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14. ABSTRACT The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DoD) Reorganization Act of 1986 (GN-86) has been hailed as the "most consequential and successful example of defense reform in the Cold War era." While GN-86 effected profound positive change in DoD, a considerable body of recent professional literature advocates additional organizational and process reform. This quest for further change has been driven both by drastic shifts in the strategic security environment since GN-86 was passed, as well as by the existence of still unmet GN-86 objectives. To address this call for change, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) "Beyond Goldwater-Nichols" (BG-N) project has published two detailed reports delineating several specific recommendations for significant defense reform. Implementation of all these recommendations would require major changes at many levels of government; in many cases the burden to change or adapt would fall upon military Combatant Commanders. This paper addresses the following research question: Suppose the CSIS recommendations in its Beyond Goldwater-Nichols Phase I and II Reports are implemented. What is the impact to the Combatant Commander?					
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**BEYOND GOLDWATER-NICHOLS:
IMPACT TO THE COMBATANT COMMANDER**

By

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A paper submitted to the faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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21 February 2006

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Abstract

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DoD) Reorganization Act of 1986 (GN-86) has been hailed as the “most consequential and successful example of defense reform in the Cold War era.” While GN-86 effected profound positive change in DoD, a considerable body of recent professional literature advocates additional organizational and process reform. This quest for further change has been driven both by drastic shifts in the strategic security environment since GN-86 was passed, as well as by the existence of still unmet GN-86 objectives. To address this call for change, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) “Beyond Goldwater-Nichols” (BG-N) project has published two detailed reports delineating several specific recommendations for significant defense reform. Implementation of all these recommendations would require major changes at many levels of government; in many cases the burden to change or adapt would fall upon military Combatant Commanders. This paper addresses the following research question: Suppose the CSIS recommendations in its Beyond Goldwater-Nichols Phase I and II Reports are implemented. What is the impact to the Combatant Commander?

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INTRODUCTION

Twenty years ago, President Reagan signed into law the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 (GN-86). Hailed as the “most consequential and successful example of defense reform in the Cold War era,”¹ this legislation aimed to strengthen civilian authority in the Department of Defense (DoD), empower the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), and restructure operational authority through joint rather than Service channels.

While GN-86 effected profound positive change in DoD, a considerable body of recent professional literature advocates additional organizational and process reform. This quest for further change has been driven both by drastic shifts in the strategic security environment since GN-86 was passed, as well as by the existence of still unmet GN-86 objectives. To address this call for change, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) launched the “Beyond Goldwater-Nichols” (BG-N) project in November 2002 as a major effort to promote defense reform by “identify[ing] specific problems and then develop[ing] practical, actionable measures for fixing them.”² Although the BG-N project is still in progress, CSIS has published two detailed reports of its ongoing work,³ and these reports delineate several specific recommendations for significant defense reform. Implementation of all these recommendations would require major changes at many levels of government; in many cases the burden to change or adapt would fall upon the Combatant Commanders (CCDRs).

¹ Murdock, Flournoy *et al.*, p. 140.

² Murdock *et al.*, p. 13.

³ *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era – Phase 1 Report* was published in March 2004; *Phase 2 Report* was published in July 2005.

While it is unlikely that the full set of BG-N proposals will soon be put into action by some single comprehensive legislative act, it does seem quite feasible that some, if not many, proposed changes may be implemented by DoD as measures to improve jointness. At a minimum, CCDRs should consider the implications of these recommendations; more proactive CCDRs might make reasonable preparations to put these recommendations in place. With these considerations in mind, this paper addresses the following research question: Suppose the CSIS recommendations in its Beyond Goldwater-Nichols Phase I and II Reports are implemented. *What is the impact to the Combatant Commander?*

