DOD Reorganization: Part I, New Imperatives

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Much has been written about the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. The expansive predictions of politicians and press would lead one to believe that the nation has turned a historic corner and that we professional officers will live and serve in a defense environment significantly different from that of our experiences to date. These predictions foresee fundamental improvements being brought about by the legislated reorganization of DOD and by the changes imposed on the procedures and relationships which make up our national security processes.

As professional officers we have a healthy skepticism of such euphoric predictions. We know that change to an organization as large as DOD takes place only over time, and then only with the acceptance and cooperation of the component organizations involved. It is a simple but seemingly unalterable fact of organizational behavior that large organizations can effectively resist change if they choose to. The history of DOD is replete with such examples.

On the other hand, we also know that much of the intent of the new law is correct. Changes to some DOD organizations and to some of our national security processes are needed, not just because Congress has legislated them, but also because we recognize that through judicious change improvements can be made in the effectiveness and the efficiency with which our nation's security is provided. For the Army, this period of significant change is an excellent time to reassess its own position within the changing environment of the DOD, and to see if there are new opportunities for Army contributions.
Context of the Reorganization

The enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation is not a singular effort to reorganize DOD. Rather, it is but one part of a much larger, diverse effort to reform the whole of the defense establishment, both from within and from without, both structurally and procedurally. This reform movement has been growing for several years and is now coming to fruition in several areas. In addition to the Goldwater-Nichols bill, the recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Defense Management (Packard Commission) have been implemented within DOD by executive authority, principally by National Security Decision Directive 219, issued in April 1986. In a separate but related effort, Congress through the 1987 DOD Appropriations Act provided for the creation of two new joint combatant commands. One is to be a unified command for the special operations forces of all the services, and the other a unified command for strategic mobility forces. Both commands are intended to further the unity and efficiency with which these forces are built and the joint effectiveness with which they are employed. Thus the Goldwater-Nichols legislation should be viewed as the centerpiece of a set of complementary initiatives.

Of course, it would be helpful to know precisely what the legislation is supposed to correct. Unfortunately, there is no unanimity on what the problems within DOD really are. The symptoms of systemic problems have been broadly discussed for several years: the lessons learned from the failure at Desert One, the interoperability problems in Grenada, the command and control problems in Lebanon, the quality of military advice provided by the Joint Chiefs, and the abuses and gross inefficiencies found within the defense acquisition process. Thus, reform proposals have come from all perspectives, as one might expect given such intensely politicized issues.

Perhaps the best single portrayal of the fundamental, underlying problems is the Staff Report of the Senate Armed Services Committee published in October 1985, "Defense Organization: The Need for Change." It has become a prime statement of the organizational and decisionmaking problems within DOD and with congressional review and oversight of DOD. Its major themes:
- Too much emphasis on functions versus missions, which has inhibited the effective integration of service capabilities along mission lines;
- A predominance of service interests over joint interests within DOD, a problem of balance which has precluded the most efficient allocation of defense resources;
- Inter-service logrolling which has smoothed over internal conflict among the services, conflict yet to be resolved;
- A predominance of programming and budgeting within the
organizational activity of DOD, which has left insufficient attention to strategic planning, contingency planning, and operational matters;

- A lack of clarity of DOD-level strategic goals, which has allowed their displacement by subgoals of the various elements within DOD, particularly the services;
  - Insufficient mechanisms for change, in part attributable to inherent military conservatism;
  - Inadequate quality of personnel, both in political appointees and joint-duty military personnel.
- An ineffective division of work, manifested in congressional micromanagement of DOD programs, and within DOD by duplication of effort within military departments.

