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REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE ON THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE BY THE BLUE RIBBON DEFENSE PANEL. APPENDIX N. STAFF REPORT ON JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF DECISION-MAKING

Department of Defense
Washington, D. C.

July 1970

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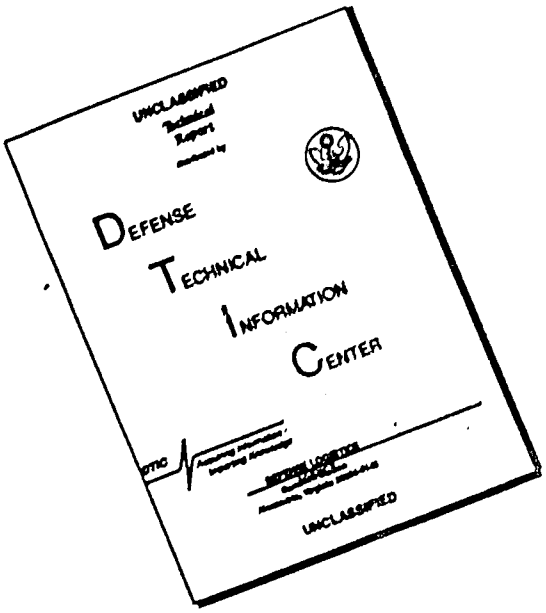

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Report to The President and the Secretary of Defense on the Department of Defense

BY THE

Blue Ribbon Defense Panel

APPENDIX N

Staff Report on

Joint Chiefs of Staff Decision-Making

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PREFACE

During the Blue Ribbon Defense Panel's study of the Department of Defense, it was fortunate to receive in February 1970 an independent analysis on JCS Decision-Making by Mr. Leonard Wainstein.

Mr. Wainstein's staff report to the Panel is considered to be of sufficient interest to top-management personnel of the Department of Defense to be included as an Appendix to the Panel's Report. However, your attention is invited to Page 20 of the Panel's Report which states that Staff Reports are being printed as information, without necessarily implying endorsement by the Panel on each of their conclusions and recommendations.

The Panel is grateful to Mr. Wainstein for this comprehensive study.

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INTRODUCTION

Almost from its very inception, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) organization has been the target of criticism. While its origins reach back to January 1942, its formal establishment dates from the National Defense Act of 1947. By the time of the creation of the Hoover Commission in 1948, the JCS were already the subject of critical examination. Former Secretary of State Dean Acheson who served on the Commission and dealt with the JCS problems, drew upon his experience with the JCS from then until his last official duty in early 1968 - describing the JCS thusly:

> " ... The members of the committee are burdened by both staff and command duties, some of which require committee action. This organization is extremely difficult for civilian officers engaged in foreign affairs to work with. All too often it produces for those looking for military advice and guidance only oracular utterances. Since it is a committee and its views are the result of votes on formal papers prepared for it, it quite literally is like my favorite old lady who could not say what she thought until she heard what she said. Even on a tentative basis, it is hard for high officials to get military advice in our government. When one does get it, it is apt to be unresponsive to the problems bothering the civilian official."1

The comment, while harsh in the typical Acheson manner, nevertheless expresses a view widely held today. It could have been made by several of the senior informants interviewed for this paper.

While the main thrust of this paper concerns the decision-making process within the JCS, it is patently impossible to examine decision-making in vacuo. Decisionmaking is inevitably a reflection of, and indeed a function of, the organization and operations of the body in question. The author therefore extended the scope of the paper to include a broad view of the organization and major functions of the JCS, specifically focused on how they impinge on and indeed create the decision-making process.

The analysis in this paper is both descriptive and prescriptive. It is intended to enlighten the Panel as to the major problem areas; it also presumes to offer some possible remedies. The author has examined the main criticisms of and complaints against the JCS system, attempted to ascertain the reasons for these criticisms, and to assess their validity. It should be stressed that while the Panel, with its

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1. Dean Acheson, Present at the Creation, (W. W. Norton & Co., New York, 1969), p. 243.

problem orientation, is naturally concerned with what does not go well, it should not forget how much does go well. This is especially so in the case of a perennial whipping boy like the JCS system.

Method of Approach

In addition to drawing upon the author's own experience with the JCS, the main source of insight was a series of interviews with general officers of the Joint Staff, staff officers of the Joint Staff, personnel from elements of the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), personnel of the Service Departments, and former officials, military and civilian, who had dealt with the JCS in the past five years.

Discussions with senior officers of the Joint Staff were generally less fruitful than those with the action officer level. The corporate viewpoint presented in different ways by most of the senior general officers was that the present situation was the best of all possible worlds. In most cases they were clearly reluctant to suggest that anything in the system might be defective or in need of change. Discussions with personnel from outside the JCS were much more candid and revealing, and especially pointed out what the author feels is a significant difference in expectations between the Joint Staff and these other agencies. Because they were dated, comments by former officials had to be appropriately qualified.

SUMMARY POINTS

1. The JCS decision-making process is a function of the organization and operations of the JCS system and cannot be evaluated separately, especially in terms of possible change. The process reflects the nature and intent of the JCS structure. It is a process based not only on coordination with the Services but on their concurrence, a mechanism which maximizes opportunities for compromise and resolution of disagreement at every step.

2. The JCS exist within constraints established by statutes which reflect congressional suspicion of centralized military authority and intent to incorporate in the JCS system the same pattern of checks and balances found elsewhere in the government. The legislative acts are both the base line for the evolution of the JCS and the fundamental constraining limits within which that evolution occurs. Unless the basic legal structure of the system is changed, there are sharp limits to changes which can be effected in either organization or functions.

3. Dissatisfaction with the JCS in good part appears to be based upon differing expectations and perceptions of the role of the JCS. Previous Secretaries of Defense have tended to view the JCS in terms of a "national general staff," while the JCS have considered themselves essentially as Service intermediaries and coordinators. It is probably true that the JCS are and always have been more conscious of their limitations than their powers.

4. So long as the JCS remains a committee system, it will invariably operate on a basis of negotiated compromise, especially in matters where Service interests are at stake. Unless the committee system is changed, this fact of life should be accepted and ways sought to work around it or to mitigate those of its effects which are pernicious.

5. The JCS is an evolving organization. It has matured over the past several years, with a higher quality of staff and an improved sense of jointness. Despite its ponderous nature and its often unsatisfactory performance, the present system has survived the test of time and does work within its limitations.

While there has been an undeniable growth of jointness in the JCS itself, there is appearing another contradictory trend which may well make the operation of the JCS more difficult. This is a possible increase in Service competition in a future of uncertain national strategy, declining military budget and worldwide contraction of US commitments. The trend may well be heightened by the wind down of the war and the relaxation of the pressures which kept the Services pulling together.

6. The objective of any changes should be to move the organization closer to both the capability and the willingness to offer to the Secretary of Defense more of a truly broad-gauged "national military viewpoint." What should be sought is the maximum development and exploitation of the power and authority available to the JCS within the existing framework.

7. What is implied in the new budget system is a much more criticial attitude toward Service inputs on the part of the JCS. This will require both the capability to evaluate critically and the willingness to do so. Up to now both elements have been lacking. It will require constant prodding by OSD to make the JCS fulfill its potential role.

8. Improvements can be made in the functioning and organization of the Joint Staff in order to produce a more useful military guidance for the Secretary of Defense.

THE BASIC NATURE OF THE JCS SYSTEM

There are three basic characteristics of the JCS system which must be recognized if one if to understand and evaluate that system.

1. It is a committee system.

2. It is a coordinating system.

3. It is an advisory, not a decision-making system.

These characteristics were established for the system by the Congress under the original legislation of 1947, 1949, and 1958. They are both the base line for the evolution of the JCS and the fundamental constraining limits within which that evolution occurs. It must also be remembered that the system as it stands today exists because it was the only one that could be agreed on. It is very probable that it is still, in its basic form, the only one which could be agreed on by the several elements involved.

The deficiencies of the system are more obvious than its merits (the greatest being that, no matter how ponderously, the system has worked), and so this paper will concentrate on the problems and deficiencies.