THE GOLDWATER-NICHOLS ACT

In order to fully explore reformation of the current defense establishment, it is necessary to revisit the Goldwater-Nichols Act itself and realize the substantial impact it has had on the U.S. military. After World War II, the National Security Act of 1947 (NSA 47) and its ensuing revisions created the Department of Defense and established the CJCS. This legislation also gave unified commanders full operational command of assigned forces; however, the Service Chiefs' role in the operational chain of command in effect weakened the unified commanders.⁴ Over the four decades that followed, successive operational failures – failures in the Vietnam War, the seizure of *USS PUEBLO* in 1968, the seizure of *SS Mayaguez* in 1975, the failure of Operation EAGLE CLAW (hostage rescue attempt in Iran) in 1980, coordination failures in Operation URGENT FURY (invasion of Grenada), and the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut in 1983 – raised questions of whether the existing military organization was adequate.⁵ In addition to these tangible events, in 1982 GEN David Jones, CJCS at the time, damningly testified to Congress that the system was

⁴ Locher, p. 43.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

broken, that he was unable to fix it from the inside, and that Congress would have to mandate necessary reforms.⁶ As Congress turned its attention to these shortcomings, several problems were identified. Among the most significant of these were: an imbalance existed between Service and joint interests, operational chains of command were confused and cumbersome, and the authority of each unified commander was not commensurate with his responsibilities. Also, military advice to political leadership was inadequate, strategic planning was ineffective, and officers serving in joint-duty assignments were insufficiently qualified.⁷ These and other problems drove Congress to mandate significant defense reform in the form of the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

Under the provisions of this Act, operational authority was centralized through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs as opposed to the Service Chiefs. The Chairman was designated as the principal military advisor to the President of the United States, National Security Council, and Secretary of Defense. The Act also established the position of Vice-Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and simplified the chain of command, increased the ability of the CJCS to direct overall strategy, and provided far greater power to Unified and Specified field commanders.⁸

It was not long before Goldwater-Nichols was put to the test: In Operation DESERT STORM, Army General Norman Schwarzkopf exercised full control over Army, Air Force, and Navy assets without having to negotiate with the individual Services. This successful operation seemed to powerfully validate the reforms mandated by Goldwater-Nichols.⁹

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-50.

⁸ *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, updated 29 December 2005, s.v. "Goldwater-Nichols Act."

⁹ *Ibid.*

“BEYOND GOLDWATER-NICHOLS”

While the Goldwater-Nichols Act catalyzed significant changes throughout the Department of Defense, it was not a panacea. While GN-86 emerged in part from a series of operational military failures in the field, changes in the strategic environment coupled with unmet GN-86 objectives still presented challenges to DoD which might require further reform.¹⁰ According to the BG-N team, “today’s DoD failures are ‘hidden’ and largely unknown to the broader public.”¹¹ While the military executes its core competencies *effectively*, it fails to do so *efficiently*. According to the BG-N team, the U.S. national security structure as a whole requires “more agility, less redundancy, [and] maximum alignment of authority and accountability”.¹²

As it studied existing DoD issues, the BG-N team identified several critical “systemic shortcomings”¹³ which most forcefully drive the need for fundamental defense reform. They echo the conventional wisdom that new military and national security missions have taken on an increased urgency since the attacks of September 11, 2001. Likewise, they agree with the common criticism that the military has insufficient capability to deal with post-conflict resolution. Of course, both these observations are ubiquitous in defense analyses today; however, BG-N attempts to tackle these issues from an organizational and process standpoint.

In that light, BG-N has identified several issues germane to defense reform. First, they contend that outdated organizational structures remain a problem in the DoD. NSA 47 came into effect at the onset of the Cold War, while GN-86 was developed and

¹⁰ Murdock *et al.*, p. 12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

passed as the Cold War was reaching culmination. The strategic change in the defense environment since the close of the Cold War should itself have prompted consideration of an investigation into possible organizational change within DoD; the additional shift in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 beckons even more loudly for change.

Additionally, they submit vast budget inefficiencies exist within DoD, and that the dominance of Services in the procurement process results in the tendency for parochial interests to be favored over joint interests. Furthermore, they note that an imbalance appears to exist between civilian and military expertise at the Pentagon, and that good communication and partnership between the Executive and Congress is lacking.

Consequently, CSIS makes several recommendations to address these shortcomings. At the national level, they propose creating a more integrated and effective national security apparatus, unifying effort in interagency operations, building operational capacity outside the DoD, and elevating and strengthening Homeland Security policy. For DoD specifically, they recommend determining joint capability requirements, reforming defense acquisition for the 21st century, organizing for logistics support, improving the governance of defense agencies, updating the Officer Management System, modernizing PME, and organizing for space and cyberspace.