In consequence, Congress made major changes to various sections of Title 10, United States Code, as it applies to the Department of Defense. Highlighted below are the changes that have the most significant implications for the Army.⁵

**Department of Defense Generally**

Congress has amended the National Security Act of 1947 to require the President to provide annually to Congress, coincident with budget submission,

a comprehensive description and discussion of ... worldwide interests, goals, and objectives that are vital to the United States ... the foreign policy, worldwide commitments, and national Defense capabilities necessary ... the proposed short term and long term uses of political, economic, military, and other elements of national power to ... achieve the goals and objectives ... and an evaluation of the balance among all elements of national power.⁶

The new legislation also amends the Secretary of Defense's reporting requirements to "include annual descriptions of the major military missions and military force structure ..., an explanation of the relationships of those military missions to that force structure and the

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justification for [both]." Thus Congress has mandated that at the beginning of any public debate on defense programs, a textbook statement of grand or national strategy and a clear statement of military strategy be provided as an explicit benchmark for the evaluation of all defense programs, including the Army's. Given the elusiveness of such concepts in the past this will be no small task.7

Congress also has specified the content of future DOD guidance for the Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) and for the Joint Operational Planning System (JOPS). The legislation requires the guidance to "include national security objectives and policies; the priorities of military missions [an important new item]; and resource levels projected to be available." For operational planning the guidance "will be for the preparation and review of contingency plans . . . including specific force levels and specific supporting resource levels projected to be available . . . ." This statutory requirement for operational planning guidance is new, this area having been almost the exclusive domain of the JCS and services in the past. One has to go back to the late Carter Administration years of 1979-1980 to find the last such attempt to impose detailed DOD-level guidance on military operational planning, and then the attempt did not involve legislative mandates.8

The legislation also requires four management studies of the Office of Secretary of Defense, one each by the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, an independent contractor to the Secretary, and the three service secretaries acting jointly. All studies are to be sent to Congress within one year of the legislation, i.e. by 1 October 1987. The legislation states with great specificity the "matters to be included," taking over two pages to detail how the studies are to analyze both "the present organization of the Office of the Secretary of Defense" and whether or not the PPBS of the DOD, including the role of the OSD in such system, needs to be revised. Even a casual reading of the legislation makes clear that the Congress is not convinced the OSD is now correctly structured nor that civilian control is being correctly exercised. Equally clear is the assertion implicit in the "matters to be included" that further integration of the capabilities of the armed forces can most effectively be pursued along mission lines in lieu of functional lines, and that OSD and DOD should be so structured.

Military Advice and Command Functions

The functions of the CJCS have been redefined. The Chairman now "is the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense," but he "shall, as he considers appropriate, consult with and seek the advice of the other members of the

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JCS or commanders of unified and specified commands." Previously, in fact since the inception of the JCS in the early postwar period, this advisory function has been a responsibility of the corporate JCS. Now, however, other members of the JCS as military advisors "may submit [through] the Chairman advice, or an opinion, in disagreement with . . . or in addition to the advice presented by the Chairman."

In addition to this much stronger role as the principal military advisor, the Chairman has been given a Vice Chairman who is second in military rank only to the Chairman; and the CJCS has been given singular "authority, direction, and control of the Joint Staff" which previously he shared with all of the corporate JCS.

The Chairman's functions in the PPBS, as executed by the Joint Staff, also have been greatly enlarged. He is to

prepare strategic plans which conform to resource levels projected by the Secretary of Defense . . ., develop doctrine for the joint employment of the armed forces [a vital, new function] . . ., provide for the preparation and review of contingency plans which conform to the policy guidance from the President and the Secretary of Defense . . ., advise the Secretary of Defense on the priorities identified by the unified and specified combatant commands and on the extent to which program and budget proposals of the military departments . . . conform to the priorities of the unified and specified commands . . ., submit to the Secretary of Defense alternative program and budget proposals in order to achieve conformance with the priorities . . ., and recommend to the Secretary a budget proposal for [certain] activities of each unified and specified command.

These detailed functions are clearly intended to give the Chairman, supported by the Joint Staff, a new and possibly dominant military role in the iterative stages of the PPBS. It will take some time for the procedures to be modified to accommodate all of this; but when they are, Army programs and budgets will be evaluated and modified according to the strategies, plans, and priorities established by the Chairman and his staff in coordination with the combatant commanders. The CJCS has already used his new statutory authority to reorganize the Joint Staff and create two new directorates: a J-7 as focal point for interoperability with responsibilities for joint doctrine, exercises, and operational plans; and a J-8 for analysis of force structure and resources, particularly the military net assessment and cross-service analyses.

