

# GOLDWATER-NICHOLS – FAILING TO GO THE DISTANCE

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**GOLDWATER-NICHOLS – FAILING TO GO THE DISTANCE**

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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As a result of The Defense Department Reorganization Act of 1986 -- also known as the Goldwater-Nichols Act -- the United States Military operates jointly to an extent never before seen. However, loopholes in the legislation remain which continue to prevent the services from realizing the full extent of the efficiencies envisioned by Goldwater-Nichols. U.S. Military victories from Desert Storm to Operation Iraqi Freedom have masked the fact the U.S. Military is still steeped in parochialism, that there is no truly 'joint force', the services still pursue individual service priorities, redundant capabilities persist throughout, and turf wars frequently arise in new mission areas. It is time for an update to Goldwater-Nichols to address the loopholes which prevent the U.S. Military from exploiting the synergies of increased jointness. This is especially critical in this 'era of persistent conflict' coupled with flat-lined budgets and the need to replace worn out and expended equipment.



## FAILING TO GO THE DISTANCE

When describing the Armed Forces of the United States, Edward Luttwak said,

The failures in war and the continuing failure of peacetime have the same source. Shaped by laws, regulations, and military priorities that date back to 1945-48, the very structure of the armed forces and of the Defense Department are badly outmoded: and we now know that the system is quite incapable of self-reform<sup>1</sup>

With these failures in mind, the U.S. Congress passed the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. The Act, informally known as Goldwater-Nichols, reorganized the Defense Department in ways universally regarded as the most sweeping since the National Security Act of 1947 which created the Air Force as a separate service, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the National Military Establishment, which later evolved into the Department of Defense. One of the main thrusts of Goldwater-Nichols was to improve the ability of the separate branches of the armed forces to operate more in concert with one another, or jointly. In addition, Goldwater-Nichols aimed to strengthen civilian control of the military and improve military advice to the National Command Authorities. To do this, Goldwater-Nichols altered the fundamental relationships between -- and therefore the powers of -- the services, the Department of Defense, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

This paper reviews the current state of jointness in the armed forces and provides an independent assessment of the joint capabilities of the armed forces when analyzed against recent joint operations in Afghanistan and Iraq.

### Jointness

While there is no approved definition of jointness, Joint Publication 1-02 defines *joint* activities as those, "... in which elements of two or more military departments

participate.”<sup>2</sup> Others define jointness as the, “ability to blend the powerful capabilities each service brings to the battlefield in a way to achieve the maximum effectiveness and efficiency.”<sup>3</sup> Still others define jointness as the broad understanding of “...what your fellow soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines bring to the battle and *trusting* them to do it right and well – and their feeling the same way about you.”<sup>4</sup>

### The Joint Journey

Dr Richard Meinhart, Professor of Defense and Joint Processes, Department of Command, Leadership, and Management at the United States Army War College, describes jointness as a journey consisting of three phases<sup>5</sup>. The first phase is deconfliction which was first demonstrated in Desert Storm as each military branch learned to stay out of the other’s way while operating within the same battle space. This was greatly assisted by the Goldwater-Nichols provision which gave the Unified Commander appropriate authority for commanding troops toward achieving a common goal. The next phase of jointness is interoperability which permits systems from different services to share information, ammunition, doctrine, etc. With some exceptions, the armed forces of the United States have demonstrated a modicum of interoperability with more work to be accomplished in this area. The final phase of jointness is interdependence which describes an ideal where the services are not only able to deconflict their operations and interoperate systems, but also where the services are dependent upon each other for a shared capability.

One of the main questions concerning jointness is how much jointness is appropriate. In other words, is it possible to be too joint and thereby lose the service specific expertise that results in part from the healthy competition among the services?