While each of these areas is of some interest to Combatant Commanders, their specific proposals relating to national security apparatus integration, interagency operations, and joint capability requirements have the most direct impact to CCDRs, in that they would require immediate, significant action by the CCDRs and their staffs. The remainder of this section describes the specific supporting recommendations in these areas, which are then analyzed for action in the subsequent section.

BG-N makes several specific suggestions for creating a more integrated and effective national security apparatus. While these strategic-level specifics do not all have explicit impact on CCDRs, they will require likely organizational and process changes to accommodate interagency coordination. Two interagency recommendations are of specific interest to CCDRs: to create a USG-wide framework for defining regions of the world, and to conduct National Security Council (NSC)-chaired IA summits in regions.¹⁴ The relevance of these recommendations to CCDRs is obvious, and particular response actions are discussed in the following section.

With respect to unifying effort in interagency operations, BG-N makes two strategic-level recommendations that directly impact CCDRs: to create rapidly deployable Interagency Crisis Planning Teams (ICPTs) for interagency campaign planning, and for each complex contingency operation, to establish an Interagency Task Force (IATF) in the field to integrate the day to day efforts of all USG agencies and achieve greater unity of effort on the ground.¹⁵ Again, the relevance of these recommendations to CCDRs is obvious, and particular response actions are discussed in the following section.

Finally, the largest recommendation subset that impacts directly upon CCDRs is in the area of determining joint capability requirements. The crux of the BG-N position is stated simply: “Only the Combatant Commanders have operational requirements; joint capability requirements, both near- and far-term, must drive DoD resource allocation and acquisition policies and decisions.”¹⁶ BG-N claims that the current CCDR role in the requirements and acquisition process is still insufficient; therefore, as GN-86 gave the CCDRs direct responsibility for operations, the study team recommends that the process for

¹⁴ Murdock, Flournoy *et al.*, p. 38.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

identifying and advocating joint capability requirements be restructured around the CCDRs, with Services competing to provide the CCDRs with whatever capabilities they deem necessary. They envision a more “joint” Joint Requirements Oversight Committee (JROC), on which Service Vices are replaced by Deputy CCDRs, and civilians responsible for requirements policy are added. Additionally, they suggest that the functional commands should have responsibility for long-term capability needs, with Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) being assigned the role of a Joint Capabilities Command.¹⁷

The BG-N study team recommended in its Phase 1 report that CCDRs build capacities to enable a stronger role in resource allocation. They observe that is beginning to happen already to some extent: for example, the Pacific Command (PACOM) previously assigned this function to its Requirements and Forces Division (J55), a minimally staffed shop, but is has now built a Forces, Resources, and Assessment Directorate (J8). However, they persist that all the CCDRs, regional and functional, must have organizational capacity to identify near-term capability shortfalls and excesses, since the CCDRs are the ones responsible for conducting operations and developing operations plans to address current contingencies.

Consequently, BG-N recommends that DoD build a CCDR-centric process for identifying and advocating joint capability requirements that is comprised of the following elements: 1) Identify and prioritize short-term joint capability requirements through an enhanced Integrated Priority Lists (IPL) process; 2) Have the functional commands take the lead on determining long-term capability needs in their respective areas; 3) As an interim step, create a Washington, D.C.-based JFCOM capability, headed by a three-star, to determine and advocate the longer-term joint capability needs of the regional commands, and

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

decide after two years whether a separate Joint Capability Command is necessary for this critical function.¹⁸

Lastly, in light of what they describe as “continued disarray in both defining joint C3 capability requirements and procuring interoperable C3 systems,”¹⁹ the study team recommends forming a Joint Task Force (JTF) with budgetary and acquisition authority for Joint C3, and assigning it to either Strategic Command (STRATCOM) or JFCOM, but not both.²⁰

With the BG-N recommendations discussed above in mind, the remainder of this paper proposes specific courses of action that CCDRs might follow in the event that some or all of these proposals are implemented. The following suggestions are by no means exhaustive, and in general do not address second- and third-order effects that the BG-N recommendations might cause; rather, the proposals below focus on the main issues for the CCDD should the BG-N recommendations become reality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear from this analysis that recommendations of the BG-N study team will, if implemented, require substantial action by the CCDRs. The remainder of this paper offers suggestions for implementation at the Combatant Commander level. It is noted at the outset that several BG-N recommendations that are not made to CCDRs explicitly will still have indirect effects on them; however, the scope of this paper prohibits delving exhaustively into such second and third order effects. The recommendation areas causing the most significant impact to CCDRs are: creating a more integrated and effective national security apparatus,

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 84.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

unifying effort in interagency operations, and determining joint capability requirements. This section suggests action at the CCDR level to answer these recommendations.

