

TAKING STOCK



Joint Combat Camera Center

U.S. Navy (Donald W. Hanselman)

OF THE NEW



Joint Combat Camera (H.H. Deffner)

U.S. Army

JOINT ERA

By IKE SKELTON

Summary

Events following Vietnam reinvigorated the military and led to the prominence of jointness: the end of the draft, the All Volunteer Force, the Total Force, and improved military education all helped to pave the way. The credibility of the Armed Forces ebbed with Desert One which prompted the Reagan administration to vow to restore American military strength. The Goldwater-Nichols Act redistributed institutional power across the defense establishment—under the rubric of jointness—and made possible the unified command structure which performed so effectively in the Gulf War. Jointness was recently given another boost by the *Report on the Bottom-Up Review*. But the force structure proposed in the review may not be adequate to cope with simultaneous regional conflicts as envisioned. We must not endanger our security in a frenzy of cost cutting only to find ourselves faced once again with a hollow force.

The American military came out of Vietnam demoralized if not broken by the experience. The services all had serious problems, including racial friction and drug abuse. Toward the close of the conflict in Indochina the Armed Forces instituted various far-reaching changes. Some of them were forced on the services, others were initiated from within the military. These changes included the end of conscription and the introduction of the All Volunteer Force as well as the Total Force concept, plus a renewed emphasis on professional education for officers.

Decline and Rise

Change is never easy. The collapse of the Republic of Vietnam in April 1975 ended a long national nightmare. As the military sought to reconstitute itself from inside out, it also had to deal with a nation that wanted to turn away from things military. At the same time the Armed Forces confronted continuing challenges posed by the Warsaw Pact while maintaining a substantial force structure but at the expense of readiness.

By 1980, however, defense spending was simply inadequate. The military had become a fundamentally hollow, unprepared force with ships that were unable to sail, aircraft that could not fly, weapons disabled by shortages of spare parts, personnel unsuited for service in the force, and inadequate operational training. The tragedy of Desert One, the unsuccessful attempt to rescue our hostages from Teheran that resulted in the death of eight Marines, symbolized the state of disrepair to which the Armed Forces had been reduced in the post-Vietnam period.

When he entered office in 1981, President Reagan convinced Congress that defense cuts in the 1970s under Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter had left the Nation exposed. The humiliation of Iran holding Americans hostage for 444 days, along with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, convinced the public that change was required. Defense spending which increased during the final years of the Carter administration was raised substantially by the incoming Reagan administration.

Goldwater-Nichols

Early in the Reagan years other changes affecting the military were also taking place. Two articles published in 1982—by General David Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and by General Edward “Shy” Meyer, Army Chief of Staff—made the same point. The defense establishment was in need of substantial changes to improve the way it did business. So was born what came to be known as defense reorganization which culminated four years later with passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

Goldwater-Nichols was fundamentally about rearranging power among institutions within the Department of Defense—namely, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the services, and the unified commands. It reduced the influence of the service chiefs and increased the power of the Chairman and commanders in chief (CINCs), the commanders with responsibility for employing U.S. forces in given theaters of combat.

It also helped simplify the chain of command. This occurred as a result of the 1983 House Armed Services Committee investigation of the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut. Among other problems, the committee found fault with a complicated chain of command. An example of how business was conducted before and after Goldwater-Nichols helps to illustrate this finding. The chain of command during the Vietnam war was anything but clear and simple. While Generals Westmoreland and later Abrams ran the

ground war in South Vietnam, the Navy ran its own air operations over the North as did Air Force. And while the Air Force ran tactical aircraft from headquarters in Vietnam, the Strategic Air Command maintained its own chain of command through the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington for B-52 missions against targets in the North. In other words, operational coordination was a nightmare. American military leaders violated one of the fundamental principles of war, unity of command.

Goldwater-Nichols corrected the problems of Vietnam by strengthening the authority of the theater commander. Thus in the war in the Gulf, the Commander in Chief of Central Command, General Norman Schwarzkopf, commanded all forces in the theater whether Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or Air Force.

The military buzz word for this ability to fight together in a unified fashion is *jointness*. Unlike the experience in Vietnam, the effort was coordinated by a single commander in the theater running the entire show. Goldwater-Nichols made this unity of effort possible.

Professional Military Education

The House Armed Services Committee Panel on Professional Military Education (PME) was established in the wake of Goldwater-Nichols¹ and undertook the first comprehensive review of PME by Congress. Its charter was to assess the military’s ability to develop strategists and to review joint education requirements under the Goldwater-Nichols legislation. The panel’s findings appeared in a 206-page report which had two major thrusts. One established a conceptual model in which each level of schooling builds on previous levels and each college has a clear, fundamental teaching focus. The other urged resurrecting two joint colleges—the National War College (NWC) at the senior level and the Armed Forces Staff College (AFSC) at the intermediate level—to the prominence they enjoyed in the early post-World War II period. Under this scheme

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U.S. Air Force

General David C. Jones.

schooling at service colleges would precede joint education.

