

RELATIONSHIP OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF TO MILITARY PROCUREMENT  
22 April 1946.

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GENERAL ARMSTRONG:

We have not heard much from the exalted heights of The Joint Chiefs of Staff. Most of us have been operating on much lower levels. If your experience compares with mine, there is considerable ignorance of what went on in those lofty spots; so we are particularly glad to hear from an officer who has been there and who is thoroughly indoctrinated with the principles and the theory on which that organization works. He will speak on the "Relationship of The Joint Chiefs of Staff to Military Procurement".

Colonel Vandersluis is a graduate of the Class of 1923 Military Academy and he was in the Coast Artillery Corps. He has been, since 1943, with the Headquarters of the Army Service Forces, and has represented General Lutes on the Joint Logistics Plans Committee since August 1944. Ladies and gentlemen, Colonel Vandersluis.

COLONEL VANDERSLUIS:

This Mount Olympus business has me sort of dazed. We are down in the foothills where the mud is dirty and the pick and shovel work is hard.

I am supposed to discuss "Relationship of The Joint Chiefs of Staff to Military Procurement". You will find during the discussion that the Joint Chiefs do not get down to as low a level as procurement. Very often, however, their decisions do have a tremendous impact on procurement and procurement itself has an impact on their decisions. I intend to talk about this subject by discussing first, briefly, the history of the Joint Chiefs, with which you may not be completely familiar; go through their functions and try to relate them to procurement; speak somewhat about the staff echelons they have set up that are interested in, or related in any way to, Procurement; and then go through a procedure that we have recently established that we think will coordinate the activities of the Joint Chiefs with the procurement agencies.

The Joint Chiefs is a World War II agency. It was established for one reason only, and that was to secure collaboration with the British. Its basis is dated back in January 1941. At that time, the United States and British officers thought they should get together to establish some procedure and some policy to govern joint action in case we were drawn into the war. A delegation from the United Kingdom came over here and met with a United States Staff Committee and established some methods of procedure and some strategic policies that were to be used as a guide in case we were drawn into the war. Of course, this was long before the war and there could not be any high-level approval. The plan that was made was approved by military chiefs in June 1941 but was not submitted to the President for approval.

On 7 December 1941, when Pearl Harbor was attacked, it was immediately apparent that a number of provisions in the plan that had been established the year before were obsolete, principally because of the wider scope of the war. The Prime Minister and the Chiefs of Staff of Great Britain immediately hopped a plane and came over to this country to revise the plan and to establish a more sound basis. They met with our Chiefs and at that time--shortly after Pearl Harbor--started working on a charter for the Combined Chiefs of Staff, which is the basis of the Joint Chiefs organization.

The charter was approved by the Chiefs of Staff, that is the British and the United States Chiefs of Staff, in February 1942, and approved by the President in April 1942. That charter has guided the Combined Chiefs of Staff in their action throughout the war.

For the U. S. membership of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, we had the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Commanding General of the Air Forces, the Chief of Staff of Naval operations, and the Chief of Staff to the President--just four members. Prior to this date, we had what was called the Joint Board, that was considerably larger than the Joint Chiefs of Staff and did not have as a member a Chief of Staff to the President. The Joint Board actually approved the CCS charter but did not in its entirety meet with the Combined Chiefs since the large number of members involved would result in an unwieldy organization.

In the Combined Chiefs of Staff setup, there was a staff organization with U. S. sides and British sides. Before a meeting of the Combined Chiefs, it was desirable that the U. S. Chiefs get together and talk over what was going to be presented at the CCS meeting and arrive at a common line of thought, and it was logical that they should call on the U. S. sides of the various Combined Chiefs of Staff committees for advice on such problems. That was the start of the Joint Chiefs of Staff which was organized originally to handle nothing but combined problems. However, it was a convenient setup to handle U. S. joint problems that in the past had been handled by the Joint Board. In order to make it more easy to handle these problems, the U. S. staff was enlarged and some echelons were added that were not concerned greatly with United Nations' problems, but were concerned primarily with U. S. problems.