Regarding the national security apparatus, any changes to make it more integrated or efficient will undoubtedly have large carryover effects to the CCDR. While the regional CCDRs have the responsibility to integrate all activities of the U.S. military in their areas of responsibility, no formal mechanism currently exists to integrate the activities among all the U.S. government agencies in a given region. The first step for the CCDR then is to carefully examine his organization and processes with a forward-looking mindset, and adjust them to facilitate interoperability with other agencies.

In addition to the lack of a formal interagency integration mechanism is the challenge that each of the key national security departments defines the regions of the world differently, which sometimes leads to disconnects in the process of implementing international policy.²¹ However, CCDRs can and should considerably influence the development of a USG-wide framework for defining regions of the world. Such a framework should certainly resemble the “Commanders’ Areas of Responsibility” as established by the Unified Command Plan (UCP). The UCP-assigned areas of responsibility (AORs) are well-known and well-tested, and CCDRs are the world’s experts at functioning within that framework. Using the existing UCP as a baseline, CCDRs should actively shape the development of a USG-standardized Unified Regional Plan (URP). Where the UCP has proven to be effective, it should remain unchanged; where onerous seams exist, CCDRs should take advantage of the URP development process to achieve needed improvements. Changes for consideration might include realigning Africa as its own separate AOR,

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.37

modifying the boundaries of Central Command (CENTCOM), or adjusting (or at least reassessing) the demarcation lines dividing PACOM and European Command (EUCOM) or PACOM and Northern Command (NORTHCOM). The JCS Directorate for Strategic Plans and Policy (J5) should be the lead agency to coordinate the URP development effort, with direct support from each CCDR J5 as well as from the policy directorates of other key USG agencies (e.g., Department of State (DoS) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS)).

Likewise, while CCDRs do not have primary responsibility for the implementation of NSC-chaired interagency summits, they should be tapped to catalyze these summits. In many cases CCDR headquarters (HQs) will be the natural locations for these summits, at least in their inception. While DoD should not necessarily be the lead agency for such summits, CCDRs must assume a leading role. CCDRs should draw on the regional issues that consume them daily to develop anticipatory summit agendas and propose draft participant lists. CCDRs should coordinate with US Embassies within the region to broaden and mold agendas. The best chance for such interagency summits to gain traction and achieve success is for CCDRs to take an active role in getting them underway. Again, the CCDR J5 should be the office of primary responsibility for engaging this issue.

On the topic of unifying effort in interagency operations, CCDRs will require a mechanism to integrate proposed ICPTs into their existing planning processes. While BG-N suggests that the CCDR designate a subordinate commander to lead the military's participation in the interagency planning process, a better-aligned approach would be for the CCDR to assign this responsibility to reside within his staff. Specifically, the Future Operations Directorate (J35) should commission a standing Interagency Coordination Planning Group (ICPG) to serve as a primary link to ICPTs. The ICPG would be responsible

for developing the interagency dimension of the CCDR's military plans, and would function as the active planning arm of the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG), which is the "multi-functional advisory element on the CCDR staff that facilitates planning, coordination, and information sharing across the interagency community."²² The ICPG-JIACG relationship would be similar to the J35-J5 relationship with respect to deliberate planning. In the case of specific operations for which a JTF is established, the ICPG would turn over interagency planning responsibilities for the operation at hand to the JTF J5 and provide active support, while retaining its interagency planning responsibilities for the theater at large. Since most civilian agencies currently lack the capacity to provide the people and resources necessary for robust interagency planning and operations,²³ the ICPGs will be challenged with identifying counterpart planners at sister agencies until such capacity is properly resourced. The JIACG should enable the process of matching military planners with interagency counterparts.