The principal recommendations focused on joint institutions, a proposed National Center for Strategic Studies (as a reconstituted NWC was referred to) and AFSC. Numerous suggestions sought to strengthen these institutions by combining greater operational competence at the military level with sound, imaginative strategic thinking at the national level.

End of the Cold War

The Berlin Wall fell a few months after the House report on military education was issued and shortly after that, the Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, crafted a new “national military strategy”² which envisioned the end of the Cold War. It differed from Cold War strategy in a number of ways. First, it envisioned the primary threat as regional rather than global. Second, it emphasized conventional forces instead of nuclear weapons. Third, forward presence replaced forward deployment as the key to protecting U.S. interests around the globe. The military would be primarily U.S.-based, especially the Army and the Air Force. Subsequently, the Base Force, articulated by DOD, spelled out the new military strategy.³ It envisioned a 25 percent reduction in both forces and funding by the mid-1990s.

Service and Joint Reorganization

In the midst of these momentous developments each military department began efforts to reorganize for the future as did DOD as a whole. The Air Force, for one, published a white paper entitled “Global Reach, Global Power” in 1990, a visionary document which outlined a strategic planning framework for the post-Cold War world.⁴ Venerable institutions such as the Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command, and Military Airlift Command passed into history. In their place the Air Combat Command incorporated all winged firepower—fighter, bomber, reconnaissance, command and control, tactical airlift, and rescue—in one organization. The Air Mobility Command acquired most mobility and refueling assets: strategic transport, tanker, and medical evacuation aircraft. The number of major commands was reduced from 13 to 8.

The Navy—regarded as the service traditionally most resistant to change—also responded to the end of the Cold War and the Persian Gulf War in dramatic fashion by issuing a white paper in 1992, “. . . From the Sea.”⁵ The result of a year-long study, it incorporated two assumptions: America and its allies would control the seas and most future military operations would be joint. This strategy symbolized a new way of thinking. The focus of future operations shifted from open seas to coastlines. In concert with the Marine Corps, the emphasis on littoral warfare marries naval forces and the priorities of both services. “The Navy and Marine Corps will now respond to crises and can provide the initial, ‘enabling’ capability for joint operations. . . .”⁶

In many respects the Army instituted a number of far-reaching changes twenty years ago. The bitter outcome of Vietnam was reflected in three crucial decisions which affected this service more than any other: the end of the draft and beginning of the All Volunteer Force, the creation of the Total Force concept, and the establishment of the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) at Fortress Monroe, Virginia. Recruiting high school graduates and adequately paying them built an Army of high-quality people. TRADOC yielded great dividends. First-rate training programs, as symbolized by the National Training Center at Fort Irwin in California, and a renewed emphasis on PME helped produce combat leaders who had studied war and were well prepared when called to action. Those officers responded magnificently in Panama and in the Gulf with campaign plans that produced quick victories with few casualties. Although less prone to white papers than other services, the Army is indeed undergoing fundamental change as it becomes “A Strategic Force for the 21st Century.” The Army is coming home; it will be primarily based in the United States rather than forward deployed as in the Cold War. Substantial force reductions have led to inactivating four divisions and one corps along with consolidating fifty-one war reserve stocks to five.

As all the services reorganize for the post-Cold War era, each understands that most future operations will be joint or multiservice.



Flight over *USS George Washington*.

U.S. Navy

U.S. Navy

Marines during Operation Red Reef III in Ecuador.

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This view was underscored in 1991 by Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces*. That document and the related effort to develop joint doctrinal publications will help the services to work more closely together in a period of declining budgets and force structure. Leading thinkers in each service can offer their creative talents toward integrating the disparate ways the military thinks about employing forces. The publication in 1993 of the first issue of *JFQ* was another tangible indication that jointness had finally come of age.

While the services were busy adjusting to the changed political circumstances in the world, the Chairman was also busy reviewing defense policy. As a result of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, General Powell issued a report on roles, missions, and functions of the services in 1993. Two considerations dominated the

report, improving the way the Armed Forces fight and saving money in the process.⁷ The report noted the dramatic changes that have taken place already: the creation of Strategic Command, the elimination of nuclear weapons in the Army and the Marine Corps, and the end of the need to maintain chemical weapons brought about by the signing of the Chemical Weapons Convention in January 1993. The report also highlighted savings from further consolidation among the services of depot maintenance and flight training.