I told you that the Combined Chiefs had a charter that was approved by the President. The Joint Chiefs have never had a charter approved although they thought that they should have a charter and that it would help them in their dealings with other governmental agencies. They prepared a charter with this purpose in view and submitted it to the President in June 1943. The President reviewed the charter but declined to approve it. In a memorandum to the Joint Chiefs of Staff he stated that he would not approve such a charter because he desired the Joint Chiefs to have all the initiative that they needed and he did not want anyone to take the charter and say that that was the limit to what the Joint Chiefs could do.

The lack of a charter has not affected the Joint Chiefs at all during the war, as the Chiefs of the respective Armed Services had all the legal authority they needed to handle military problems, and they had the complete backing of the President in handling problems with other governmental agencies. It may be that in peace the lack of a charter will affect their operations with other governmental agencies. Not having a charter that is approved, the only basis for determining the functions of the JCS is this charter that they presented to the President in which they listed what they considered their functions should be and actually those functions were carried out by them.

The functions stated in this charter were: First, to advise the President on certain matters. They were to advise him on strategy. They were to advise him on requirements, production and allocation of munitions and shipping. They were to advise him on joint Army and Navy policy. In addition to advising the President on these matters, they were to initiate proposals to assure coordination between Army and Navy agencies and other governmental agencies. So far as the Armed Forces were concerned, they considered that they should establish joint policies, make joint plans, issue joint directives, and direct strategy and operations in the U. S. theaters. In other words, in purely U. S. theaters, the U. S. Chiefs of Staff, or the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as we call them, directed the operations entirely by themselves. Of course, as the last function, they were part of the Combined Chiefs of Staff to represent the United States with the British.

Now let us consider the relationship of these various functions to military procurement. First is the function concerning strategy and operations: Advising the President on strategy, and directing strategy and operations in U. S. theaters. A casual glance at that function does not indicate a very close connection with military procurement. However, closer analysis shows that it is closely tied in with military procurement. If there is sufficient time and unlimited resources, the plans of the Joint Chiefs concerning strategy and operations can be used as the basis for procurement. If there is not sufficient time to get out these plans sufficiently early to guide procurement, then the operational plans that are developed must be based on the procurement that has been planned. You therefore have two possible methods of coordinating operational and procurement planning. If you have time, the procurement plans--if you can do the job--must be based on operational plans. If you do not have time to prepare operational plans sufficiently in advance, then operational plans must be based on the procurement that has been planned.

There are a number of examples of how plans affected procurement during the war and of how procurement affected plans. The strategic concept of the island hopping war in the Pacific led to the placing of procurement programs for numerous amphibious weapons and vehicles and jungle equipment. The strategic plan for the operations in Europe led to major changes in the placing in procurement programs of a great many heavy trucks, railroad equipment, and that sort of thing that had not been planned before. The very date of the landing in Normandy was based on studies of the availability of resources. Another interesting example, was the course of events in the Pacific. There was a question as to whether the attack should be launched through Luzon or through Formosa. Actually the decision was based almost entirely upon the availability of resources. It was found that there

were not enough resources available for the Formosa attack, and therefore the approach to Japan was made through Luzon.