Just as the ICPG would be the CCDR's primary link to ICPTs, the JIACG should serve as the CCDR's node for interaction with BG-N's proposed IATF. The concept of operations for the JIACG includes its "continuing coordination with external civilian agencies;"²⁴ this would naturally extend to coordination with any IATF assigned to the region. See Figure 1 for an organizational concept showing the JIACG and ICPG relationships in the context of the operational chain of command.²⁵

²² USJFCOM, p. 5.

²³ Murdock, Flournoy *et al.*, p. 52.

²⁴ USJFCOM, p. 12.

²⁵ Figure 1 depicts a merging of the organizational concepts described in BG-N and USJFCOM, and also represents notional ICPG relationships.

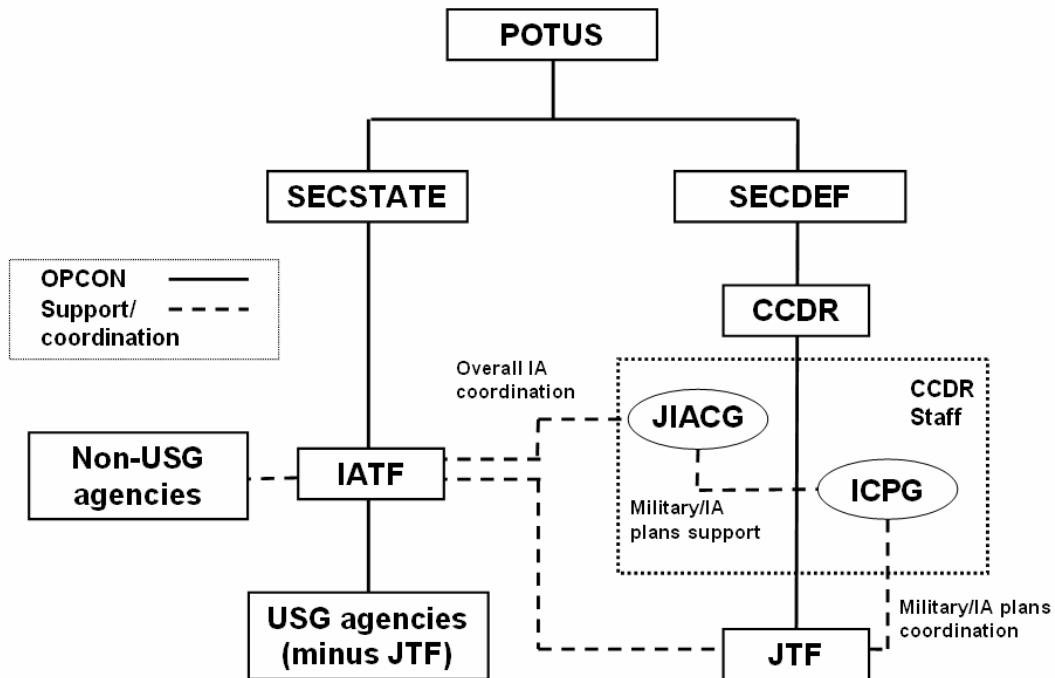


Figure 1 - Organizational construct for the JIACG and ICPG

BG-N also recommends establishing a standing IATF HQ core element that is available for rapid deployment on short notice, and further suggests that the ideal initial home for this core element would be Joint Forces Command, where its construct could be tested and refined through experimentation and exercises²⁶ – this obviously impacts JFCOM directly. As the inaugural host of this IATF HQ core element, JFCOM should seize the opportunity to test IATF interaction with JIACGs and ICPGs – either those stood up at regional commands, or groups stood up internally at JFCOM. The efficiencies of co-location might very well demonstrate that JFCOM should be the permanent home of the IATF HQ core element.

On the subject of determining joint capability requirements, this author concurs that only CCDRs have operational requirements. Therefore, it follows logically that the process

²⁶ Murdock, Flournoy *et al.*, p. 52.

for identifying and advocating joint requirements should be CCDR-centric. The current system to identify military requirements and secure military capabilities is too Service-centric; the following suggestions seek to shift the requirements balance of power to the CCDR.