This author believes the appropriate level of jointness is that which fosters cooperation among the services while providing a range of options to the warfighter, permits the selection of the best available option, regardless of service origin, to produce the desired effect in the most efficient manner. Joint Vision 2020 highlights the importance of wringing, “every ounce of capability from every available source”<sup>6</sup> when faced with “flat budgets and increasingly more costly readiness and modernization.”<sup>7</sup>

### The Need for Reform

To understand the need for reform, it is important to view the state of the armed forces prior to Goldwater-Nichols, especially with regard to the ability of the different services to work jointly at the time. Numerous military setbacks between WWII and the 1980s created, and then fed the perceived need for defense reform: the Vietnam War, the *USS Pueblo*, the *Mayaguez*, the failed Iranian hostage rescue, the Marine Barracks bombing in Beirut, and finally the Grenada invasion. Each successive military failure exposed yet another glaring weakness and further highlighted the need for change.

The failed mission to rescue American hostages in Tehran was pivotal in the reform discussion as it demonstrated a lack of preparedness that was, “so immense that even six months of organizing, planning, and training could not overcome institutional deficiencies”.<sup>8</sup> The 1983 Marine barracks explosion exposed, “cumbersome military chain of command problems”<sup>9</sup> when the services deployed over 30 units in support of the peacekeeping mission unbeknownst to the Unified Commander. Although somewhat successful, the invasion of Grenada to rescue hostages demonstrated continued difficulties in the conduct of joint military operations. Locher provides a sobering critique of the situation at the time:

The Pentagon badly needed reform. The military bureaucracy had tied itself in knots since World War II...decision making had become so convoluted, fiefdoms so powerful and inbred, lines of authority so confused, and chains of command so entangled that the military hierarchy had repeatedly failed the nation. Third-rate powers and terrorist had humiliated America. Tens of thousands of troops had died needlessly. Unprecedented levels of defense spending were not making the nation more secure. Goldwater and Nunn were resolved to fix this dysfunctional system. The fiefdoms were equally determined to preserve their power and independence.<sup>10</sup>

These failures and the bleak prospect for internal reform due at least in part to service parochialism led Gen David Jones, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to outline in Congressional testimony the need for reform of the military establishment, leading eventually to the Goldwater Nichols Act.

#### Goldwater-Nichols Intent

In short, Goldwater-Nichols sought:<sup>11</sup>

- (1) to reorganize the Department of Defense and strengthen civilian authority in the Department of Defense;
- (2) to improve military advice to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense;
- (3) to place clear responsibility on the commanders of the unified and specified combatant commands for the accomplishment of mission assigned to those commands;
- (4) to ensure that the authority of the unified and specified commander is fully commensurate with the responsibility of those commander for the accomplishment of those missions assigned to their commands;
- (5) to increase attention in the formulation of strategy and contingency planning;
- (6) to provide for the most efficient use of defense resources;
- (7) to improve joint officer management policies;
- (8) otherwise to enhance the effectiveness of military operations and improve the management and administration of the Department of Defense.

## Operation DESERT STORM

Since Goldwater-Nichols, the military has had numerous opportunities to demonstrate its ability to operate jointly. To many, Goldwater-Nichols was validated when the U.S. military routed the vaunted Iraqi military during Operation DESERT STORM. Buoyed by the success General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the operation, credited Goldwater-Nichols for improving the U.S. Military's ability to operate jointly.<sup>12</sup> Senator Sam Nunn credits Goldwater-Nichols for the "remarkable military successes of the 1990s."<sup>13</sup>

However, General Tommy Franks, former Commander of U. S. Central Command and architect of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Assistant Division Commander of the 1st Cavalry Division during Desert Storm called DESERT STORM, "...a patchwork of 'deconflicted' service operations, not a true joint effort."<sup>14</sup> Retired Admiral William Owens questions whether we learned the right lessons from DESERT STORM or even asked the right questions.<sup>15</sup> James Locher believes the success in the Cold War and since has caused the Pentagon to suffer from the "failure of success"<sup>16</sup> by adopting practices based solely on their success in Desert Storm.

Regardless of how joint Operation DESERT STORM actually was, it "profoundly shaped U.S. military thinking throughout the 1990s, placing greater emphasis on precision weaponry, command and control, battlefield surveillance, logistics modernization, and more extensive use of prepositioned equipment."<sup>17</sup> But given the difficulties inherent in institutionalizing change in large organizations, one has to question how the services, each heavily steeped in their own culture, could have implemented jointness to the extent necessary to have made an appreciable difference in the short time between Goldwater-Nichols and Operation DESERT STORM.