The second major function that I told you the Joint Chiefs had was that of advising the President of requirements, production and allocation of munitions and shipping. That would appear to put the Joint Chiefs right in the procurement job. It was, however, never so interpreted, and the Joint Chiefs, except for a few bottleneck items, did not make recommendations as to procurement of items. They did allocate end products that came from procurement programs and had a special committee set up for such allocation between the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. Throughout the war they indicated requirements for procurement but these indications were very broad and a lot of work had to be done down in the services in computing detailed requirements. The requirements would be in terms of troops to be employed and bases to be organized and developed; that sort of thing that could not be put in a procurement program. They did get right into procurement concerning certain bottleneck products, as I said before. The building of ships by the Maritime Commission was the principal example, the construction of ships being based directly on the needs of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to export military forces and supplies. The Maritime Commission shipbuilding program was based on specific recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. That procurement was so tied down to the recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the President actually ordered that no major changes in the shipbuilding program would be made without consultation with the Joint Chiefs. Other bottleneck items came up for review and recommendation, usually as a result of a request for recommendations from the director of War Mobilization. Studies were made, in this respect, on the need for aircraft, the need for aviation gasoline, the need for bombs and other items, where the Director of War Mobilization thought that perhaps we were asking for too much or where requirements were conflicting with some other requirements and he wanted a decision from the Joint Chiefs as to which should take precedence.

The other functions of the Joint Chiefs, concerning coordination of Army and Navy functions with those of governmental agencies, and coordination of Army and Navy policies, had little, if any, bearing on procurement.

Now we will go through the Joint Chiefs of Staff organization, in so far as it pertains to military procurement. As you all probably know, the staff elements of the Joint Chiefs are not based on either an Army or Navy idea of what a staff should be. It has grown up like Topsy, to cover special jobs. There is no single head of any of these staff divisions. All of the staff divisions are committees and the result is that all action is committee action, where from four to six people get around a table and decide what to do; and there is no one boss who can tell them what to do if there is an argument. There is no general staff set up to supervise special work of special staffs. All the committees, except the Joint Strategic Survey Committee which is the one top staff echelon, are on the same level.

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The Joint Strategic Survey Committee, as I said, is the top Joint Chiefs of Staff committee. It is a very high ranking committee and is charged with broad strategy and with recommendations concerning national policy. The broad strategical concepts developed by that committee are, of course, the basis of all the other actions, operational and logistical, carried out by the Armed Services; so their actions have a direct bearing on military procurement. The strategic concept that they develop, however, is too broad to be of much use to procurement people other than to indicate certain items that might be needed in operation, and will not generally indicate timing nor will it indicate the size of forces. It will give such data as a decision of whether we attack Germany first or Japan first; in the attack on Germany, whether we approach from the South or the North. In that way it will indicate whether arctic equipment or tropical equipment is wanted, whether you are going to have a long line of communication requiring rolling stock, or whether it is going to be a short, small operation. The Joint Strategic Survey does not develop operational plans or detailed strategical plans.

The Joint Staff Planners come right under the Strategic Survey Committee in the chain of developing plans. They are charged with the preparation of joint war plans and with plans concerning the combined employment of United Nations forces. They review all studies and plans of other Joint Chiefs agencies that are connected with military operations. In other words, if it might affect an operation plan, they review a paper and report to the Joint Chiefs concerning the implications. They operate under the broad strategic guidance of the Strategic Survey Committee and with that guidance develop more detailed strategical plans and operational plans to carry out the broad strategic concept. They will go into some detail as to time of operations, which helps the procurement people, and as to the size of the combat forces needed for the operations, and some detail as to bases required to support the operations. The plans they turn out are the first real guide to procurement plans, but they must go through other planners before they become satisfactory for that use.

In addition to the Joint Strategic Survey Committee and the Joint Staff Planners, both committees being interested in strategic and operational plans, there are three other committees that are more closely connected with procurement planning. They are the Joint Military Transportation Committee, The Army-Navy Petroleum Board, and the Joint Logistics Committee.

In looking at the functions charged to the Joint Military Transportation Committee, in its charter, it is not apparent how it gets into procurement, but I will cover that later. The charter of the Committee charges its representatives with being concerned with all matters concerning military overseas transportation; with coordinating Army and Navy overseas transportation requirements with those of other governmental agencies and of other nations; with informing the War Shipping Administration, which furnished a large quantity of our shipping, of the Army and Navy requirements; and with allocating the shipping furnished by the War Shipping Administration between the Army and the Navy. They advised the Joint Chiefs and the Joint Chiefs of Staff agencies on all matters concerning military transportation.