Testifying before the House Armed Services Committee in March 1993, General Powell, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, described the roles and missions report as “simply a snapshot of a continuous process of self-evaluation that occurs every day. The Joint Staff will continue to examine other

areas for possible consolidation or elimination.”⁸ The Joint Staff will soon get more help. The DOD Authorization Act for FY 94 included a provision calling for the establishment of a commission on roles and missions of the Armed Forces. It will have seven members appointed by the Secretary of Defense and will issue a report within a year of its first meeting.

Jointness in the Post-Cold War Era

In September 1993 Secretary of Defense Les Aspin reported the results of the long-awaited Bottom-Up Review. The review envisions a force designed to fight two major regional conflicts nearly simultaneously, one that is smaller than the Base Force and appears to cost 10 percent less. Overall active duty strength will decline from 1.6 million to 1.4 million. The force level will allow for the permanent stationing of 100,000 military personnel in Europe and 98,000 in the Pacific. To bolster the capability of a smaller force the Pentagon plans to add airlift and sealift, preposition Army equipment in both the Persian Gulf and Northeast Asia, develop and procure more precision guided weapons (especially anti-tank munitions), and improve Reserve component forces.

If truth be told, I have serious reservations about the Bottom-Up Review. Peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace-enforcement, and other peacetime contingencies have increased dramatically in the brief period since the end of the Cold War. Such operations impinge on the military's ability to carry out the national military strategy to fight two major regional conflicts. In addition, I question that the force described in the review can fight two regional conflicts even if all U.S. involvement in peacekeeping operations was terminated: the overall force is too small. The Bottom-Up force is underfunded, overstretched, and verging on hollowness while a declining defense budget pays for nondefense functions such as industrial conversion, drug interdiction, and environmental cleanup.

As the size of the force decreases so does our margin of error. As a result, the requirement for greater jointness increases as a way to compensate for smaller forces. This growth in jointness takes two forms, greater



DOD (Helene Stikkel)

General Colin L. Powell.

cooperation in the field and fleet among each service's respective combat forces and greater attention to matters that concern two or more services in the planning, research, and development phases of the acquisition process. The former is the primary responsibility of the CINCs and the latter that of the Joint Chiefs working with the services. Airlift, prepositioning, sealift; command, control, communication, and intelligence (C³I); space, ballistic missile defense, and advanced munitions are just some of the cross-cutting issues that must be addressed from a joint perspective early in planning and R&D.

Atlantic Command

The return of units formerly deployed overseas to bases in this country means that a larger and more important segment of the overall defense establishment will be stationed at home. Except for those forces attached to Pacific Command, all other forces in the United States now come under U.S. Atlantic Command (ACOM) which was established on October 1, 1993.

This was recommended in the Chairman's 1992 "Report on Roles, Missions, and Functions of Armed Forces of the United States" and is the fourth such effort. There

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was Strike Command in 1961, Readiness Command in 1971, and the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force in 1980 (which is now Central Command). While service parochialism undermined the first two efforts, ACOM should succeed for two reasons: first, Goldwater-Nichols gave unified commanders authority over component commanders which they previously lacked and, second, since 1986—especially after the Gulf War—jointness has not only become fashionable but has also proven itself.

Joint Exercises

Prominent among the activities of the trend toward greater jointness are training exercises. ACOM is charged with the joint training of forces based in the United States. Reductions in forces stationed abroad makes it crucial that the forces which reinforce regional commanders arrive fully capable of operating as a joint team. The services had five months to prepare for the Gulf War and we must assume that any potential opponent learned from that experience not to give the American military time to prepare for combat.

This is not an easy matter to work out. Service expertise comes first. Service personnel—both officer and enlisted alike—must first become skilled as soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen. Service skills progress from the individual to the unit. Much time, effort, and training is needed to become combat ready, be it an infantry battalion, ship, or fighter squadron. Finding time for both service and joint training is difficult. Balancing service and joint needs may require emphasis on service training with field exercises and joint training with computer-aided staff exercises. Advanced simulation technologies now exist that allow service and joint staffs to participate in staff exercises from remote locations. This will result in improved joint interoperability.

There is still a requirement to conduct field exercises for forces that normally do not work together: Army armor units supporting Marine Corps infantry units, naval gunfire support for Army forces, Air Force tankers refueling Navy fighters, Army helicopters working with Navy ships, and Navy attack aircraft providing close air support to Army and Marine Corps units. These are just

some of the activities that require joint training exercises among the services.

At the same time, regional unified commands must also conduct joint training exercises in theater. And forces deployed from the United States in the future will have to be well grounded in joint warfare fundamentals and better prepared to conduct combat operations on arrival in theater. If we fail to train in peacetime we will have to learn in wartime at the high price of American lives.