The JCS are essentially a committee of the Services supported by a Joint Staff, which must rely upon compromise in order to operate. The most fundamental problem of the JCS arises in this relationship of the JCS to the Services. The JCS system puts the four Service Chiefs in the position of attempting simulatneously to be advocates for their respective Service and statesmen with the broader JCS viewpoint. Their primary loyalty inevitably remains with their Service, not to the abstract entity called the JCS. On the most crucial questions coming before the JCS, those relating to force structure and missions, the Service views will invariably be raised in the JCS structure. This is the familiar "two-hatted" problem.[1]

The Services still compete over major missions, and in an era of declining US overseas commitment and concomitantly declining military budgets, the competition over reduced military missions may well

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1. The Chiefs do spend the greater part of their time on JCS matters. The Vice Chiefs of Staff have the responsibility for internal Service management. It is difficult to establish a longer term proportional breakdown because the war has obviously changed normal work patterns, requiring more attention by the Chiefs to operations in Vietnam.

increase as we move into the '70s. Each Service naturally advocates reliance on its own chosen instruments. Moreover, each Service tends to speak its own dialect and it is often difficult to determine the basis for differences on key issues or key assumptions in arguments. The Services, accordingly, cannot be counted on for, nor indeed should they really be expected to produce, balanced and objective viewpoints on issues on which they are competing for funds or prestige.

Furthermore, it should be recalled that the Services themselves are in a sense coalitions of competing viewpoints. The Navy, for instance, is really three Navies plus the Marine Corps. Therefore, by the time a Service position reaches the JCS, it is already a negotiated compromise among competing interests, with many strongly held views and ideas appropriately muffled. The JCS, in other words, represents the highest level of military compromise.

Once the issues reach the JCS, the committee nature of the JCS requires much time in seeking unanimity and in overcoming dissent. The usual resolution of the more awkward inter-Service disputes within the JCS is a compromise position which recommends at least part, if not all, of each Chief's position. Aside from avoiding splits, this also satisfied the Chiefs' inherent conservatism in what forces might be required for a certain objective. JCS formal positions and views thus will tend to be compromises arrived at through hard bargaining. To change anything of fundamental interest to a Service requires much effort. The Chiefs can always agree on more for everybody, and since this is the path of least resistance, it is often taken.

There is another element too which leads to pressure for unanimity, no matter what the process may do to the issue under discussion. Just because the JCS represent the pinnacle of military opinion for the Secretary of Defense, there is inevitable pressure for a unanimous opinion with which to confront the civilian leadership in order to bring extra weight to that military opinion. Achievement of this objective requires a great deal of time and coordination and almost invariably produces an unsharp product.

One of the most pernicious results of this compromise process of reaching committee decisions has been the inability of the JCS to present their cases in the precise, sharply focused way which most Secretaries of Defense have sought. The Chiefs, operating in the tradition of negotiated decision, have often found in the past when presenting program recommendations that either they made their case or struck out.

The decision-making process reflects really the status of the JCS. They are advisors, not policymakers. They are thus under no real compulsion to come to decisive crisp decisions since their decisions are advice only and the Secretary of Defense can ignore them (as Secretaries of Defense often have). The fact that the JCS are

responsible by law for advising the President, the Secretary of Defense, and the Congress does not, of course, mean that their views on military affairs must necessarily prevail. Secretary McNamara's habit of disregarding the JCS and of not giving them a sense of participation probably was damaging and in a sense self-defeating in this regard. By ignoring them he gave the JCS little incentive to improve the system and its product, although the JCS was a much better organization at the end of his tenure than at its outset.

On the other hand, the compromise system can be defended on the ground that the free play of contradictory Service viewpoints among the Chiefs has its merits. The system permits, indeed encourages, issues to be aired thoroughly, and ultimate resolution of issues which the JCS cannot settle can always be left to the civilian leadership of OSD, unsatisfactory though that may be to them. Then, too, a certain amount of intertia in a military system is probably useful in order to prevent half-cocked decisions. The difficulty lies in controlling that inertia.

On balance, however, the disadvantages of the committee system and dual role seem more glaring than the advantages. Recognizing that is one thing; doing something about it is another.

The coordinative nature of JCS operations has led to the charge that the JCS is little more than a post office for the transmittal of information and positions from the Services on the one hand and the unified commanders on the other. This is in a sense still true since, so long as the Services control the all important element of money, they hold a serious advantage over the JCS. The administrative control by the Services over the budget, plus their strong political affiliations and support in Congress, has made it almost inevitable that the real work of force structuring be done there, and that the JCS have the role of coordinating and smoothing off the rough edges.

The JCS have been designed to be dependent on the Services, but it is a moot point whether they are or should be captive of the Services. The JCS cannot program force structures without Service inputs; to do so would be to plan in vacuo. The Services provide the data and the nuts and bolts realism for such work. It must be understood also that the JCS system was not designed to be in competition with the Services. Rather they were intended to be a coordinating melting pot within which inputs from the Services--and the unified commanders below--would be formed into a single broad national military viewpoint.

A major and persistent criticism, however, has been that this coordinative role should not preclude an independent judgment by the JCS. While they have not possessed an in-house capability to evaluate in depth Service inputs, limited capability should not prevent more critical evaluation to the limit of their capacity. Similarly, requests

from unified commanders should receive more critical scrutiny than they usually have, especially requests from the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV), over the last five years. The war gave the JCS greater opportunity than ever before to expand its influence, but, in fact, it essentially abdicated such opportunities to the field commander.

The JCS operates in three different directions: upward to OSD, laterally to the Services, and downward to the unified commands. A fundamental problem in an earlier period, no longer as severe but still quite apparent, pertains to the view that the JCS hold of themselves vis-a-vis OSD. They have tended to conceive of their role to the Secretary of Defense quite differently from the rest of OSD charged with advising the Secretary of Defense on other aspects of defense policy. The JCS still seem to assume an autonomy and to view the relationship to the Secretary of Defense as one of separateness compared with other OSD agencies. They have always made a point of setting themselves apart from the rest of OSD. They stress their legal obligation to be independent military advisors, and imply that this stance is not compatible with total subordination to OSD. They feel, in short, more of an independent agency than the rest of OSD. It took many years for the JCS to begin to accept the obligation that they should basically serve the Secretary of Defense, are responsive to his interests and concerns, and should provide him with advice and analysis that is specifically relevant to his needs and his wishes. The advice they have offered has often been designed primarily to serve their interests rather than his.

This attitude reflects the fact that there are, in short, two "systems" in DoD, one military and one civilian. It is not a matter of the JCS resisting civilian control. Rather it is a difference in perception of role.

Probably one of the most fundamental causes of friction between the Secretaries of Defense and the JCS has been this difference in role perception. Almost invariably the Secretaries seem to have unconsciously thought of the JCS in terms of a national general staff, with responsibilities and authority of much greater reach than those which the JCS conceived as theirs. The JCS, in turn, has always stressed that it is a "joint" staff, not a general staff, and it is fair to say that the JCS have always been more conscious of their limitations than of their powers. They have even been reluctant to use their existing powers up to their limits.

Evolution of the System

It is difficult to assess the current effectiveness of the JCS except on evidence which may be obsolescent, the changes of the past year having been significant. But even over the longer term of the last five years there has been significant progress within the JCS toward a better organization. The improvement of the JCS represents essentially a better utilization of the organization within the existing structure and law. The Chiefs themselves have developed far closer

working relationships than in earlier years. It is generally felt that there is more harmony, more joint sensing of problems, more functioning as Joint Chiefs. Splits are now rare at the Chiefs level.

The war alone was not the sole catalyst to jointness but it certainly helped, compelling as it did closer cooperation and more continuous cooperation among the Chiefs. The impact of the McNamara reforms of the early 1960s has also progressively and quietly changed outlooks. The Services were compelled by the Program Planning and Budgeting System (PPBS) to think more in terms of missions than of specific forces, and the very harshness of Secretary McNamara toward the JCS drove them closer together.

The increasing sense of jointness, the increasing maturity of the JCS are reflected in improved relations with the OSD and in a growth in quality of the Joint Staff. The growth in capability of the Joint Staff has resulted in an increased confidence in the Staff on the part of the Chiefs and, to a degree, the rest of OSD. Cynical critics of the JCS, however, suggest that the apparent growth of jointness may be illusory; there are indeed fewer splits but this may be the result of less substantive content in JCS decisions; the less the substance, the easier it is to achieve agreement.

There is an increasing "openness" to the JCS, quite in contrast to the closed nature of the organization in the past. The Joint Staff has become considerably more open to informal channels and something like a normal relationship has grown under which discussions can take place prior to rather than after JCS positions are officially and formally reached. It is generally felt that considerable progress has been made in coordinative activity and flow of information and opinion among the Joint Staff, OSD, and the State Department. This cooperative atmosphere should allow the Secretary of Defense to provide more useable policy guidance to the JCS and, in return, enable them to provide him increasingly with more useful broad gauged military advice. This movement toward flexibility and openness, it should be added, is generally approved by the military.