First, the CCDR J8 must be augmented to support an enhanced IPL process. Of course, any suggestion to “make the staff bigger” rings hollow without a proposed source of manning for the augment. It is recommended here that some (if not all) of the Service staff billets which are currently dedicated to the JROC be reassigned to the various CCDR J8s. This properly places “requirements manpower” where the actual operational requirements reside: with the CCDR. The regional commands would focus on near- and mid-term capabilities in support of their areas of responsibility, while the functional commands would take the lead on determining long-term capability needs in their respective areas (as recommended by BG-N).

This suggestion to augment the CCDR J8 fits hand-in-glove with the BG-N recommendation to replace the Service Vices on the JROC with CCDR Deputies. While such a change would be organizationally challenging, its long-term benefits would far outweigh short-term difficulties. The J8 augment would directly support this additional responsibility for the CCDR Deputies, and would simply increase the capacity for the CCDR J8s to execute their existing responsibilities to develop and coordinate IPLs and to manage CCDR participation in the JROC – only now the CCDR J8s would support the Deputies as leads in the process (vice the Service Chiefs).

Of course, a very practical challenge emerges from such a change – since the Service Chiefs currently all share offices in the same building, while CCDR Deputies are dispersed

across the globe. To address this issue, the CCDRs should establish a Requirements Liaison Cell (RLC) at the Joint Staff. Representatives from each CCDR would man this cell and remain employees of their respective CCDR, but would reside at the Pentagon to serve in two vital capacities: 1) as a direct link between the CCDR and the Joint Staff J8 (i.e., the CCDR Deputies' permanent representation at the Pentagon with respect to their JROC responsibility), and 2) as a link from each CCDR to the others with respect to joint requirements.

At least two options would satisfy the recommendation for JFCOM to stand up a D.C.-based 3-star to advocate long-term joint capability needs of regional commanders. The first option would be to station the JFCOM Deputy himself in D.C. with this responsibility. This course of action may be unfeasible, but until determined to be so it should be considered in support of the broader change of assigning leadership of the JROC to Deputy CCDRs. Otherwise, this long-term capability advocate would have to be taken "out-of-hide" from elsewhere in JFCOM, or appropriated from another command. Regional commanders should devise metrics for the advocacy performance of JFCOM, and these metrics should be the basis for the decision at the two-year point whether a separate Joint Capability Command is necessary for this function.

Finally, the formation of a JTF with budgetary and acquisition authority (JTF B&A) for Joint C3 would place important responsibility with the selected CCDR (STRATCOM or JFCOM). This trial in joint acquisition would require the reallocation of certain funding, which would most logically come out of Service budgets. JTF B&A might task-organize along Service lines to facilitate Service input to the joint process. JTF B&A should establish and promulgate the process by which other CCDRs are to coordinate with the JTF for C3

acquisition matters – coordination would preferably be via the C4 Systems Directorate (J6) or the J8 on the CCDR staff. Joint C3 requirements will of course be vetted as part of the IPL process; here the selected CCDR (STRATCOM or JFCOM) Deputy would be the JROC lead on C3 issues. Finally, a deliberate effort should be focused on developing processes to link Service budgets in proper proportion to C3 acquisition “load.”

CONCLUSION

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 was sweeping legislation, and drove significant change toward jointness in the United States military. Many of the changes resulting from this legislation are proven successes, while the implementation of some changes is still in progress. The case has been made in recent years that Goldwater-Nichols did not go far enough, that some of its measures have proven to be ineffective or inadequate, and that inefficiencies remain in the Department of Defense which call for further reform. The ongoing “Beyond Goldwater-Nichols” project recommends several significant changes in the defense arena; implementation of many of these recommendations will require major actions by Combatant Commanders in response. This work has endeavored to outline some of the principal impacts that BG-N recommendations would have on CCDRs, and to suggest appropriate action to be taken by them to achieve the effects intended by the recommendations. These suggestions are intended for the use by CCDRs and their staffs, and should be used as a point of departure for staffs to examine the full impact of the BG-N recommendations in the event that some or all of them are mandated by Congress or other authority. At least one additional BG-N report is anticipated from CSIS in the near future, and further research is encouraged to investigate impacts to the CCDR of any additional recommendations made by the BG-N team.

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