCS without a "vote." The Chairman was placed in an advisory role to the NSC where he was expected to present the collective views of the Chiefs. The Joint Staff was increased in size to 210 officers.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, the United States entered the challenging second half of the century with a revamped military organization. It was, however, an organization that reflected compromise between vastly different points of view. The Army, under Generals Marshall, Eisenhower, and Bradley, and the President, Harry Truman, had favored a unitary, hierarchical structure. The Navy and many members of Congress were suspicious of such concentration of power. The nature of the reform was also affected by the character of the Secretaries who implemented it. Forrestal, despite his push for more authority, generally adopted a "hands off" approach to managing the Department. However, his successor, Louis Johnson, ruled with an iron hand, a tactic which led to the famous "revolt of the admirals" when he cancelled the aircraft carrier, U.S.S.

United States, in 1949. Truman saw clearly that unification would be an iterative process: "Unification of the Services must be looked on as a long-term job."<sup>20</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

### EVOLUTION, 1953 AND 1958

Dwight Eisenhower, who became President in 1953, had long been a strong proponent of unification. During the post-war debates, he testified in favor of a strong Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. As President, he shifted the emphasis to increasing the power of the Secretary of Defense, perhaps reflecting his new position as a political rather than a military leader. Nonetheless, he continued to push for centralized authority and responsibility.

The underlying factors stimulating reform in the 1950's were similar to those in earlier years. The Korean War had demonstrated the inefficiency of the system of joint boards operating in the Defense Department. Eisenhower took office believing that national security included more than military strength and that the amount of national wealth that could be expended on the military was limited. Economy was a necessary goal. America was now tied into a system of alliances around the world that greatly complicated the defense equation. New weapons and delivery systems demanded the capability for virtually instantaneous response. Peacetime organization would have to be able to fight wars. Economy, technology, and the U.S. world role continued to be prime factors in organizational reform.

The 1953 effort actually began in the Truman Administration with the preparation by the Secretary of Defense, Robert Lovett, of an analysis of Defense Department organizational problems. These were provided to Eisenhower as part of the transition process and were an important part of the study conducted under the chairmanship of Nelson Rockefeller. The proposals were submitted to Congress as Reorganization Plan No. 6 (one of a series of executive reforms). Congress allowed the Plan to take effect on June 30, 1953.

These reforms consolidated the authority of the Secretary of Defense. The system of boards was replaced by six new assistant secretaries who had the authority to act in the name of the Secretary. The Service Secretaries' roles were once more diminished, and they were now considered "operating managers." The Chairman of the JCS was given more direct authority over the Joint Staff. However, the command channel to the unified commands was altered. Instead of the Service Chief (as a member of the JCS) being designated executive agent for a command, the chain now went from the Secretary of Defense to the Service Department to the Service Chief. This removed the JCS from the operational chain.<sup>21</sup>

Eisenhower was still not satisfied. The bitter interservice battles over weapons development and force structure convinced him that further reform was required. He was also concerned about the ability of the military to respond in an emergency.

The Joint Chiefs' system, as it now exists is too complicated to work in warfare when minutes will be as precious as months have been in the past. Readiness for anticipated emergency demands that the peacetime organization be made so simple and clear that decision and control are free of delays and obstructions.<sup>22</sup>

Once again with the assistance of the Rockefeller Commission, Eisenhower developed a plan for reorganization of the Defense Department. Congress accepted most of his proposals and passed the Defense Department Reorganization Act of 1958 which was signed into law on August 6. It continued the consolidation of the power of the Secretary at the expense of the Service Departments. The executive agent system was abolished and the unified commands were now established by the Secretary of Defense and were directly under his command. The authority of the unified commanders to exercise operational control over their assigned forces was clarified. The JCS was allowed to organize the Joint Staff (increased to 400 officers) along traditional staff lines thus abolishing the committee system which had been functioning since 1942. The

Chairman's authority over the staff was strengthened although he now exercised that control on behalf of the JCS. He was given an equal "vote" in JCS deliberations. The Secretary was also given the authority to transfer, reassign, abolish, or consolidate combatant functions among the services.<sup>23</sup>

Eisenhower's reforms had gone a long way toward consolidating, in civilian hands, authority over the Nation's military forces. The new organization reinforced a traditional bipolar tension in American defense structure. On one side were those involved in development and providing of forces and materiel. These were the Service Departments and the Defense agencies. On the other side were those responsible for readiness and for fighting wars--the JCS and the unified commands. This divergence of responsibility had been greatly reduced in the Army by the Root reforms but remained very strongly entrenched in the Navy. It was a characteristic that would figure prominently in future Defense Department reforms.

After 1958, the Chairman possessed much greater authority and stature; but he still lacked the command authority of a true Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces as recommended by Marshall, Truman, and Eisenhower. The Secretary's office, on the other hand, was potentially very powerful; and the potential was fully exploited by the next Secretary of Defense, Robert McNamara.