The significance of this growth on the informal level should be stressed. While in outward appearance and formal functioning, the JCS may appear to have evolved little, in actual fact the change through the '60s has been quite considerable, although it has primarily been in this area of informal contact and flexibility of operation at the action officer level.

The function of personalities is all important in the functioning of the JCS. If one starts with the assumption that the main responsibilities of the Service Departments and the offices of DoD are not going to be changed, it is the element of personalities which will then count for most in the effective operation of what exists. Changes for

the better, present and future, are and will be in large part a function of those personalities. Even if the JCS is a less than ideal organization, personalities can make it work. This human element must always be taken into consideration in an evaluation of the JCS. Starting from the proper working relationship between the Secretary of Defense and the Chiefs, down through the Director Joint Staff (DJS) and the Directors of the Joint Staff Directorates (J's), the desire to improve the operation, to cooperate, and to accept responsibilities will determine the degree of effectiveness of the JCS at any given time.

Changes in the JCS Structure and Authority

There are clearly limits to the degree of formal change to which the JCS can accommodate within the existing structure. The structure of the JCS sets limits on the initiative it can show although, as mentioned above, increasingly the influence of the JCS is being exerted informally rather than formally. At the same time, it is generally considered feasible to "streamline" the organization without the necessity of seeking Congressional revision of the basic law. The Organization as it stands basically reflects the intent of Congress in setting it up. Congress probably still harbors suspicion of a centralized staff and probably prefers the limited size, power, and responsibility of the current JCS. Any question of fundamental change which might be made for the benefit of the Executive Branch would have to contend with intensive Congressional scrutiny.

Two schools of thought exist regarding the development of the JCS. One can be termed optimistic. These observers see the JCS evolving slowly into a more useful flexible instrument. The writer feels that the evidence available points in this direction. However, even the optimists recognize that the potential for evolution is ultimately constrained by the basic legal structure of the JCS. The other school of thought, the pessimistic, see not only the possibility of development as ultimately constrined by the basic structure, but they feel that the JCS in the past has been generally not as effective as it should have been or indeed could have been, even within structural limits. They claim that while attitudes are changing, they are not changing rapidly enough to meet the demands of the times. The pessimists consequently advocate fundamental alterations in the JCS, the most commonly suggested one being some solution of the "two-hatted" problem of the Chiefs, in order to break the intimate tie to the Services and thus to grant the JCS a genuine independence as the senior military agency. This involves drastic recasting of all the relationships in the entire JCS system.

The recommendations generally cluster about some means of separation of responsibilities, primarily the divorce of the Chiefs from their Service connection. The Joint Chiefs would be very senior officers,

ex-Chiefs of Services, whose last tour would be as the Joint Chiefs. The proposal is attractive in that it would remove or presumably remove, inter-Service conflicts from the JCS arena and permit a joint national military viewpoint to be developed for the Secretary of Defense. Avoidance of inter-Service problems also would presumably speed up the whole JCS decision-making process.

The disadvantages, however, are also obvious. Without doubt something would be lost by the separation. As Chiefs of Service, the Joint Chiefs remain fully conversant with military developments in their Services through daily participation. There is always the possibility that separation of the Joint Chiefs from the Services would lead to an ivory tower outlook, a purely planner's outlook, unleavened by the awareness of daily operational realities. In addition, separation would mean essentially the establishment of a group who could recommend courses of action without having the responsibility of executing them.

Furthermore, there is no assurance that inter-Service problems would indeed disappear. Despite the loss of direct Service connection, a member of the Joint Chiefs is hardly likely to forget the uniform he has worn for a lifteime. Partiality would inevitably remain and could be just as difficult, if not even more difficult, to manage.

Another objection to the suggested solution of the two-hatted problem is that the separation scheme would really create only another bureaucratic layer. So long as the Services remain the powerhouses, with control of funds and management authority, with political influence in the Congress and among the public and the defense industry specifically, they will still wield immense power and authority which the JCS would not be able to match. In other words, the possibility exists that the Services might in actual practice, as opposed to theory, bypass the JCS, leaving it with even less actual authority than it currently has. The Service Chiefs, in short, would still be the source of real power.

It may well be that a solution to the problem of the dual role of the Joint Chiefs, really the basic problem in the JCS system, lies outside the system. Rather than being found in attempts at further "unification," the only practical answer may be in reliance upon a very strong leadership from OSD which can wring the best in operating effectiveness out of the JCS system as it presently exists. This implies, on the one hand, acceptance of the existing boundary limits of JCS authority and responsibility, accompanied by a maximum utilization of existing JCS power and authority. It implies on the other hand, even closer relationships between OSD and the JCS so that the "two systems" will work more in cooperation and less in opposition.

THE ROLE OF THE CHAIRMAN JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

In the evolution of the JCS the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) has probably undergone the most significant change. While by the law he is but one among equals with the other Chiefs, he has come, as a result of practice, precedent, and personality to exercise very considerable power. He has become in practice what is implied by his title, the senior military officer of the United States. As such he has become not merely the chairman of the corporate body of the Joint Chiefs but their spokesman and the representative of the Armed Forces in the hightest national decision-making councils. His role in formal JCS decisionmaking is perhaps less important that his role as transmitter of the military viewpoint.

The CJCS is in essence the ambassador between the JCS and the Secretary of Defense. He has the great advantage, alone among the Chiefs, of knowing the mind of the Secretary of Defense, derived from the continual contact with him. Consequently, one of his most important functions is in presenting JCS advice in the best possible form for the Secretary of Defense. Furthermore, he is in a position to warn the Chiefs in advance that the advice they propose is unacceptable to the Secretary of Defense, and thus he can often avoid a conflict by revision and recasting of a JCS position. The Chairman's role in the smooth and effective flow of JCS advice outward is crucial.

The Chairman's job is complicated by the necessity for a dual set of loyalties. He is the spokesman for the military but he is also the President's and the Secretary of Defense's man. To hold their confidence he must retain that of the Joint Chiefs. He must take into account in presenting JCS views the valid Service responsibilities of the Chiefs as well as their corporate JCS ones. This demands full trust on the part of the Chiefs. He must be certain that when he presumes to speak for the Chiefs, he fully coordinates with them before or after.

While the Chairman has legally no power of decision, his functions have become informally "institutionalized." In large part this dedelopment has been due to the successful roles of the last two incumbents, Generals Taylor and Wheeler, in strengthening the role of the CJCS. However, the changes that have occurred are not rule changes. While the present CJCS has not hesitated to speak for the Chiefs and to give the Secretary of Defense a decision without having first to consult with the Chiefs, another man of different temperament and conception of his role might not be so willing to bypass formality.

In fact, it is because of the importance of personality that there is reluctance among the military to formalize the expanded role of the CJCS. There is concern over the potential concentration of power in one man's hands with resultant influence on the system of checks and balances built into the JCS structure. It is felt to be best to leave the situation informal. The CJCS on this basis has enough authority today, it is felt, and further accretion of power should be left on a basis of the personality, capability, and initiative of future Chairmen. Furthermore, the process of formalization of what now exists informally would open major structural and legal issues which are best avoided unless the conscious decision has been made to open them.

A number of changes have been recommended in the role and authority of the CJCS. It has been suggested that he be given a fifth star to accord formally with his position as the senior officer of the US Armed Forces. Certainly this would facilitate protocol relations with allied equivalents, although the step could be seen as damaging the basic committee nature of the JCS, the committee of equals. There is probably a continuing opposition in the Congress to the ida of a single chief of staff, and promotion of the CJCS would have to be specified in such a way as to remove these fears. It might also prove rather difficult to elevate the CJCS without, at the same time, formalizing his informal powers.

Another step might be to grant the CJCS the power of decision in the case of certain JCS split papers. There are many areas of military controversy among the JCS which should not go to the Secretary of Defense, which could be settled within the military rather than by the civilian leadership. This category, clearly, would not include really crucial issues such as roles and missions so vital Service interests would not be suppressed. On the other hand, the number of split decisions going to the Secretary has become so small that such increased formal authority may no longer be necessary.

THE FLIMSY-BUFF-GREEN SYSTEM

The system used to process JCS actions and decisions reflects the nature and intent of the JCS structure. It is a system which is based not only on coordination with the Services but on their concurrence. It is a mechanism which maximizes the opportunities for compromise and resolution of disagreement at every step from the inception of the paper to consideration by the Joint Chiefs. It is a process of negotiation and unabashedly so. Inasmuch as it is the system by which the JCS lives, it is worth describing it in some detail.[1] It is a target easily shot at, and one which has been shot at over the years, as well as having been exposed to management analyses by outside consultants.