These types of criticisms are not limited to the conduct of Operation DESERT STORM. Regarding more recent efforts, Douglas Macgregor, a senior military fellow in the Institute of National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University wrote in 2001, "...operations against Yugoslavia offer further evidence that the single-service American way of war has changed little..."<sup>18</sup> Indeed, for various reasons, recent conflicts appear to be less joint than would seem reasonable thereby failing to attain the synergies possible through joint operations.

Recent operations in Afghanistan and Iraq provide a fresh opportunity to evaluate how 'joint' the armed forces have become by evaluating the performance of critical joint operations. Despite some successes, efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq appear to fit the mold outlined by General David C. Jones.

Although most history books glorify our military accomplishments, a closer examination reveals a disconcerting pattern: unpreparedness at the start of war; initial failures; reorganizing while fighting; cranking up our industrial base; and ultimately prevailing by wearing down the enemy – by being bigger, not smarter.<sup>19</sup>

### Joint Fires

In military terminology, fires is, "...the use of weapon systems to create a specific lethal or nonlethal effect on a target."<sup>20</sup> Joint Fires are "fires delivered during the employment of forces from two or more components in coordinated action to produce desired effects in support of a common objective."<sup>21</sup> The ability to execute joint fire missions effectively assumes increased importance as ground forces shed traditional fire support platforms in an effort to transform to become lighter, leaner, and more mobile.<sup>22</sup> Joint Close Air Support (JCAS) is an aerial Joint Fires mission which requires special qualification and training because it requires pilots to engage targets in close

proximity to friendly forces elevating the risk of fratricide. The ability to execute joint fires is a critical joint capability which falls under the Precision Engagement, one of four operating concepts highlighted in Joint Vision 2020<sup>23</sup> which states “enhanced jointness will ensure greater commonality between service precision engagement capabilities and provide future joint force commanders with a wider array of responsive, accurate, and flexible options.

### Operation ANACONDA

In March of 2002, Combined Joint Task Force – Mountain (CJTF-Mtn) executed an operation designed to trap and destroy remnants of the Taliban Regime and Al Qaeda operatives who had fled to the Shahikhot Valley, a high-altitude valley in the Gardez region of Afghanistan. Because Coalition Forces relied exclusively on airpower for joint fires (due to a lack of organic artillery) the operation provides a unique opportunity to assess the effectiveness of joint fires in one of the first large-scale actions in the post 9/11 world.

With a few isolated exceptions, coalition air power demonstrated the ability to deliver precision weapons into such a small area all deemed to be ‘short of the Fire Support Coordination Line’<sup>24</sup> with no fratricide.<sup>25</sup> However, the Commanding General, CJTF-Mtn, highlighted perceived shortcomings in a September, 2002 interview<sup>26</sup> claiming it took (on occasion) hours for the Air Force to execute Precision Guided Munitions (PGM) missions in support of troops in contact from enemy mortar positions. The Combined Forces Air Component Commander (CFACC) responded by highlighting several issues that adversely impacted the air component’s ability to provide timely Close Air Support during the initial stages of the operation; inadequate prior

coordination with the air component and inaccurate intelligence on the type and number of forces to be engaged.<sup>27</sup>

As a matter of fact, the Operations Order (OPORD) for Operation ANACONDA was published without CFACC involvement. The CFACC explained that faulty intelligence was crucial because the realization that there were more enemy fighters than expected, and that they were dug-in and prepared to stay and fight would have resulted in a change in the size and type of the planned air package. This, in turn, would have driven the need for a more intricate command and control system over the postage stamp-sized battlefield with multiple strike requests supporting troops in contact.