Now you will notice, as I said, that those functions do not tie in with procurement. However, in developing the shipping requirements plans that the Joint Chiefs presented to the Maritime Commission, they worked in collaboration with the Joint Logistics Committee in developing those requirements. So in that respect they were directly tied with military procurement.

The Army and Navy Petroleum Board is in one way a procurement agency. It has a dual status. It serves under the Army and Navy Munitions Board, which you know is charged with procurement coordination, as well as under the Joint Chiefs, and its plans or functions concerning procurement are carried out under the Army and Navy Munitions Board in accordance with policies put out by that agency. This board is charged with effecting close cooperation between the services on all matters pertaining to petroleum, petroleum products and all associated matters, and it correlates and coordinates procurement and budgetary requirements. It determines strategic requirements for petroleum and petroleum products. It designates procurement agencies for the products, charging one service with all the procurement of a certain product. It coordinates research development and testing of petroleum and petroleum products. It coordinates distribution, storage, and issue and specifications and standards for these products. You will see, as I said, that the Army and Navy Petroleum Board has a definite procurement responsibility in that it not only determines the requirements but assigns procurement agencies.

Let us now consider the Joint Logistics Committee. The Joint Logistics Committee is the primary logistical advisory and planning agency of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It is charged with giving the Joint Chiefs the logistical aspects and implications of plans or commitments, with advising other agencies of the Joint Chiefs and of the War and Navy Departments of logistic plans and requirements, with developing logistical plans to implement strategical and operational plans developed by the War Plans Committee. In carrying out its functions, the Joint Logistics Committee is constantly studying problems relating to the availability of resources or to requirements for resources. It has two responsibilities that are directly connected with procurement--all of their responsibilities are connected with it to some extent--but it has two planning responsibilities that tie right in with the procurement problem. These responsibilities are fairly new and were charged to the J.L.C. in a new charter that was developed a couple months ago. It is now charged with preparing and maintaining an over-all logistical plan that will serve as guidance for the War and Navy Departments in developing their more detailed procurement plans. This document when it is put out--it is slow in coming out because it in turn must await strategical plans developed by the war planners--will be a guide to procurement programs in the services. Until it is developed, of course, the services and the Army and Navy Munitions Board will have to do what they did before and that is to estimate requirements unilaterally rather than with joint guidance.

Another type of plan developed by the Joint Logistics Committee is the logistical plan for a special operation. The over-all logistical plan previously discussed will cover the over-all long-range situation, and it will be tied into a normal peacetime plan.

The war planners, in addition to their over-all strategical plan, will develop special plans for particular operations. Such a plan may consist of a divisional attack in a certain area. Now it is necessary to check that operational plan against the over-all plan to make sure that it can be done within the framework of the over-all planning. The Joint Logistics Committee will develop logistical plans for these operations which can be sent down to the services, to check against procurement plans, and to the Army and Navy Munitions Board, to check against their plans to see if these operational plans can be done within the broad framework that has been developed.