A JCS action may originate in many ways. Some come from the Secretary of Defense, the Deputy Secretary of Defense, or an Assistant Secretary of Defense in the form of a memorandum addressed to the CJCS. These are usually short deadline requests. Actions may also originate from the unified and specified commands, from a Service, from the CJCS or the DJS. Occasionally an action may originate within a Joint Staff directorate, and generally this is simply the Joint Staff functioning as a military staff and taking actions deemed necessary for some purpose. Many of these actions can be completed without a formal report going to the JCS, but, if necessary, a staff action may result in a report for the JCS via the flimsy-buff-green route.

The normal JCS report takes three weeks to process, although much depends on whether the JCS is reacting to a request or initiating the action. The immediate task after receipt of a directive is the preparation of a flimsy. The purpose of the flimsy is to establish an approach to the problem and to iron out as many divergencies as possible at the early stage before more formal phases. It represents a straw man and allows Service and Joint Staff shots at it. The flimsy is really a crucial step; it sets the tone for the final paper. Consequently, it seems surprising that so little time is given for its preparation.

The appointed Joint Staff action officer usually has forty-eight hours to write the flimsy, although he may have had warning of the upcoming request. He may have known of the request and may even informally have been involved in its preparation, in which case he will have had some time to prepare himself for the JCS action. The amount of warning, of course, will determine in good part his performance

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1. At the conclusion of this section are some statistical materials on the record of JCS decisions from 1958. This material was prepared on request by the Joint Secretariat, Joint Staff.

in the preparation of the tone-setting flimsy. The action officer has a great deal of latitude. He may write the flimsy first and send it to the other appointed Joint Staff and Service action officers for comment, or he may call a meeting to discuss the problem and write the flimsy himself. He may also request inputs from Service or other Joint Staff officers.

Once the flimsy has been prepared, it is sent to the other action officers and a meeting is scheduled for the following day, the Services being allowed 24 hours to prepare comments and inputs. These inputs and comments come from lower level officers, and there is no review by higher levels. The action officers meet on the third day and once any differences are reconciled, the paper is turned buff. This buff must first be coordinated with Joint Staff agencies. Changes by them, if acceptable to the action officer, are published as a corrigendum to the report. After this, the buff is sent to the Services on the fourth or fifth day. Here it receives wide circulation and attention by more senior officers, the "planners."

The Joint Staff action officer is still responsible for inter-Service action, and he must convince the Service planners of the validity of the report and/or respond to the planners' comments. If there are no dissents, the paper moves to the next phase and turns green immediately.

However, if a Service dissents (a dissenting Service comment is called a "purple"), its dissenting comment is distributed to all the Services. The Joint Staff officer may either accept the nonconcurrence or may attempt to resolve the disagreement without having to call a "Planners meeting."

If a meeting is necessary, it will be at the senior colonel planner level. It is chaired by the Joint Staff planner, usually a brigadier general from the Joint Staff Division involved, who will be briefed by the Joint Staff action officer. The buff, it should be recalled, represents the official position of the Joint Staff Division involved. While the Joint Staff action officer and interested Joint Staff agencies may attend the planners' meeting, they do not participate in the discussion unless specifically requested to by the chairman. Agreement is sought without compromising the substance of the report. If resolution of differences does occur, the buff turns green. The buff more often than not must be rewritten to reflect agreed changes. In other cases, the limit may have been reached on how much differences can be settled at that level, and the paper must then receive as attachments formal statements of nonconcurrence by the dissenting Services. This statement will include recommended changes to the report necessary before the dissenting Service will concur. The originator of the report, the Joint Staff action officer, is required to prepare an originator's consideration of

the nonconcurrence, stating the issues and the reasons why he cannot support the nonconcurrence. This statement becomes part of the paper which then becomes a formal numbered JCS green paper. It is intended to assist the JCS in arriving at a decision when the paper reaches them for consideration.

The rewrite of the paper at this point usually requires another day.

At this point the CJCS or the DJS may request a briefing and may suggest changes. These are appended to the green when it goes to the Operations Deputies or the JCS. The green then goes to the Operations Deputies and is scheduled for the Joint Chiefs also. Usually four days elapse until the Ops Deps reach it. If they resolve the disagreement, they "approve and remove," voting the paper out, and the issue is removed from the Joint Chiefs agenda. Such agreement constitutes approval by the JCS.

If, however, the Ops Deps cannot reach agreement, the paper goes to the JCS the same afternoon or the next day. The ops Deps may also send a paper on to the JCS, even if they have agreed on it, if they deem it to be a subject of major importance. The Chiefs themselves may approve a report as written in the case of noncontroversial ones, by the Joint Staff and Service Planners, or split on the report and pass it up to the Secretary of Defense for decision.

In the case of a peper which the Chiefs cannot settle on and which then goes to the Secretary of Defense, the CJCS customarily will send a covering memorandum. He is free to do so on any JCS paper, split or agreed, but it is a more common occurrence in the former case. This paper will explain to the Secretary of Defense the nature of the split and may also express the Chairman's own view.

Alternative Methods

There are several methods by which this decision-making process can be expedited. The increasing frequency of use of such procedures is illustrated on the statistical table at the end of this section.

1. Under the standard procedure described above, the buff phase may be omitted and the flimsy processed directly to a green if: 1) there are no substantive issues in the report; 2) the report is urgently required.

2. Under Memorandum of Policy 97 (PM 97), certain actions may become JCS decisions and be implemented without receiving the formal consideration of the JCS. PM 97 permits actions taken on JCS matters

by the Joint Staff to become decisions and to be implemented, provided that: 1) actions are unanimously concurred in by the Services and the Directors of the pertinent Joint Staff Divisions; 2) during the five days following submission of the report to the JCS, no member of the Joint Chiefs or the DJS requests consideration of the matter by the Chiefs. The Services indicate at the time they vote on the buff whether they recommend use of PM 97. If all involved agree, the report is not scheduled for an agenda, but is instead turned green, with the cover carrying a date on which the report will automatically become a decision. If, prior to this date, a request for consideration should be made, the report will be put on an agenda.

3. Similarly, on a matter of urgency which is not sufficiently substantive to warrant consideration of the JCS, a phone vote may be employed. At the time of the vote on the buff, the Services may indicate to the military secretary of the Joint Staff Division involved their willingness to use a phone vote instead of a formal meeting. If there are any nonconcurrences during the phone vote, the report is placed on an agenda and processed normally. Otherwise the report becomes a decision.

4. Processing by PM 133, first introduced in 1965, now accounts for over 50% of JCS decisions. Its purpose is to increase the effectiveness of the Joint Staff by providing authority and guidance to enable the Joint Staff to function as a conventional staff. It authorizes the CJCS to take actions for the JCS and to inform them on 1) matters involving operations of the forces where a decision is urgent and time does not permit formal consultation with the Chiefs; 2) matters on which JCS policy, plans, procedures, or guidance has been previously established; 3) matters on which the corporate views of the JCS on a similar problem are known to the CJCS; 4) matters not important enough for JCS consultation. PM 133 also authorizes the Directors of Divisions of the Joint Staff to issue instructions in the name of the JCS which are in accord with JCS approved plans, policies, and procedures. For matters not covered, instructions may be issued provided 1) the action is not substantive enough to warrant the attention of the JCS; 2) the matter has been coordinated with the Services and no member of the JCS requests consideration.

It is obvious that contentious issues are never subjected to alternate decision methods. It must be assumed that all important matters will invariably follow the full flimsy-buff-green route in order to protect Service interests. It is significant that for the first eleven months of 1969, of 2339 decisions taken, 3.8% were by the Chiefs, 16.4% by Ops Deps, 16.4% by PM 97, 8.7% by phone vote, and 54.7% by PM 133. This increase in decisions that had to go to the Chiefs for resolution and the decrease in the use of PM 133 from its peak use in 1966 may indicate a reversal of the greater degree of cooperation which resulted from the war. In this period of withdrawal, the Services tend to insist on coordination for almost all non-crisis matters.

Evaluation of the Flimsy-Buff-Green System

Given the basic structure and nature of the JCS system, the flimsy-buff-green procedure has the merit of being workable. It is at the same time open to criticism for being ponderous, slow, and productive of a tepid compromise product which represents Service views far more than any Joint Staff view. In fact, it is difficult to establish even the existence of a "Joint Staff View" in many cases.