Regarding instances of less than optimum JCAS during ANACONDA, an *Infantry Magazine* article faults a, "...lack of adherence or even an understanding of joint doctrine," and states, "...poor performance in Anaconda was due to unsatisfactory procedural implementation and execution."<sup>28</sup> The problems were so formidable that a conference was held in the weeks following ANACONDA which illuminated fifteen problems with JCAS execution at the tactical and operational levels ranging from confusion between airborne forward air controller to a lack of knowledge of, "...the commander's intent...the ground scheme of maneuver... and where forces were located as the operation progressed".<sup>29</sup> Equipment interoperability issues were also highlighted as controllers attempting to call in strikes on the ground lacked either the equipment to speak communicate directly with pilots or properly designate ground targets for JCAS aircraft.

An after-action report released by the Headquarters U.S. Air Force Office of Air Force Lessons Learned, (AF/XOL) concluded similarly:

There were gaps in the understanding of tactical procedures for theater air control, and air and ground planners and operators alike were following different doctrinal concepts on the use of airpower in relation to the ground battle.<sup>30</sup>

A RAND study of close air support cited rules of engagement which were incompatible with the JCAS requirements, complicated de-confliction due to the limited airspace over the small battlefield, and normal aircraft cycle times for JDAM (Joint Direct Attack Munition) ordnance as having negatively impacted response times.<sup>31</sup> The Air Force Lessons Learned report hints at a major training deficiency by stating the Land Component “had not had time to gain experience in how to work with the air component”.<sup>32</sup> Regardless of the accusations being lobbed back and forth, one thing is clear. Despite 15-plus years of a supposed joint focus, U.S. Forces had to overcome a lack of training in the heat of battle to deliver joint fires on the battlefield. A true joint force would have had procedures in place, immediately executable *by trained personnel* upon arrival in theater. As it developed, U.S. soldiers and airmen relied on work-arounds to ensure adequate strike coverage for the duration of ANACONDA.

### Operation IRAQI FREEDOM

In contrast to Operation ANACONDA, the V Corps historian describes how close coordination between V Corps and the 4<sup>th</sup> Air Support Operations Group not only made up for a shortage of organic artillery at the outset of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM but created synergies never before seen. V Corps credits placement of the All-Source Collection Element (ACE), the Fires Effects Coordination Cell (FECC), and the (Air Force) Air Support Operations Cell within close proximity as the, “...critical ingredient in

focusing of joint fires..."<sup>33</sup> This coordination enabled "corps shaping" -- the timely servicing of targets in the corps area of operations -- in an average time of 18 minutes<sup>34</sup> despite the absence of all but two of eighteen anticipated artillery battalions.

Furthermore, V Corps credits JCAS missions with the de facto destruction of the Adnan and Medina Divisions on 3-4 May 2003 and claims its corps shaping operations were more effective than theater interdiction campaigns in reducing Iraqi Republican Guard Strength.<sup>35</sup> This use of joint fires by V Corps demonstrated the synergies possible when executing joint missions which provided options to the commander who then "selects the best means and most appropriate forces at his disposal."<sup>36</sup> In addition, these missions provided immediate bomb and collateral damage assessments and resulted in no cases of fratricide within V Corps areas of operation.<sup>37</sup> In summary:

...airpower became the primary means of executing joint fires to shape corps battlespace. Artillery was comparatively underutilized, especially for counterfire missions, for several reasons. One was the early shortage of artillery. Another was a general reluctance to fire dual-purpose conventional improved munitions because of the possibility of collateral damage and the probability that dud bomblets would hinder friendly maneuver or endanger civilian populations. At the same time, a growing realization emerged of the ease, effectiveness and rapid responsiveness with which airpower could be used under the direction techniques the 4<sup>th</sup> ASOG had evolved. Having the ability to strike a target immediately by drawing continuously on the target-seeking capability of the corps G-2 vastly increased the FECC's effectiveness. After early, successful demonstrations of the technique, when the corps G-3 chief of staff or commanding general wanted a target hit they turned directly to the ASOC. Ultimately, the corps delegated all decision-making for the execution of tactical air support to the ASOC. The team was that solid, the trust was that great; but it was a trust earned by performance on the battlefield

While airmen and soldiers were able to overcome initial problems and provide effective servicing of targets, one must ask why these procedures were not in place from the outset. As a result of lessons learned from failures in air-ground coordination during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, JCAS in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM was

“effective...but still short of its potential.”<sup>38</sup> The next logical question is have training, tactics and procedures been updated to reflect the lessons learned from these operations where appropriate?