The Chairman is now required to submit to the Secretary of Defense, at least every three years, a report on the assignment of roles and missions to the armed forces. The report is to contain "such recommendations for changes . . . as the Chairman considers necessary to achieve

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maximum effectiveness of the armed forces." Each report is to consider "changes in nature of the threat, unnecessary duplication of effort among the Services and changes in technology that can be effectively applied to warfare." The first such report is required by 1 October 1988, by which time Congress intends that service roles and missions which scarcely have been modified since the Key West accord of 1949 will be rationalized and regular public reviews instituted thereafter. The implications for the Army and the other services are severe given the often zero-sum nature of such reviews.

**Combatant Commands**

The legislative changes contain new requirements for the assignment of virtually all forces to the combatant commands and for their command arrangements. The legislation requires that "except for those forces assigned to carry out functions of a Secretary of a military department [basically recruiting, training, equipping, mobilizing, etc.] . . . the Secretaries of the military departments shall assign all forces under their jurisdiction to unified and specified commands to perform missions assigned to those commands," but the Secretary retains the responsibility for "the administration and support of forces assigned by him to the command." It also specifies that "all forces operating within the geographic area assigned to a unified combatant command, shall be assigned to and under the commander of that command."

The chain of command runs "from the President to the Secretary of Defense, and from the Secretary of Defense to the commander of the combatant command." Further, "command authority" with respect to the forces assigned includes giving authoritative direction . . . necessary to carry out missions assigned . . . including authoritative direction over all aspects of military operations, joint training, and logistics . . ., prescribing the chain of command to the commands and forces within the command . . ., organizing commands and forces within that command . . ., and employing forces within that command as he considers necessary to carry out missions assigned.

This new definition of command differs significantly from the former corporate JCS-approved definitions of "command" and "operational command." It was intentional on the part of the legislators to break the old molds and in their place specify in detail the new authority they believed the combatant commander needed. The result is consistent with the intent, a decentralization of authority and power out of Washington and consolidated at the field level responsible for fighting a war in a fully coordinated, joint manner.

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These major changes will take considerable time to implement, even after initial decisions. Again the implications for the Army are large, e.g., can the Army prudently assign "all" combat forces to the combatant commands in time of peace, even our Reserve forces and overseas elements of US-based support commands? How will the combatant commanders exercise their new authority to organize assigned forces and oversee their joint training and logistics, and what will be the resultant role of Army component commands?

Another change is that the CJCS is required to review, "not less often than every two years . . . the missions, the responsibilities (to include geographic boundaries), and force structure of each combatant command and recommend to the President, [through] the Secretary of Defense, any changes . . . as may be necessary." The legislation requires the first such review of the Unified Command Plan to be completed by 1 October 1987, and specifies in the "matters to be included" ten specific issues for review, e.g., changes in current boundaries, possible addition of three new unified commands and the elimination of one, and several mission changes between commands.

Taken together with the requirement for periodic reviews of the roles and missions of the services starting in 1988, this creates greatly strengthened civilian authority in policymaking roles within DOD and provides continuous oversight by Congress in these two critical areas of military organization. These are areas which have long been unchangeable, and which, if changed, have a direct bearing on the nature of the Army in the future.

**Joint Officer Personnel Policy**

The next major legislative change with implications for the Army, especially for the officer corps, is the creation of the "joint specialty" for "officers particularly trained in and oriented toward . . . the integrated employment of land, sea, and air forces, including matters relating to national security strategy, strategic planning and contingency planning, and command and control of combat operations under unified command." Under the legislation, the Secretary of Defense, with the advice of the CJCS, must establish career guidelines for the selection, military education, training, and utilization of these officers in "joint duty assignments" (JDA). However, many of these guidelines are already contained in the detailed provisions of the new law.