The degree to which the Joint Staff with its presumably broader view influences the product is questionable. The Joint Staff action officer does, of course, write the important first draft, the flimsy, which usually sets the general tone of the end product. Even here, however, he may rely upon Service inputs which will influence that product. Thereafter he is essentially the chairman of a board which projects Service viewpoints which invariably seem to weigh more than any view originally expressed in the flimsy. He loses control of the paper after it goes buff and becomes thereafter a coordinator and recorder of Service views. The valid question is whether there is more compromise involved than there need be. The Joint Staff has become less unwilling to send forward to the Chiefs a paper carrying Service purples. They are free to send it as it is especially if they have been directed from above to send a paper forward. Neverthelss, in practical terms one Service purple is enough to prevent the Joint Staff action officer from winning his case. In order to "sell" a viewpoint, some compromise is necessary. While an identifiable unilateral Joint Staff viewpoint may be developed, this is usually considered not advantageous for the future of the paper.

Undoubtedly, the compromise process involves trade offs among Service views which may considerably affect the paper. In cases where no trade offs occur, the Services engage in log rolling, vote trading for future use. The flimsy-buff-green process is also a propaganda forum which provides a Service with the opportunity to make a point, to go on record, even though it does not expect its point to carry the day. "Waffling" of propaganda statements is probably more common than waffling of genuine dissents, especially in policy reports of the J-5 type.

While usually the compromise process does not end up by changing the main thrust of the original paper, that thrust can be lost in another way. A gap in the process seems to occur in the Services between the issuance of the buff and the planners' meeting. The Service action officers and the Service planners are often physically separated within their own Service structure, so that when the Service planners are brought into the process, they are usually not familiar with the background and the intensive discussions which have already been held by the action officers. Consequently, there is a tendency at planners' meetings either to repeat what may have already been covered earlier (which wastes time), or more likely to seek compromise on some new tack, during the course of which the original concept might be lost or watered markedly.

The point is often raised as to whether or not alternatives should be presented in JCS papers rather than a single agreed position. For reasons mentioned previously, the thrust is toward a single agreed military view. The JCS naturally do try to highlight their preferred solution in any paper that goes to the Secretary of Defense and they feel it their duty to shoot down any alternatives which they consider militarily unacceptable.

The flimsy-buff-green system is undoubtedly time consuming and unwieldy, and has helped foster impatience among previous Secretaries of Defense with the JCS decision-making system. On the other hand, the JCS argue that most issues are not urgent and deserve a slower in-depth consideration, and that furthermore, in an emergency, alternatives to the flimsy-buff-green system do exist.

Possible Improvements in the Flimsy-Buff-Green System

Improvements could be made in two directions: to speed the process, and to strengthen the role of the Joint Staff action officer. The basis for one recommended change is the fact that it is the requirement for Service concurrence at each of the several stages which causes delay. This change would remove this requirement until the Operations Deputies level were reached. For the flimsy and buff stages, Service inputs only would be sought, not Service concurrence. This would speed up the process and would, even more importantly, raise disagreement to a higher level where it is more difficult for senior officers to disagree over minutia. It is the minutia and the haggling over it which most often causes delay at the action officer level. At the higher level, disagreement will generally, with some notable exceptions,[2] tend to be at the higher levels of substantive importance.

In addition, this would result in a strengthening of the role of the Joint Staff action officer, granting him a greater degree of independence. If a national military viewpoint--a Joint Staff viewpoint--is desired, the Joint Staff action officer should be given more authority to act as a true chairman throughout and not merely as a coordinator.

Another useful step would be to permit more time for preparation of the flimsy, in order to derive a more thorough and sophisticated first draft. Additional time for this step could be taken from the later steps in the process. By starting with a first class flimsy, the field of later argument and dispute could be narrowed. Furthermore, a better prepared flimsy could more adequately represent what is described above, a truly joint national military viewpoint.

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2. See Attachment Two to this section concerning JCS splits as of 30 November 1969.

ATTACHMENT ONE

JCS DECISION STATISTICS

This table lists the number of JCS decisions since 1958 and the procedures employed to reach decision.

YEAR	TOTAL DEC NO.	DEC BY CHIEFS (NO.%)	DEC BY OPDEPS (NO.%)	DEC BY PM-97 (NO.%)	DEC BY PHONE (NO.%)	DEC BY PM-133 (NO.%)	SPLITS TO SECDEF (NO.%)
1958	887	228(25.7)	189(21.3)	244(27.5)	226(25.5)		13(1.5)*
1959	1038	269(25.9)	179(17.2)	345(33.3)	245(23.6)		24(2.3)*
1960	1066	266(24.9)	146(13.7)	353(33.1)	301(28.3)		21(2.0)*
1961	1405	326(23.2)	156(11.2)	411(29.2)	512(36.4)		15(1.1)*
1962	1458	366(25.2)	168(11.5)	416(28.5)	506(34.8)		13(0.9)*
1963	1460	599(41.1)	252(17.2)	281(19.3)	328(22.4)		42(2.9)*
1964	1593	349(22.0)	455(28.5)	338(21.2)	451(28.3)		47(2.9)*
	8907	2403(27.0)	1545(17.4)	2388(26.8)	2571(28.8)		175(1.9)*
1965	3017	264(08.7)	412(13.6)	464(15.4)	288(09.6)	1589(52.7)	40(1.3)*
1966	3281	155(04.7)	372(11.4)	450(13.7)	267(08.2)	2037(62.0)	7(0.2)*
1967	2690	54(02.0)	391(14.5)	403(15.0)	222(08.3)	1620(60.2)	6(0.2)*
1968	2575	61(02.4)	337(13.1)	397(15.4)	273(10.6)	1507(58.5)	6(0.2)*
**1969	2339	88(03.8)	384(16.4)	384(16.4)	203(08.7)	1280(54.7)	2(0.8)*
	13,902	622(04.5)	1896(13.6)	2098(15.1)	1253(09.0)	8033(57.8)	61(0.4)*

*Totals in this column are included in column "Decisions by Chiefs."

**Thru 30 November 1969.

ATTACHMENT TWO

SPLIT PAPERS OUTSTANDING WITH THE
SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
AS OF 30 NOVEMBER 1969

JCSM-346-69, dated 2 June 1969

Service Responsibility for Assigning Chief, MAAGs, in EUCOM for CY 1970 (U)

Reference: JCS 2478/303-1

JCSM-723-69, dated 22 November 1969

JCS-Directed and JCS-Coordinated Exercise Schedules, FY 1970 (U)

Reference: JCS 2311/636

THE MILITARY ADVICE ROLE

The first and perhaps foremost of the statutory functions of the JCS is to provide military advice to the President and the Secretary of Defense. It is in this function that a truly broad gauged national military viewpoint, surmounting Service interests, is expected, and yet for two main reasons, one concerning outlook and the other organization, this is not the viewpoint that the political leadership always receives.

In the first place, the provision of JCS policy advice to the political authorities is complicated by two differences in outlook and modus operandi. One concerns the matter of time view. The military invariably examine national security issues on a long-term basis, looking ahead in order to anticipate threats and to prepare military postures at the level designated by the civilian leadership. On the other hand, national security policy is often influenced by short-term political or economic goals, the pursuit of which can often contradict the long-term security objectives being pursued in the JCS planning. In the face of this contradiction, JCS advice can seem irrelevant and unresponsive.

Another difference in outlook concerns the military concentration on enemy capabilities rather than intentions. This professional predilection makes JCS advice often seem archly conservative and hard line as contrasted to political estimates which deal in possible enemy intentions as well as capabilities. Nevertheless, one should hardly be surprised that the military recommend, more often than not, a military course of action.

In the second place, it has been pointed out that the very nature of the flimsy-buff-green process, itself a reflection of the basic structure of the JCS, leads participants to seek the lowest common denominator, the loosest language, on which all can agree. In addition, the higher opinions rise in the military heirarchy, the more political, that is non-military, factors come to weigh, so that by the time the JCS are reached, the product is often heavily watered with those non-military considerations, particularly in regard to power relationships within the Pentagon and between the Pentagon and other elements of the government. As a result JCS advice often appears ambivalent.