While it is true there have been joint initiatives to improve the effectiveness of joint fires training with the establishment of the Joint Fires Integration and Interoperability Team (JFIIT), jointly agreed-upon standards for Joint Tactical Air Controller training, and the establishment of a new Joint Forward Observer (JFO) position to aid JTACs, one must ask why these were not established prior? Instead, it took perceived failures in battle to jolt the system into making needed changes. It also demonstrates that, jointness, in many ways was placed secondary to service desires until forced in the crucible of battle. And in spite of the plethora of lessons which could have been learned early on, there is little evidence that these lessons have been incorporated into doctrine where appropriate.

Lt Gen John R. Wood, Deputy Commander, U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) and a branch artilleryman provided some disturbing insights during an address at the Artillery School at Ft. Sill, OK in June of 2007.<sup>39</sup> Lt Gen Wood highlighted three areas of concern identified by the JFCOM Joint Fires Integration and Interoperability Team (JFIIT): Joint Fires training, Joint Fires interoperability, and Joint Fires culture. These areas of concern, highlighted as shortcomings during Operation ANACONDA in early 2002, are still being discussed and there is little evidence that they have been resolved.

## Focused Logistics

Throughout military history, logistics has played a pivotal role in warfare. When asked to explain his civil War successes, Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest claimed he always “just got there first with the most men”. Focused Logistics is the Joint Staff concept for executing the logistics missions and one of the four operational concepts highlighted in Joint Vision 2010. It is defined as:

the ability to provide the joint force the right personnel, equipment, supplies, and support in the right place, at the right time, and in the right quantities, across the full range of military operations. This will be made possible through a real-time, net-based information system providing accurate, actionable visibility as part of an integrated operations picture, effectively linking the operator and logistician across joint forces, Services, and support agencies. Through transformational innovations to processes, systems, and organizations, Focused Logistics will provide the joint warfighter with support for all functions.<sup>40</sup>

In recent history, the U.S. military has demonstrated an unmatched ability to move personnel and war materials into a war zone. At the same time, the U.S. has failed to find a way to effectively track and disperse materials within the war zone to the appropriate users leading to the creation of “iron mountains” (stacked shipping containers) at airfields and ports of entry during past conflicts including Korea, Vietnam, and most notably, Desert Storm.

The Joint Staff’s Focused Logistics Plan emphasizes the “fusion of information and logistics technologies...to track and shift units, equipment, and supplies even while enroute” and requires, “focus on the big picture (joint and combined operations) vice maintaining functional and/or service stovepipes...”<sup>41</sup>, so future joint forces will be more mobile, versatile, and more easily deployed anywhere in the world. The overall Focused Logistics vision is to replace the large inventories with rapid transportation and time-definite delivery requiring a smaller, but more responsive logistics footprint. This ability

to provide focused logistics will become more crucial to the warfighter as the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review's<sup>42</sup> vision of relying less on "large, permanent overseas garrisons" and more on austere expeditionary bases becomes the norm.

In spite of the best intentions of the campaign plan, iron mountains reappeared during Operation Iraqi Freedom as large backlogs of supplies existed throughout the supply chain resulting in duplicate orders, circumvention of the supply system, lost supplies, and cannibalization of vehicles for spare parts. According to the Federal Times, over \$1.2 Billion in material went unaccounted for during the first month of major combat operations.<sup>43</sup> An April 2005 Government Accountability Office (GAO) Report<sup>44</sup> studied the availability of 9 selected items and determined "ineffective theater distribution" at least partially culpable for shortfalls of four critical items – Assault Amphibian Vehicle generators, Interceptor body armor, MREs, and replacement tires. Furthermore, at least some of these shortages were shown to have an operational impact as in the case of the 3d Marine Infantry Division, where the tire shortage forced it to abandon equipment and "reduced its operational capability."<sup>45</sup> The GAO report cited doctrine, improper packaging, insufficient transportation equipment and personnel in theater, and inadequate logistics information systems as causal.