You will note from what I have said that the Joint Chiefs' responsibilities in connection with procurement are mostly those of setting forth requirements. You know, I am sure, that the Army and Navy Munitions Board is charged with coordinating matters relating to industry, with coordinating procurement plans of the services, and with establishing plans and policies for industrial mobilization. The Army and Navy Munitions Board reports directly to the Secretary of War and Navy or to the Under Secretaries and Assistant Secretaries and not to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This is a change from the wartime setup in which they did report to the President through the Joint Chiefs. Because of the change, it was necessary to figure out some method by which the Joint Chiefs' plans could be coordinated with the Army and Navy Munitions Board plans to assure that procurement and strategical planning were properly coordinated. The Joint Logistics Committee has recently developed such a procedure which has been cleared with the Army and Navy Munitions Board representatives. It is now being forwarded to the Joint Chiefs and if they approve, they will present a memorandum to the Secretaries of War and Navy to get their concurrence which will establish this as a working procedure. The procedure that we visualize and that we have outlined in this paper is as follows: The Strategical Survey Committee of the Joint Chiefs will develop its broad strategical plans. These will go down to the war planners, who will develop an over-all strategical and operational plan in some detail setting forth forces required, bases required, and status of different bases. That in turn will come to the Joint Logistics Committee which will develop the major requirements in a broad way for logistical support. Those requirements will be such items as the units required, that is, service units, as the war planners will give us the combat units; the base development that will be needed to make the bases satisfactory for the mission assigned by the war planners; the amount of shipping required to support the operations, including hospital ships for evacuation; petroleum requirements for all purposes--all of the major requirements but on quite a broad basis. That plan will be referred to the War and Navy Departments for their study and for recommendations.

Now it is intended that when the logistical plan gets to the War and Navy Departments it will go down to the organizations that compute the detailed requirements--that is, the technical services of the Army and the bureaus of the Navy. These technical organizations will make computations of end items needed to support the logistical plan, such as requirements of engineering equipment to construct bases and landing fields and weapons to equip combat forces. They will compare those over-all requirements with supplies that they will have available according to the time set forth in the plan,

which will develop the number of end items that must be produced or procured from outside sources. A schedule of requirements for procurement will then be submitted by the War Department and by the Navy Department to the Army and Navy Munitions Board and they will coordinate the two schedules and develop their procurement and production programs. They will then check those programs, with the capabilities of industry and will go back to the War Department and the Navy Department with their comments as to the feasibility of the plan from a production and procurement viewpoint, pointing out any items that they will not be able to produce, and recommending such action as they think will have to be taken to iron out difficulties.

The War and Navy Departments will then review the requirements that they have set up with the view to such substitution as they can make, or perhaps the cutting down some of the requirements on which they may have gone a little strong. The departments will then forward their comments and their recommendations to the Joint Chiefs for necessary action.

Now when the comments get to the Joint Chiefs, they will have to go in reverse through the agencies that they came down through to see what can be done about the troubles that have been developed. It may be that some of the end items that will be short could be produced if a sufficient priority is given to them and a lower priority given on some other item that was considered necessary. It may be that the only solution is a change in the plans that have been developed. Certainly it is not realistic to count on a plan that you know procurement cannot meet. So there are the two probable solutions, either the assigning of high priority to some items at the cost of low priority to other items or the change of war plans. These questions will be studied by the Joint Logistics Committee, probably in collaboration with the Joint Staff Planners, and recommendations will be submitted to the Joint Chiefs. The Joint Chiefs will then act upon these recommendations and inform the War and Navy Departments as to what they intend to do to minimize the difficulties.

In closing I will give you just a little information on how these joint committees work with the War and Navy Departments.

We will start with the Joint Logistics Plans Committee to which I belong. We have a problem given to us by the Joint Chiefs or perhaps initiated in our committee. In solving that problem we contact individuals from the War and Navy Departments and the Air Forces, from all of the offices that are interested in that particular problem. We obtain all their viewpoints and their recommendations and all of the basic data needed in the solution of the problem from these agencies. We do not necessarily follow the advice that is given to us by some of these people; it is impossible to follow some of it because it will be conflicting. The Navy may have a definite feeling that something ought to be done and the Army may have just as definite feeling that it should not be done. So we take all this data and advice and figure out what we think ought to be done from a joint viewpoint and put it in a paper.