Previous Secretaries of Defense have sometimes attempted to overcome this problem by seeking hard military information from lower level officers, reaching down at times to the fifth or sixth level of command where the action officer was concerned with the hard military problem only. Another similar point of criticism of the advice given by the JCS is that it is far too often, if not invariably, inadequate on the truly thorny military problems. The JCS have generally avoided such major long-term issues as tactical air versus carriers or tactical nuclear weapons in Europe, with the result that these issues carry on year after year to the dissatisfaction of the political authorities. These issues almost invariably are those involving differences over Service roles and missions.

On the other hand, a distinction must be made between the frequent blandness of official and formal JCS position papers on such subjects, which reflect the criticisms mentioned above, and the sort of informal military advice the CJCS might give in his personal contacts in the highest national councils. Freed from the constraint of a formal written position paper, the CJCS is able to provide more candid opinions for the guidance of the political authorities. This is, however, really a means of sidestepping a formal responsibility of the JCS.

Ideally, the JCS must be fully prepared to provide competent professional technical military advice, while recognizing and giving full due weight to non-military considerations, the political, economic, and social realities of national security affairs. They should accept the fact that professional military advice must be balanced and tempered by higher authority with fuller cognizance of these other factors. Nevertheless, the prime mission of the JCS, in their view, is to point up the hard military risks which may arise from decisions weighted more heavily, as will happen, toward non-military factors. The JCS, in short, must be ready to make clear the national security consequences of alternative top-level decisions. Their deep conviction, born of their professionalism and their statutory responsibilities, is that military viewpoints and security risk assessments should not become submerged at the point of decision by political or economic factors; overweighed, perhaps, but not submerged.

The JCS have, however, shown in the past decade that they have become increasingly aware of the impact of non-military considerations. The present CJCS, for example, has been most insistent that JCS advice not be undiluted military in nature without indicating concern for non-military factors. Such advice is viewed as a "sure loser." However, the JCS are not charged primarily with advising on political considerations, and so there is often a problem on major issues as to just how much weight they should give to non-military factors in their presentation of the military viewpoint.

THE FORCE PLANNING-PROGRAMMING ROLE

One of the most crucial forms of advice given by the JCS concerns force structures. Comment on this function of the JCS must be qualified, however, since the new budget cycle system which is currently being practiced for the first time cannot yet be judged. Presumably the new process is designed to improve, if not totally eradicate, some of the weaknesses of the JCS performance under the old system.

Until this year the only real contribution of the JCS to the budget cycle of planning and programming forces was the preparation of the Joint Strategic Objectives Plan (JSOP) which is essentially a statement of the military requirements as seen by the JCS. It was and is the bible for the unified commanders who request in their plans such forces as are required to carry out the objectives of Volume I (Strategy) of the JSOP. However, the JSOP previously never had any real acceptability at DoD level; it represented neither national nor even DoD strategy. The old system did not force the JCS to face the question of trade offs in force levels or weapon systems. The JCS did not have adequate means to evaluate Service inputs, while the committee nature of the JCS militated against challenges of those inputs. For both the JCS and the Services, the easy solution in preparation of the JSOP was to pursue the option of adding together everybody's requirements. Once the JSOP was prepared, all formal JCS and unified commarders inputs to OSD were based upon it and, therefore, on a guide which had no acceptability in OSD. Consequently, the JCS inputs were regularly found wanting by the Secretary of Defense.

Early in the Kennedy Administration, the Secretary of Defense realized that the JSOP was essentially meaningless and set out to design a document which would provide the broad realistic guidance which he desired and could not find in the JSOP. The Draft Presidential Memorandum (DPM) was the result, and this was developed primarily in OSD/Systems Analysis. While the JCS continued to produce the JSOP, the DPM became the key document and remained so until 1969 when displaced by the new system.

One of the fundamental problems for the JCS in the JSOP process has always come at the very first step. This concerns the matter of basic national objectives. The JCS does not and should not attempt

to establish these. Rather they should interpret them in their military implications. However, if no clear objectives of the sort the JCS feel they need were provided by the civilian authorities, the JCS have been compelled to project their own estimates. For all its weaknesses, the "Basic National Security Policy" (BNSP) paper of the Eisenhower era is still considered by the JCS to have been a useful document. They would like to see an equivalent reestablished. The new system does not provide for such a single formal document, although guidance of some sort on national objectives is called for from the NSC.

Another basic difficulty in the preparation of the JSOP is the need to reconcile the "five-year Defense view" with the "one-year State view." This question of differing time frames has already been mentioned in this study. It becomes specifically acute in the matter of force planning. Planning and programming within DoD must be gauged as closely as possible to a five-year projection or longer, mainly to provide essential weapon system development lead times, industrial base preparations and reorientations, force development and modernization, and worldwide base rights. Political planning, the other part of national security planning, follows a more pragmatic route in establishing objectives and policies, and tends to focus necessarily on the short-range period, venturing longer-range projections on objectives and policies only rarely for the simple reason that there are too many unpredictables.

Consequently, it has been difficult to marry military mid-range hardware and force plans with the short-range political objectives and policies. As a result of this differing approach to planning (and it is a difference which seems to the writer to be fundamentally quite inevitable and probably in large part irremediable), JCS recommendations in the JSOP have often seemed to be mere abstractions. The new budget process is in part designed to mitigate this difficulty. However, this difference in basic approach will probably continue to create problems and to produce even more complexities in the years ahead as the US attempts to develop new strategic concepts for itself and new relationships with other states.

The force planning process involves four major phases: 1) the determination of national objectives; 2) the determination of military objectives; 3) the preparation of an objective force; 4) the application of fiscal restraints to the objective force in order to derive an attainable force. The JCS contributes to all four phases, but under the new Nine Step System its specific contributions will be two, the initial JSOP and the later Defense Program which will recommend force levels and provide rationale and risk assessments involved in the fiscally constrained forces. The main detailed work involved in third

and fourth phases above will remain, however, the responsibility of the Services. (See attached description of the process from "Armed Forces Management.")

Nevertheless, what is implied in the new system is a much more critical attitude toward Service inputs on the part of the JCS. This will require both the capability to evaluate critically and the willingness to do so. Up to now both elements have been lacking.

The new system should reduce the gap between JSOP levels and budget-allowed levels and thus avoid the situation which prevailed earlier wherein the JCS got a fiscal force level by rebuttal. Now the Secretary of Defense is seeking a more common approach, and it is hoped that by having the JCS provide a more reasonable program to start with, the heavy and unsettling OSD budget manipulations of the past can be avoided.

It remains to be seen how much greater a role the JCS actually does have under the new system. An improved JSOP is a logical entry point for the JCS, while the Defense Program will provide broad JCS guidance relating resources to objectives. Only actual performance can tell whether the new system will enhance the responsibility of the JCS. Two strongly opposed viewpoints conflict here. One school of thought feels that the JCS should be in fact, as well as in theory, the primary source of advice on military implications of alternative force levels, force mixes, or possible reductions of significant scale. The central assessment of the impact on the national military capability, which should be the primary basis for necessary decisions of the Secretary of Defense, must come from the JCS more explicitly and definitively than it has in the past. This school of thought, in short, holds that the JCS should exploit to the maximum the opportunity presented by the new system to enhance its role as the central military authority and the arbiter of the Service budget inputs in the preparation of the Defense Program.

Proponents of this view admit that the more deeply the JCS become involved in programming of forces, the more likely there will be an increased number of JCS splits. This is very possible, if not indeed probable, and given the structure of the JCS, there may well be a point beyond which the JCS cannot and perhaps should not go in its force programming function.

The other school of thought emphasizes this last problem, and holds that the JCS does not really belong in the programs business. Provision of the JSOP recommended strategy with a posture to support it, blocked out in broad terms only, is felt to be the most useful contribution by the JCS.

It is probably wise not to expect, at least initially, a major impact from the new system on the JCS performance. After all, the

philosophy traditionally guiding development of the JSOP has been to recommend force levels which, with minimum acceptable risks, are designed to guarantee security in the face of threats likely to exist in the mid-range time period. While there may be disagreement over the feasibility of these force levels, the JCS philosophy basically cannot be faulted. So long as the current JCS institutional concept exists, the JCS feel that their foremost responsibility should continue to be the recommendation of whatever force levels are needed, economic and political restraints notwithstanding. That their newly assigned responsibilities take them beyond the realm of the abstract to that of fiscal reality is all to the good, but the range of change of outlook possible may be more narrow than is sometimes apparently expected.

The new system represents a large step forward in the evolution of the JCS, and, if the past is any guide, the JCS will probably be slow to exploit the potential. It will require constant prodding by OSD to fulfill that potential.