The logistical failures realized during the initial portion of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM expose seams in the transportation system and an overall lack of unity of effort both within the theater and between strategic, operational, and tactical level logistics. The Beyond Goldwater-Nichols (BGN) Phase I Report calls logistics "an \$85 billion enterprise that is not well understood, receives little guidance and far too little oversight from either OSD or the Joint Staff."<sup>46</sup> Service-specific information systems

could not communicate with each other; doctrinal differences between the services persevered; and unclear command relationships continue.

There have been some attempts to correct the problems identified early on. In September, 2003, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld designated the Commander of USTRANSCOM the “distribution process owner” responsible for end to end, or factory to foxhole, logistics. In addition, USTRANSCOM and USCENTCOM established the CENTCOM Deployment Distribution Operational Center (CDDOC) in January, 2004 to close the seams between not only theater and operational logistics, but between Service logistics functions. While operating in an environment split by three different chains of command – TRANSCOM, CFLCC, and Multi-National Force-Iraq --these efforts have achieved a modicum of success. But the fact remains, they weren’t in place at the outset, in spite of over 15 years of joint focus and over five years after focused logistics was identified as one of the four operational concepts for Joint vision 2010. It took the reappearance of “iron mountains” and \$1.2 Billion in lost assets to force change. In the interim, service logistics were permitted to continue to develop in stovepipes using service-specific rather than joint doctrine.

### A Joint Assessment

The short case studies in joint fires and joint logistics demonstrate a concerning lack of jointness in critical mission areas. In some areas, corrective actions have been initiated and have borne fruit. In others, there is still much work to be done. With the lack of jointness found in the case studies, one must ask why this remains the situation over 15 years after Goldwater-Nichols? Why had army ground controllers not trained together with pilots to call in air strikes? Why were some ground controllers unable to

laser-designate targets due to equipment that was not compatible? Why is there so much duplication of effort in logistics and why are there seams between operational and theater-level logistics? In order to determine the way ahead we must analyze the roadblocks which prevent interoperability in many cases and interdependence in most?

### Roadblocks

There are numerous reasons why jointness has not taken hold to the degree it should have. Goldwater-Nichols was partially successful in creating a joint force that can deconflict and interoperate, for the most part, but failed to remove some of the most important obstacles which threaten to impede interdependency unless addressed. Operation ANACONDA exposed seams in Goldwater-Nichols when the Joint Task Force Commander failed to include the air component in the planning thereby placing his own ground troops unnecessarily at risk. The Joint Task Force Commander had presumably benefitted from the Goldwater-Nichols requirement to become a Joint Specialty Officer and had presumably completed requisite joint professional military education but failed to even consider coordinating with aerial fires during the planning phase of the operation. This omission can be summed up in one word -- culture.

### Culture

What is culture and how can culture derail the reforms envisioned by Goldwater-Nichols? John Kotter, Professor of Leadership at the Harvard Business School, provides some clues. Kotter defines culture as, "...norms of behavior and shared values among a group of people."<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, he says:

In a big company, one typically finds that some of these social forces – the so-called corporate culture – affect everyone and that others are specific to subunits (for example, the marketing culture, the Detroit office's

culture). Regardless of level or location, culture is important because it can powerfully influence human behavior, because it can be difficult to change, and because its near invisibility makes it hard to address directly.<sup>48</sup>

Carl Builder, a RAND Corporation researcher, writes extensively on the distinct service cultures forged in tradition and war over a more than 200-year period:

...these institutions are living, breathing, and most important, adaptive, self-motivated human organism that like individuals will look to their own survival, security, and esteem. They will find ways to ensure their survival, security, and esteem even if they are reorganized or restructured or legislated...<sup>49</sup>

Admiral William Owens, former Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (VCJCS), writes that the military culture relies on professionalism but that this professionalism generates an 'institutional conservatism' that:

works against needed change inside the organization...military culture confuses professionalism with loyalty to a particular military service, or even to a professional specialty within a service...the problem occurs when this relatively healthy expression of solidarity to a community hardens into an unreasoned, blind commitment to existing doctrine or structure.<sup>50</sup>

Builder believes that, "short of national defeat, it is hard to imagine wartime traumas that would induce major changes in the American services."<sup>51</sup> In other words, changing the military culture would not be easy.