Now that paper goes up to our parent committee, the Joint Logistics Committee. The members of that committee all sit in a dual capacity, each has a job in the War and Navy Departments and a second job on the committee. So they take the paper back to the working people in the War and Navy Departments and have it reviewed by everybody they think is interested in the paper. The Joint Logistics Committee then meets to consider the paper in the light of the comments of War and Navy Department agencies, and arrives at decisions as to what they think is proper. The paper is now forwarded to the Joint Chiefs of Staff and again is referred to lower echelons of the War and Navy Departments for comment and to additional groups of the Army and Navy, perhaps different working agencies, who again comment on the paper. Thus, before a paper is finally presented to the Joint Chiefs of Staff it has been so written that it expresses as well as it can the combined Army and Navy and Air Forces viewpoint.

I would be glad to answer any questions which you may have on the relationship of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to military procurement which I have shown you is mostly that setting forth requirements.

GENERAL ARMSTRONG:

Did I understand you to say, Colonel, that the Maritime Commission was represented there too?

COLONEL VANDERSLUIS:

No, sir. The Maritime Commission is not represented. In the ship-building industry, the Joint Chiefs of Staff set up the requirements for ship-building for military purposes. That was sent to the Maritime Commission and a copy sent to the President requesting that the program include so many thousand tons of liberty ships.

GENERAL ARMSTRONG:

You were authorized to deal directly with them.

COLONEL VANDERSLUIS:

We are authorized to deal directly with any governmental agency.

GENERAL ARMSTRONG:

Did you deal directly in the same sense with WPB?

COLONEL VANDERSLUIS:

Yes; we did, but we did not have so much to deal with them because actual end item procurement has been considered a War and Navy Department, and not a Joint Chiefs, function.

GENERAL ARMSTRONG:

Did they require your views as to priorities?

COLONEL VANDERSLUIS:

I do not recall that they did. Mr. Byrnes, as the Director of the War Mobilization, inquired quite often as to priorities and the Joint Chiefs recommended definite priorities.

QUESTION:

You covered this new relationship of the Army and Navy Munitions Board vaguely. I am afraid it did not sink in altogether. Would you mind repeating it, because I think it is very important.

COLONEL VANDERSLUIS:

I will cover it very briefly. The strategical plans which are the basis for all requirements are developed by the Joint Strategic Survey Committee under the Joint Chiefs. Those plans go to the Joint War Plans Committee, or Joint Staff Planners which is the parent committee, it develops more details as to strategical and operational plans, setting forth requirements for combat units and combat bases, and then those more detailed plans come to the Joint Logistics Committee which develops an over-all logistical plan setting forth requirements in some detail, but, of course, not getting down to end items. This logistical plan goes to the War and Navy Departments where it is reduced to detailed end-item requirements. Those requirements are fitted into the supplies available and the difference is the amount that has to be procured and that establishes a procurement schedule of requirements for the War and Navy Departments. That goes to the Army and Navy Munitions Board and they tie the Army and Navy schedules together and fit it into their production and procurement programs. Does that answer your question?

QUESTION:

Thank you very much.

QUESTION:

How long does it take; what is the time of that procedure?

COLONEL VANDERSLUIS:

It takes too long. Our plans are that we will develop, once we get started, a new logistical plan each quarter. We want from the strategical people a troop basis developed and revised each quarter. We are at present waiting for the development of a new troop basis; the last one we have is from back in August or July of last year and we have been waiting for four months now for a new one. Once this procedure is established, we should have a new plan each quarter, keeping it revised and up-to-date.

QUESTION:

How far into the future do you predict your over-all logistic plan?

COLONEL VANDERSLUIS:

We hope to go two years.

QUESTION:

Is that going to follow in general the Navy over-all logistic plan developed in September of 1944?

COLONEL VANDERSLUIS:

It will be close to that. The Navy plan will go to the War Planners, who will furnish us with guidance. You have that conflict--it is not a conflict all the time--something may develop first in the Navy or War Department, then it goes to the Joint Chiefs where these ideas are coordinated to some extent and put out as joint plans.

GENERAL ARMSTRONG:

I want to thank you for your contribution, Colonel Vandersluis.

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