THE NEW PPBS SYSTEM

STEP 1--The Joint Chiefs of Staff on 10 October will submit to the Office of the Secretary of Defense Volume I (Strategy) of the Joint Strategic Objectives Plan. The JSOP, developed consistent with guidelines resultant from "decisions by the President and the National Security Council regarding national objectives," will lay out a force level plan for eight future years and an estimated personnel and budget plan for five future years. The JSOP will be reviewed within OSD by personnel from the Systems Analysis, Comptroller and ISA (International Security Affairs) secretariats.

STEP II--On or about 8 December the Secretary of Defense will issue to the Services, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Defense Agencies, a Strategic Concepts Memorandum (SCM) which will contain the general strategic concepts and guidelines to be used by all participants in the budgetary process. The SecDef SCM will first be issued in draft form and finalized, after comment by all recipients, sometime in early January.

STEP III--On 15 January the Secretary of Defense will issue to the Joint Chiefs and the Service Secretaries a "for comment" Fiscal Guidance Memorandum for each of the next five program years. This document will tell the Services how much they can expect to spend to carry out their planned programs, and likely will trigger within each of the Services an agonizing reappraisal of their own priorities within the budget ceilings estimated.

STEP IV--On 18 February the Joint Chiefs will submit to the SecDef their JSOP Volume II (Analyses and Force Tabulations). JSOP Volume II--an "unconstrained" JSOP--will be a detailed analysis of what the Joint Chiefs see as the specific forces needed to meet the expected threat over the next five years. JSOP Volume II will not be limited by cost, although cost implications of the recommended force levels will be shown both in major force and in support categories. The JCS recommendations which require decisions during the current calendar year will be highlighted in JSOP Volume II.

STEP V--After reviewing Volume II JSOP as well as the comments from the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Service Secretaries on the "for comment" Fiscal Guidance Memorandum issued earlier, the Secretary of Defense on 4 March will issue "tentative" Fiscal Guidance for development of the FY 72 budget. Such guidance will be broken down by major force and support category, by Service, and will be programmed for each of the next five fiscal years. The assumptions used by the SecDef in preparation of the guidance also will be provided the Joint Chiefs and the Service Secretaries. The Services still will have opportunity for reclama and reallocation actions, but at this point the total budget planned for each program year and for each Service will be fairly well locked up. The Service Secretaries will participate in development of the fiscal guidance.

(Step V is considered by DoD officials of crucial importance. It is the first point at which strategic and fiscal policy are coordinated into one document. It also represents the decision point at which most if not all inter-Service--as opposed to intra-Service--disputes will have to be settled.)

STEP VI--The Joint Chiefs of Staff will develop and submit (on 22 April) to the Secretary of Defense their recommended Defense Program, including force level recommendations, rationale therefor, and the risks imposed by scaling down force levels in accordance with the fiscal guidelines specified in Step V. The Defense Program will be broken down by major force categories and support programs on the same basis as JSCP Volume II.

(The "risk assessments" spelled out in Step VI, it can readily be predicted, will be the real Defense Program headline-grabbers of the next several years. There is always a thin line between those programs which "just make it" and those which are left out in the cold because of "budgetary constraints," and changing the system will not change this fact. In addition, although Step VI represents the combined JCS recommendations on priorities, such recommendations will not always be unanimous, and Congress may well demand a reshuffling of the priorities during the long authorization/appropriations legislative process.)

STEP VII--On 22 May the Service Secretaries, after consideration of the Defense Program submitted by the Joint Chiefs, will submit their detailed Departmental force level and support program recommendations, with accompanying rationale and risk assessments, within the same fiscal guidance issued by the SecDef in Step V. The Departmental recommendations will be in the form of a Program Objectives Memorandum (POM), which will cover substantially the same ground as the JCS Defense Program outlined in Step VI, but with various force elements spelled out in much greater detail. (The difference between the two, according to one DoD official, is akin to the difference between an artist's sketch of a new house and the builder's construction blueprints of the same house.) The Service Secretaries also can propose trade-offs--within the established guidelines--of various force level elements if they deem such trade-offs necessary. Differences between the POM and the JCS Defense Program will be identified and costed in the POM.

STEP VIII--After evaluation of the Defense Program (Step VI) and the POM (Step VII), the Secretary of Defense will issue, by 15 July, draft decision papers to the JCS and the Service Secretaries for comment. After comments by the Service Secretaries and the JCS, he will make final Program Decisions. The Program Decision period will start in late June or early July and finish on 31 August. The tight time frame on decision papers represents a considerable change from the "every Wednesday" decision paper cycle (slightly over four months--from 30 April to 3 September) previously followed. Because the Services will be working at every step of the way within firm fiscal guidelines,

and because most inter- and intra-Service decisions on priorities will have been made earlier in the cycle, DoD officials believe the final Program Decision cycle can be compressed into a six to eight week period.

STEP IX--On 30 September the Services will submit to OSD their budget estimates, based on the approval program "resulting from incorporating the effects of all decisions made through 31 August." The OSD Comptroller will then "fine-tune" the budget, working hand in glove (sometimes fist in glove, perhaps) with the Budget Bureau. Issues still undecided in late November will be decided at the White House prior to formal submission of the budget to Congress sometime in late January 1971.

THE CHAIN OF COMMAND FUNCTION

It was stated earlier that the JCS looked in three directions--upward to the Secretary of Defense, laterally to the Services, and downward to the unified commands. The preceding pages have discussed decisionmaking primarily with reference to the upward and lateral relationships. The chain of command function is that which concerns mostly the relationship downward.

This function of the JCS, which is the one which involves them in operations as a staff for the Secretary of Defense, is probably the least controversial of the three major ones and also the one performed most smoothly.

Secretary McNamara in early 1965 described the role thusly:

> "During the past five years the strengthening of the command line running from the Unified and Specified Commanders directly to the President through the Secretary of Defense has produced a marked improvement in the responsiveness of operational forces. The contribution of the Joint Staff during this evolution has been vital to the improved command and control now exercised. The more efficient the present chain of command becomes, the more critical becomes the role of the Joint Staff."[1]

During the decade of the '60s and especially with the coming of the war, the Joint Staff has spent an increasing proportion of its time on operational matters as opposed to policy matters. The term "operational" must be viewed broadly, however, lest an exaggerated picture be created. Operations in the field do create a whole sequence of activities, many with international ramifications, which must be monitored by the JCS and coordinated with other Government agencies. Collectively, it all involves much which is only indirectly related to actual operations. In the daily activity of the JCS there are many operational decisions made in reference to the unified commands which do not have to be made via the flimsy-buff-green route. Policy, however, can be created by these action precedents.

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1. Letter from the Secretary of Defense to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, 18 January 1965.

It is a common complaint that the JCS are better organized for operations than for planning, which is their major function. The Joint Staff certainly is organized to do both; its relative effectiveness in these two functions is another matter. In acting as a military operational staff for the Secretary of Defense, the JCS during the Kennedy-Johnson Administrations were certainly practiced regularly in the series of crises of that decade. The more direct the role in the crisis of the National Command Authorities, and specifically the Secretary of Defense, the more they and he relied on the Joint Staff.

The JCS is a chnnel between the Secretary of Defense and the unified commanders. For the National Command authorities it provides a storehouse of operational information not routinely provided to assist in decisionmaking. It provides the "voice of command" for the Secretary of Defense, which gives him access to the forces in the field and the means to ensure that his orders are carried out. Furthermore, as an additional but less obvious feature, the Joint Staff, through the National Military Command Center (NMCC) Alternates, has the function of surviving in the event of general war.

While it is true that the crises of the '60s and the Vietnam war have increasingly involved the JCS in operational matters, the JCS command function is still mostly a process of delegation to the CINC's. Because of this delegation, the JCS have tended to bless, rather uncritically, actions by or requests from the CINCs. There is probably operative in this regard a professional military feeling that the JCS should try to keep the civilian leadership from making unnecessary demands on the field commanders, a policy with some merit yet one which should not preclude critical evaluation of the field. This JCS attitude is traditional, based upon habit and precedent, and is accentuated by the committee nature of the JCS.

EFFECTS OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION

The first year of the Nixon Administration has produced a new and improved climate in DoD and especially in regard to the JCS. In concrete terms, the Secretary of Defense has increased the responsibility of the JCS, while at the same time giving a fuller hearing to JCS views. Because the Secretary of Defense or Deputy Secretary of Defense observe a rigid policy of answering all JCS papers, unlike some of their predecessors, the JCS now feel that their position at least receives a fair hearing, even though it may not ultimately be accepted by the civilian authorities. Furthermore, the military view is now being heard at more and lower levels in the governmental structure. Under the revitalized NSC structure the JCS feel that military and foreign policy are being meshed at an earlier stage than previously, with a consequent two way window effect. Generally, the JCS feel more a part of the Administration than they used to, and they appreciate the more structured and orderly approach to national security policy decisionmaking.