Joint Doctrine, Training, and Education

Each service has come to understand the importance of doctrine, the prescribed procedures and fundamental principles for conducting combat operations. The Army established TRADOC twenty-one years ago. In 1993 the Navy and the Air Force established doctrine centers at Norfolk Naval Base and Langley Air Force Base, respectively.

As the importance of joint training increases in the post-Cold War era, so does that of joint doctrine. The newly established Joint Warfighting Center (JWC) will promote both joint doctrine and training. It consolidates activities of the Joint Warfare Center at Hurlburt Field, Florida, and the Joint Doctrine Center (JDC) already in Norfolk. Situated at Fortress Monroe, Virginia, JWC is responsible to the Chairman through J-7 (Operational Plans and Interoperability). ACOM will also play an important role in evaluating, testing, and sequencing the development of joint doctrine by working closely with JWC.

Yet, if current efforts to improve joint training and doctrine are to be institutionalized and have a permanent impact, more needs to be done. At present JDC reviews recommendations for joint doctrine but doesn't formulate it. The time has come to increase the stature and responsibility of JDC by re-making it into a Joint Doctrine Command with a major role in formulating doctrine.

Careful consideration must also be given to where JWC is located in the Norfolk area. JDC is already there as are TRADOC and the Naval Doctrine Command, ACOM, and AFSC, while the Air Force Doctrine Center is near by at Langley Air Force Base.

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The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the President, National Defense University, need to focus attention on the role of AFSC in this whole effort towards greater jointness. The purpose of the college is to prepare students for immediate assignment to the unified commands or to the Joint Staff. AFSC is intended to be a hands-on school, teaching students to cope with the kinds of problems faced in joint assignments. The absence of adequate wargaming facilities hinders AFSC in accomplishing its mission. Placing JWC at the college would resolve this inadequacy. At the same time, AFSC offers JWC a source of expertise for evaluating and developing joint doctrine. Such a move would have a mutually reinforcing effect.

In 1923 Major George C. Marshall, the future Army Chief of Staff, described the regular cycle in the doing and the undoing of measures for the national defense. He noted in a speech to the Military Schools and Colleges Association that “we start in the making of adequate provisions and then turn abruptly in the opposite direction and abolish what has just been done.” Today we are in the midst of making one of those changes in direction.

World conditions *have* changed. Both forces and defense budgets should be reduced. But President Clinton remarked at West Point in May 1993 that while “(defense) budget cuts . . . at the end of the Cold War were necessary . . . there is a limit beyond which we must not go.”⁹ He underscored that concern in an interview on the same occasion indicating that he wanted “to send a cautionary note to the House and Senate . . . that we have cut all we should right now.”¹⁰

The challenge now is to reduce the size of our military without putting our national security at risk. There are still threats to American interests in the world that cannot be ignored. Military power still counts in the late twentieth century and will in the twenty-first as well. The United States must maintain a ready, modern, and sufficiently powerful military to meet any contingency. As the military gets smaller, the necessity for the services to fight as an integrated force increases.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower got it right more than thirty years ago when he observed in a message to Congress that:

Separate ground, sea, and air warfare is gone forever. If ever again we should be involved in war, we will fight in all elements, with all services, as one single concentrated effort. Peacetime preparation and organizational activity must conform to this fact.

Those thoughts of a former President and five-star general should guide both civilian and military leaders responsible for shaping the Armed Forces of today for the missions of tomorrow. **JFQ**

NOTES

¹ Panel members included Joseph E. Brennan, George Darden, Jack Davis, Jon Kyl, Solomon P. Ortiz, Owen B. Pickett, John G. Rowland, and Ike Skelton (Chairman).

² John M. Collins, *National Military Strategy, the DOD Base Force, and U.S. Unified Command Plan: An Assessment* (Washington: Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress, June 11, 1992).

³ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, “The Base Force: A Total Force Presentation,” Subcommittee on Defense, House Appropriations Committee (September 25, 1991).

⁴ Department of the Air Force, “The Air Force and U.S. National Security Policy: Global Reach-Global Power” (June 1990).

⁵ Department of the Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps, “. . . From the Sea: Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century” (1992), p. 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Report on the Roles, Mission, and Functions of the Armed Forces of the United States” (February 1993).

⁸ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, statement before the Committee of Armed Service, House of Representatives (February 1993), p. 10.

⁹ Bill Clinton, remarks at the U.S. Military Academy commencement ceremony at West Point, New York (May 23, 1993), in *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, vol. 29, no. 22 (June 7, 1993), p. 997.

¹⁰ *The Washington Times*, May 30, 1993, p. A6.