## CHAPTER V

### THE TREND CONTINUES, 1986

The decades of the 1960's and 1970's produced little in the way of structural reform of the nation's military establishment. There were, however, procedural developments. They effected operations of the Department, as well as public and political perceptions of the organization's effectiveness. Secretary McNamara used the tools of the 1958 law to greatly centralize decision making authority in the civilian establishment of the Defense Department. The effect was so drastic that some have described it as the much-feared Prussian-style General Staff, only manned by civilians.<sup>24</sup>

It was also a difficult time for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Under the chairmanship of General Maxwell Taylor, who had close ties with President Kennedy and a good relationship with McNamara, the Chiefs felt that the Secretary was able to exploit differences within the JCS to the furtherance of civilian "whiz kid" domination. Consequently, under Taylor's successor, General Earle Wheeler, the Chiefs made an effort to conceal or paper over their differences, thus diluting the value of their advice at the same time that the nation was becoming involved in Vietnam. Preoccupation with the war prevented any substantial organizational reform despite an extensive study by a blue ribbon panel in 1969-1970.

Despite Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird's effort to clarify the channel of command, the Nixon Administration produced some disturbing aberrations. In 1971, Laird issued an order defining the chain of command as running "from the President to the Secretary of Defense and through the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the commanders of the Unified and Specified Commands." In nuclear war or other situation requiring quick response, the line went from the

National Command Authority (the President, the Secretary of Defense, or their deputized alternates or successors) through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, representing the JCS, to the unified and specified commanders.<sup>25</sup> In spite of this effort, the machinations of the Nixon White House as the war in Vietnam wound down caused problems. Occasionally, the JCS would be directed to issue orders to the commander in Vietnam without informing the Secretary, who had expressed disagreement with some of the Kissinger-Nixon policies. At times, Laird himself would give instructions directly to General Abrams in Saigon, bypassing the JCS. These were obviously dangerous and dysfunctional practices but they inspired no immediate remedies.<sup>26</sup>

In the 1980's, the spur for change originated, for the first time since World War II, from serving military officers. Air Force General David C. Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Army Chief of Staff, General Edward C. Meyer, each publicly stated their criticisms of the JCS system and proposed structural and procedural changes. The debate was fueled by criticisms of military operations in Iran and Grenada and by increasing public concern over procurement scandals during the Reagan Administration's defense buildup. The move for reform quickly gathered political momentum and Congress enacted legislation in 1984 and 1986.

General Jones, supported by the work of a study group under retired Army General Walter Kerwin, described several deficiencies that he saw in the JCS system. First, he believed that the unified and specified commanders lacked adequate authority over their assigned forces in peacetime. He also felt that the formal advice provided by the JCS to the President and the Secretary of Defense lacked value because of the need to generate unanimity among the Services. He also asserted that Service interests dominated JCS deliberations at the expense of "broader national interests". Finally, Jones said, the Chiefs lacked the time to deal adequately with both Service and Joint matters. Jones' prescriptions focused on strengthening the role of the Chairman. Most significantly, he

recommended that the channel of command pass through the Chairman alone rather than the JCS as a corporate body. He also advocated the creation of a four star deputy chairman and wanted the Joint Staff to report directly to the Chairman, as it had from 1953 to 1958. As a counterweight to the increased authority of the Chairman, Jones suggested channels for the Service Chiefs to provide direct advice to the Secretary of Defense.<sup>27</sup>

General Meyer agreed with General Jones' assessment of the problems but he had some different solutions. The principal feature of the Meyer plan was the replacement of the JCS by a National Military Advisory Council composed of senior officers who would have no direct Service connections and would not return to Service assignments. This is a derivation of a concept that was considered during the Kennedy Administration. Meyer also envisioned a stronger role for the Chairman, similar to the Jones plan.<sup>28</sup>

The Jones and Meyer proposals struck a resonant note on Capitol Hill. The Defense Authorization Bill for fiscal year 1985 contained some relatively minor changes to JCS procedures including a provision making the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff the spokesman for the unified and specified commanders. However, there were many in Congress who wanted to go farther. Principal among these were Senators Barry Goldwater and Sam Nunn, respectively the Chairman and Ranking Minority Member of the Committee on Armed Services. They became co-chairman of a special "Task Force on Defense Organization." Under their leadership, the Committee staff prepared a comprehensive study of the entire Defense organization. That study had actually started under a charter from Senators John Tower and Henry Jackson, but its scope was broadened significantly by Goldwater and Nunn.