How many JDAs there will be was to have been determined by the Secretary by 1 April 1987, but specifically excluded are "assignments within an officer's own military department . . . and assignments for joint training and education." Presumably this leaves most of the positions in OJCS and
the combatant command headquarters and some joint agencies. At least one thousand JDAs must be designated by the Secretary as "critical" and these plus up to one half of the JDA at any one time "shall be held only by an officer with a joint specialty or a nominee for such specialty." All assignments for JDA "shall be for not less than three and one-half years . . . or not less than three years for general and flag officers." Once these manning requirements are specified, the services will nominate officers for the joint specialty. After a two-year transition period, selection can occur only after the officer "successfully completes an appropriate program at a joint professional military education school and subsequently completes a full tour of duty in a joint duty assignment." The services have taken the position that such stringent requirements for joint service will be mathematically impossible to meet, and they are consequently seeking legislative relief. Regardless of how the matter is resolved, however, joint service will be an essential element in future career development.

In a startling change to the historical prerogatives of the military departments, the legislation also specifies the promotion guidelines for joint specialty officers. The legislation requires the Secretary "to ensure that the qualifications of officers assigned to JDAs are such that . . . officers who have the joint specialty are expected, as a group, to be promoted at a rate not less than the rate for officers of the same armed force . . . who are serving on the headquarters staff of their armed force." Also, each future service promotion board that considers officers who are or have served in a JDA "shall have at least one officer designated by the CJCS who is currently serving in a joint duty position." After the board, the service Secretary must submit a report to the CJCS, who will review the results to determine if the board gave "appropriate consideration" to the performance of officers in JDAs. If the CJCS finds that the board has "acted contrary to the guidelines of the Secretary of Defense . . . or otherwise failed to give appropriate consideration," he will so indicate to the service Secretary, who must resolve the issue or refer it to the Secretary of Defense for resolution. The legislation gives detailed guidelines for the education of joint specialty officers, including the immediate infusion of at least one half of each graduating class from joint military education schools directly into JDAs. It also makes successful performance for a full tour in a JDA as a criterion for promotion to general or flag officer starting in 1992.

To monitor implementation of all these provisions, a significant array of reports is required of the services, OSD, and the Joint Staff. These are designed to show "the extent to which the Secretary of each military department is providing officers to fill that department's share of Joint Staff and other JDAs . . . and to demonstrate the performance of the Department of Defense in carrying out this chapter."

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Taken together, the joint officer personnel provisions of the new law create a historic departure for officer development and management in our armed forces, including the Army. Congress has finally overcome the unfortunate spectre of "The Man on Horseback," and has now legislated the foundations necessary for a joint staff of the armed forces, one that can be educated, trained, and promoted over time to insure its progression, continuity, and freedom of action from undue influence from the services.

**Military Departments**

The last major set of legislated changes affects the organizational and functional responsibilities within the headquarters of the military departments. The intent of the Congress in making these changes was to strengthen significantly the authority of the service secretaries and their ability to contribute to overall management of the Department of Defense, particularly in policy and decisionmaking. But, at the same time, they intended to clarify functional responsibilities and eliminate perceived duplications between and within military departments, and in some cases, to circumscribe the departments' previous authority. The resultant changes to the headquarters of the Department of the Army are indeed significant, though perhaps not to the same degree as changes in the joint arena.

The Secretary of the Army "is responsible for, and has the authority necessary to conduct all affairs of the Department of the Army"; these affairs are listed in a traditional format of twelve functions such as recruiting, organizing, equipping, etc. He is also explicitly responsible to the Secretary of Defense for seven additional procedural functions of defense management, one of which states that he is "responsible for carrying out all functions of the Department of the Army so as to fulfill . . . the current and future operational requirements of the unified and specified commands."

To execute these responsibilities, the new law specifies the composition of the Office of the Secretary of the Army (OSA), and in a major departure from the past specifies that it shall have sole responsibility for certain specified functions. Seven functions are specified, some of which previously have been performed by the Army Staff. They are acquisition, auditing, comptroller (to include financial management), information management, inspector general, legislative affairs, and public affairs.