However, the new climate, while much improved psychologically, also imposes new demands on the JCS. The product they send forward to the Secretary of Defense may very well be final; they can no longer "count on" its being rejected as has been done on controversial issues in the past. It is difficult to say whether the JCS product has yet become that much better, the first year of the Administration being essentially the honeymoon period. The refusal of the JCS, for example, to undertake allocation among the Services of the budget cut last Fall left an unfortunate impression. At the same time, JCS performance on the new budget system cannot be fairly evaluated until at least two budget cycles have been run, in short, until mid-1971.

In addition, the announced policy of decentralization within DoD has not reached a point where it has begun to impinge on the Secretary of Defense's efforts to strengthen the responsibilities of the JCS. These are in a sense contradictory policies and the JCS feel some guidance from the Secretary of Defense would be appropriate as this function is reached.

STRENGTHENING THE JOINT STAFF

The Joint Staff can be viewed separately from the corporate body of the Chiefs themselves. One cannot consider changes in the role of the Chiefs without accepting the necessity of fundamental statutory and organizational implications. The Joint Staff, however, as a joint staff under a Director, offers more latitude for change. It is the Chiefs who are two-hatted, not the Joint Staff. There have been previous efforts to change the Joint Staff, the most recent being a proposal in the Department of Defense Legislative Program for the 89th Congress to double the size of the Joint Staff, increase the rank of the Director, Joint Staff, and permit the Secretary of Defense greater latitude in extending tours of duty.

The issue of a strengthened Joint Staff has to be approached on two levels: there is first the question of whether the Joint Staff should be strengthened, and secondly, there is the matter of how this might be accomplished. There is wide divergence of opinion on both parts of the question.

The term "strengthen" also has two aspects. There is first a strengthening in capability to conduct the Joint Staff's current duties, within the framework of existing organization and responsibility. This involves primarily questions of numbers and types of people. The second and more controversial aspect concerns an increase in JCS authority and responsibility.

Under the assumption that there should be a strengthening of the current capability of the Staff, informed opinion seems generally to support an increase in the size of the Staff. It is felt that the statutory limit of 400, even allowing for the partial de facto by-passing of the limit through the OJCS arrangement, has unduly constricted Joint Staff functions. An increase of 10-20% is the increment most generally considered useful. This would allow greater concentration of available resources in areas in which the JCS is currently weakest, specifically its analytical functions. It is not likely that internal reorganization within the current manpower limitation would provide sufficient manpower to do this.

Efforts have been made to improve the evaluative capability, for example, by the creation of the Combat Analysis Group in J3. However, to perform the analytical functions laid on it by the new budget system, the Joint Staff will either have to build an internal capability or depend more on outside assistance. While the need for this greater evaluative capability is generally recognized, there is still some

difference of opinion on this point of in-house or external assistance. An increased reliance upon the Weapons System Evaluation Group/Institute for Defense Analyses (WSEG/IDA), the Military-Federal Contract Research Center team which has traditionally supported the JCS and OSD, was repeatedly suggested as an alternative to an enlarged Joint Staff. It was pointed out that this was the very reason for the original creation of both WSEG and IDA. However, reliance on outside assistance is itself not without complications.

Instead of more officers to increase the size of the groups in the Joint Staff currently performing analytical work, an alternative approach might be the creation of a separate specialist group within the JCS, a form of "systems analysis division" like an OSA/SA for the Joint Staff. Strengthening in this sense would not be merely more people, but the creation of a permanent special capability unit of the sort which has been lacking in the JCS in the past. The chief raionale for this step is that if the JCS does not build up such a capability, the eventual result will be as before, namely, the increasing reliance of the Secretary of Defense upon some organization other than the JCS. This, after all, was the origin of OSD/Systems Analysis. If such a group existed, it could probably permit some reduction of the J5 elements currently preparing the JSOP.

It should be stressed that it is the analytical function which is important, not its organizational location. One suggestion, for example, would put such a special group as described above directly under the CJCS, since he is the representative of the JCS, in constant contact with the civilian leadership. This would locate the resources where they could do most good and have most immediate impact.

If such an increased analytical capability were given the JCS, the question might well arise as to whether this would imply some reduction of Service staff analytical capability to avoid duplication. It is likely that some resistance to this idea would occur, although the highest Army levels have made it clear that they would be willing to see some reduction in the Army staff as the price for achieving a more effective JCS. These circles do not see any "threat" to Service prerogatives unless the JCS were to be strengthened far beyond the plausible level.

One persistent problem of the JCS, and, indeed, of all the military, is maintenance of continuity, or to turn the issue around, the lack of a corporate memory. Unlike a civilian organization, the JCS has no people with continuous memory of past operations beyond the last three years. Historical records are an inadequate substitute for a living memory for the purposes of the JCS.

A partial solution to the problem lies in a longer tenure for Joint Staff officers. There are powerful objections to this approach,

however, the main one being that a longer than usual tour would break an officer's career pattern adversely. The average officer still tends to view service on the Joint Staff as disadvantageous in a career sense, and consequently any lengthened tour would be resented. Even general officers expressed concern over career disabilities which can result from Joint Staff service. The solution to this problem lies in the Service career and promotion policies. Any longer tour system must be so arranged with the Services as not to affect adversely an officer's career.

Another objection, the official JCS one, to longer tours on the Joint Staff is that the Staff requires officers who have been in recent contact with the forces in order to inject realism into Joint Staff operations. They want an officer who is a well-grounded generalist, familiar with field operations as well as staff work. It is felt that a tour longer than three years might well lead to a loss of creativity and certainly of contact with the forces. This supposed reduction of quality would have to be balanced against the benefits of a longer tour with the Joint Staff.

There is a questionable aspect to this argument. The JCS claim that they must depend upon the Services to provide realism and to inject contact with the forces into the JCS decision-making process. At the same time, the JCS argues that its officers cannot have longer tours because of their need in their JCS duties for recent field contact. Also, this argument presumes that officers come to the Joint Staff direct from the forces, which is certainly no longer the norm. The JCS further point out that the problem is partially eased by bringing officers back for a second tour on the Joint Staff at some later stage in their careers. This is quite common now for senior officers, and many of the general officers currently on the Staff have previously served there as colonels or lieutenance colonels.

Perhaps the solution lies in some flexible formula for personnel tours. Inducements could be created to encourage officers to stay on longer, provided they are useful. This would be especially so in the case of men who were approaching the end of their careers, so long as this prospect had not brought about a loss of motivation.

Another often repeated recommendation to meet the corporate memory problem is the use of senior civilians within the Joint Staff. There are currently several such, working in the Joint Command and Control Requirements Group, the Secretariat, and the Directorate of Administrative Services, but the Joint Staff has no equivalent to the permanent cadre of GS 14-16 level people who maintain continuity in OSD through the high turnover of appointed officials there. A similar cadre, perhaps two or three men, in each of the Directorates would provide the continuity now lacking.

Almost unanimously, the Joint Staff appears to oppose this suggestion. The major concern is that a cadre of permanent civilians would eventually become excessively influential just because of their continuity and would wield more power than their responsibility called for. There is less objection, however, to civilians in the analytical field than in the policy and operations fields.

JCS uneasiness over the use of long-term civilians could perhaps be satisfactorily met by establishing a rotation system for them too. While holding longer tours than their Joint Staff military equivalents, civilians could be rotated within the Joint Staff and around other OSD agencies in the fashion of the military. This would create a useful corps of experienced well-rounded DoD civilians and should relax fears of an entrenched civilian bureaucracy within the Joint Staff. At the same time, these civilians would not fulfill their potential unless given jobs of some responsibility. It is doubtful whether the Services have ever really used civilians in policy-making slots, apart from the Service secretaries and their immediate subordinates.

That the suggestions above have all been made before does not argue against their validity. Rather it merely emphasizes the continuing nature of the deficiencies in the Joint Staff.

Such possible steps to strengthen the JCS as described above might very well encounter resistance in the form of the generally anti-military climate to be expected for the next couple of years. Despite the need of a strong JCS to present a truly national military viewpoint and to overwatch Service competition, the domestic political climate might not respond favorably to any strengthening of a central military authority.