The report, titled Defense Organization: The Need for Change, was a wide-ranging review of the history and shortcomings of defense organization. It contained a number of fairly dramatic reform proposals. First, it recommended that the Office of the

Secretary of Defense be streamlined under three functionally oriented under secretaries. Secondly, the report asserted that the Joint Chiefs of Staff should be replaced with a Joint Military Advisory Council (JMAC) composed of four-star officers on their last tour of duty. The Chairman of the JMAC should be the "principal military advisor to the Secretary of Defense on operational matters and the sole command voice of higher authority within the JMAC system while ensuring absolute clarity that the JMAC Chairman is not part of the chain of command." Another key recommendation was to remove the Service component commanders from the operational chain of command within the unified commands. Finally, the report advised integrating the Service secretariat and military staffs within the Service Departments.<sup>29</sup>

This staff report formed the basis for an extensive debate of the issues in Congress and in the press. The discussion took place in an atmosphere of increasing criticism of the performance of the military establishment and amid the realization that the relative fiscal abundance of the early Reagan years could no longer be sustained. The Administration, led by Secretary Weinberger, maintained a consistent and firm opposition to legislative reform. The momentum was strong, however, and the retiring Senator Goldwater put all of his prestige behind the effort. The result was passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

This Act, the first significant defense organization legislation in twenty-six years, directs substantial structural and procedural change with the object of improving performance as well as reducing costs. The role of the Chairman is significantly strengthened and he is designated as the principal military advisor on his own in lieu of the corporate JCS. He is also given a four-star vice chairman and increased authority over the Joint Staff. The operational chain of command is defined as from the President to the Secretary of Defense to the unified and specified commanders. The President may direct that instructions and

reports between the National Command Authority and the commands pass through the Chairman. The authority of the unified commanders over forces within their theaters is enhanced and measures are directed to enhance the quality and performance of officers in joint assignments. Some functions (public affairs, comptroller, acquisition, inspections, etc.) within the Service Departments are consolidated under the Secretaries to avoid duplication in the military staffs. Finally, significant personnel reductions were directed in headquarters staffs.<sup>30</sup>

At this point, the ultimate impact of this legislation is not entirely clear, but previous experience reveals trends for the future. The law's effect will be influenced by the style and personalities of defense leaders, particularly the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Secretary Weinberger has practised a participatory style of management during his tenure. That style is likely to mitigate the immediate impact of the reforms, but the tools are in place to be taken up by an activist Secretary, as McNamara did with the 1958 reforms. The role of the Chairman will be affected greatly by whether the President decides to place him in the chain of communication with the unified and specified commanders. Initial indications are that the personnel changes may, in fact, enhance the attractiveness of joint duty for career officers.

What is certain, however, is that the 1986 law is another step on the long continuum of gradual unification of military effort in both operational and logistic arenas. It also reinforces the bipolarity that exists between the war-providers and war-fighters. More of the development and acquisition process is becoming centralized under the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Service Secretaries. At the same time, the JCS and the unified commanders are being given more authority for readiness and war fighting.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSIONS

Examination of trends in the organizational changes reveals some fairly consistent trends in the factors which motivated the reforms. Underlying all of these factors is the increasing complexity of the challenge facing those responsible for the national security of the United States. Technology expanded the scope of war and made it difficult to contain in limited geographical area. Necessarily, then, wars involved all of the nation's military capability in an integrated fashion. No longer could a major power rely on one arm (or various arms acting independently) to achieve sufficient capability to protect vital interests. The increased lethality of weapons guaranteed involvement of civilian populations and therefore significantly increased the political and social content of war.

Technology has also produced the problem of providing defense at an affordable cost. Maintaining a large standing military capability was a new experience--and expense--for America following World War II. The advance of war fighting technology added to that expense. At the same time, national leaders realized that overall economic strength was also an essential element of national security. Often the two goals of strong military defense and sound economy were competitive rather than complementary. Hence the motivation to provide for defense in the most efficient and economical way possible.

Finally, in an increasingly interdependent world, this nation's security became inextricably bound up with other countries around the world. In turn, this required an increasingly flexible and coherent military capability to respond to a variety of scenarios and conditions, all of which require joint action.

All of these trends are likely to continue, if not accelerate,

for the foreseeable future. It is also likely, therefore, that pressures toward unification of military capability will also continue. That pressure will not be continuous or smooth but will follow the pattern of fits and starts that has characterized the last half century.

The history of reform also reveals some organizational tensions which may influence the character of future reforms. Three specific conflicts are worthy of further discussion: war preparing versus war fighting, short-term capability versus long-term development, and civilian control versus military expertise.

Recent organizational changes have created a bipolar functional structure with the producers and providers in the Service Departments and the users in the JCS and the unified/specified commands. Organizationally, below the Secretary of Defense, these two elements meet only in the JCS itself, as the Service Chiefs have one foot in each camp. Such polarity was rooted out of the Army in the early Twentieth Century reforms. To accomplish the same in today's Defense Department would require eliminating the Service Departments and creating a unitary, hierarchical structure.

On the other hand, the competition between short-term capability and long-term development raise issues which may weigh against creation of such a streamlined structure. War fighting commanders necessarily focus on capabilities to meet the immediate and near-term threats which they face. The Services, on the other hand, have the luxury, and the budgetary motivation, to look at long-range impacts of technology and other changing conditions. Such tension, properly managed, appears healthy.

The tradition of civilian ascendancy over the military is so well entrenched in this country that fears of military encroaching into the political sphere seem silly. Indeed, modern communications, information technology, and the strong American press reinforce that view. Recent reforms and, more than likely,

future reforms have address the quality of the military advice provided to those civilian political leaders.

It is not possible to predict with confidence the nature of future changes. It is safe to say that more change will come, shaped by technology, economic issues, and the United States' world role.

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