In this attempt to strengthen civilian leadership within the military departments and to eliminate internal duplication of effort between OSA and the Army Staff, Congress further specified that "the Secretary of the Army shall designate a single office or other activity within OSA to conduct each of the seven functions specified. No office or other entity may be established or designated within the Army Staff to conduct any of the functions specified." Further language in the bill does allow the Army Staff
to provide advice and assistance in these functions if done “under the directions of the office in OSA assigned responsibility for that function.” It also allows the Secretary to assign to the Army Staff the aspects of research and development that pertain to military requirements and test and evaluation. Other than these small exceptions the new division of labor between the two staffs and the paramountcy of civilian control is now firmly set in statute.

One of the more pressing requirements of the new law is the specified allowable size of OSA and the Army Staff. The legislation mandates within two years a 15-percent reduction in both general officers and in the aggregate size of the military department headquarters. For the Army this will mean a reduction of approximately 550 personnel from Headquarters, Department of the Army, by October 1988.

The Post-reorganization Environment

Does all of this change really matter? I think that it does, and our profession will be the better for understanding this. We can draw five main conclusions:

- First, it is clear, even without a full understanding of how these changes will ultimately be implemented, that power relationships within DOD have been fundamentally altered.

Significantly, the chiefs of the military services have lost considerable clout in at least three respects. First, they have lost clout with respect to the CJCS, who now alone is the principal military advisor, who is responsible for many functions that were formerly shared among the corporate JCS, and who solely controls the work of the newly independent Joint Staff. Second, they have lost clout with respect to the combatant commanders, who will now command service forces in manners other than through service components, and who have new avenues to influence service programs and budgets. Third, they have lost clout with respect to the secretaries of the military departments, who have been given sole responsibility for a number of functions which now may not be delegated to the service chiefs and their staffs as was done in the past.

Conversely, as the authority of the service chiefs has been diminished, that of the CJCS, the combatant commanders, and particularly the civilian leadership within DOD has been enhanced. The Secretary of the Army and the other service secretaries now have a greater role to play in policy formulation and decisionmaking within DOD, third only to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary. Clearly the quality and political effectiveness of the appointed civilian leadership within DA will now be even more determinative of the future of the Army. It is important to realize, however, that all budget lines still reside with their pre-reorganization
owners, excepting the potential for small operational budgets for the CINCs. Even the most joint of programs, the one for joint exercises which evaluate the state of joint interoperability, still depends on funding by the services. So, while much has changed, strong vestiges of the old power relationships remain.

- **Second, Congress is not finished with reform of our national security processes, either within DOD or externally.**

  Now that the lid is off the box, so to speak, continued reform will be the norm.¹⁶ Not all this need come from Congress either; there is plenty of statutory authority now available for the Secretary to continue the reforms, if he is of a mind to do so.

  This is not inherently bad; in fact there are several aspects of this first reform that the Army will want to help correct and can do so only with access to a change mechanism such as continued legislative reform. We need only recall the mandated periodic reviews to be convinced that change will be the norm. The nation’s grand strategy and military strategy will be reviewed and debated with each budget submission; the roles and missions of the military services will be publicly reviewed every three years; the Unified Command Plan will be reviewed every two years; and a standard system for evaluating the joint preparedness of each combatant command must be in place providing feedback within a year.

  Understanding and accepting continued reform as the norm is vital as the Army implements its part of this legislation. Our responses should be designed not to meet a presumed new static state, but should presuppose continuous interaction with a dynamic environment, much of which interaction will be with entities external to the military department, e.g. the independent Joint Staff, the combatant commands, the OSD staff, and Congress and the public. Effective participation in these externally oriented relationships will continue to be a critical challenge for the Army, particularly as the changing environment opens new opportunities for the articulation of Army needs.

- **Third, the legislative reforms insofar as they affect the Army are directed generally at its bureaucratic manifestations at the top, and not at its performance in the field per se.**

  The total national security process with both executive and legislative actors can be viewed in terms of inputs and outputs. The inputs to the process are created by the many actors, primarily in Washington, who based on their roles participate in defined processes to produce what are essentially requests for resources: strategies, doctrines, programs, and budget documents. These in turn are transformed into outputs, beginning with the defense appropriation process, followed by hardware acquisition and force mobilization, to create the armed forces that have military utility for our nation. These forces are the “outputs.”

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In this context, it can be concluded that the focus of reorganization is on inputs to the national security process far more than it is on the outputs. While the intent is obviously to influence the outputs, the legislative mandates act directly only on the input side. This is not good when viewed from the Army's, or the nation's, perspective. The ability of the armed forces of a nation to apply effective military force, when and where needed, is still the test of any national security process. Unfortunately, there is little in this reorganization to focus attention on these outputs. The only focus is the new functional responsibility of the CJCS to design and implement within one year an evaluation system for the joint preparedness of the combatant commands. What form this will take is unknown, but it would be extremely helpful to the Army if it provides real visibility on the mismatch between conventional strategy and land forces; on the requisite but missing strategic lift for a global military strategy; on the actual capabilities, support requirements, and possible redundancies of weapon systems of all forces used in support of land forces; and on the known critical weaknesses in the operational jointness of our armed forces. As the service most dependent upon joint support, and as the service most suffering the inabilities of its sister services to support its primary mission, the Army would find this most helpful indeed; but that was not the focus of this reorganization. Thus, the Army's interest in continued reform to focus on outputs is acute.

- Fourth, where the legislation did focus, on the input side of our national security process, we now have a fundamentally changed set of processes for strategy formulation, planning, and force-building that is more rational and explicit.

The need for this type of change has been consistently documented in the reform literature. In one of the most succinct statements, the Packard Commission noted that "there is no rational system whereby the Executive branch and the Congress reach coherent and enduring agreement on national military strategy, the forces to carry it out, and the funding that should be provided—in light of the overall economy and the competing claims on national resources." Whether a really rational system could ever be attained or effectively used in such an intensely political environment is certainly questionable. But any move toward explicitness and rationality in relating means and ends presents the Army with both problems and possibilities. It presents problems because our organizational culture tends to be apolitical and thus we have not well articulated and effectively defended resource needs for the Army. This will be an even larger problem now that it must be resolved amid new roles and power relationships external to the military department. On the other hand, the Army will now have new opportunities to articulate its needs, given a more explicit process which publicly clarifies national commitments and strategic requirements, gets all the services
behind one common military strategy, explicitly links forces to commitments and strategy, and facilitates cross-service tradeoffs.\(^\text{13}\)

- Finally, the legislation brought no reform to Congress itself or the manner in which it exercises its considerable role in the overall planning and management of the national security process.

The problems associated with the role of Congress have been carefully analyzed, and many practical solutions offered,\(^\text{14}\) but political consensus and desire for change in the way Congress does business are obviously lacking. We should not naively expect this to change.\(^\text{15}\)

In “DOD Reorganization: Part II, New Opportunities,” forthcoming in the December issue of Parameters, Colonel Snider will address the effects of the legislation on the future of the Army. He will address specifically how the Army can take full advantage of the several opportunities presented by the legislation.—Editor

NOTES

1. Much has been written about the defense reform movement. In addition to the many books by the individual reformers, several anthologies and institutional studies provide a good overview. Suggested is The Defense Reform Debate, ed. Asa Clark, et al. (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984).


5. All references to specific wording in the legislation have been taken from the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 (Public Law 99-433), 1 October 1986.

6. The first such report has already been made by the President to Congress. See National Security Strategy of the United States, a White House document published in January 1987.


10. Discussions with senior staff, Senate Armed Services Committee, December 1986. This view is also expressed by Huntington in “Organization and Strategy,” in Reorganizing America’s Defense, p. 230.


13. The Senate Armed Services Committee under its new Chairman, Senator Sam Nunn, who was also an architect of the DOD Reorganization bill, began action on the FY 88 DOD budget with hearings on strategy, not the budget. This has not been done since 1981, and then only casually. Given the content of these early hearings, it is apparent that Congress intends to establish publicly the strategy benchmark that it mandated in the Reorganization Act.