In Leading Change, Kotter describes one reason change fails to take hold, especially in large organizations like the military:

When the new practices made in a transformation effort are not compatible with the relevant cultures, they will always be subject to regression. Changes in a work group, a division, or an entire company can come undone, even after years of effort because the new approaches haven't been anchored firmly in group norms and values.<sup>52</sup>

Those behind Goldwater-Nichols were not satisfied with the current system of assigning officers and established a joint officer management system which created and

defined the Joint Specialty Officer, withheld joint credit except for those assignments truly joint in nature, placed minimum tour lengths on joint assignments, and provided specialized training for officers assigned to joint billets. In addition, Goldwater-Nichols mandated that all future general and flag officers would have joint experience and be certified joint service officers. In spite of these sweeping changes service cultures prevailed.

Prior to the passage of Goldwater-Nichols, the debate between the Congress and military leadership was intense, especially in regards to joint officer management which Locher calls, “the last battleground in the drafting, passage, and ultimate enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation”.<sup>53</sup> In the end, the services accepted the new procedures when it became apparent they would retain absolute control of promotions and assignments. On anchoring change, Kotter continues, “If promotion criteria are not reshaped...*transformations rarely last.*”<sup>54</sup> (Italics added by author for emphasis) Although Goldwater-Nichols did make fundamental changes in the way officers were identified, selected, and assigned to joint duty while ensuring promotion rates commensurate with their peers it may have doomed joint officer culture by permitting the services to control promotions according to their own cultural underpinnings. This is due to the tendency of the services to promote officers based on internal, service-specific criteria with little to no regard for whether an officer has served in a joint environment, or not. Within this paradigm, the services can groom officers with General Officer potential exclusively within their own service structure, ensure that he or she has had all the right jobs, commands, and professional military education before finally assigning the officer to joint duty at the O-6 level, or later.

## Trust

A by-product of the separate service cultures and the natural competition between them is a lack of trust in the other services. This can often lead to an institutional duplication of effort and mission redundancy which impedes jointness. In the following excerpt, Retired Admiral Owens describes how the services rationalize redundancy and protect redundant systems while inculcating the belief other services are not to be trusted:

Too often the functional redundancy of the Armed Forces stems from a basic desire to avoid reliance on another service or external source. Regardless of why duplication and redundancy exist, once in place they become vested. Internal organizations are formed to conduct functions, maintain facilities, and ensure that these weapons or functions will be available. And the most potent rationale for duplication is soon proclaimed: it is essential because the vagaries and fog of war demand redundancy to compensate for the unexpected. After all, aren't the stakes too high to depend on another service-specialized for another kind of warfare and focused on its own needs-to come through in a crisis? Isn't it better if functions and material that may be needed are all part of the same structure, tied together by a specialized doctrine, identifiable by a specialized insignia, and wedded to the same traditions, culture, and language? And isn't this the way that we've always done it and the way that has been proven by victory on the battlefield?<sup>55</sup>

The most concrete example of the lack of trust is the existence of aerial fires in all four branches of the military. This is especially evident in regards to the Marine Corps exclusion – written in Joint Doctrine – which exempts the Marine Corps from offering all but excess sorties up to the Joint Forces Air Component Commander for the Air Tasking Order. The fundamental reason for this exclusion is a failure on the part of the Marine Corps to believe that any service other than Marine Corps can and will provide the desired effect when, and where needed.

Commanders in Operation Anaconda and Operation Iraqi Freedom reported they felt if their plans were dependent upon aerial fires for support, they were “planning to

fail”.<sup>56</sup> It is not clear whether the failure of Operation ANACONDA planners to solicit the air component’s input is a result of a lack of trust, or a lack of knowledge of joint operations. Whether it was the lack of trust, or an absence of joint operations experience, the likely cause is a lack of adequate joint training which builds both knowledge of joint capabilities and trust.

## Training

Joint training provides an avenue to eliminate service stovepipes, build joint operations knowledge and improve trust in order to enhance interoperability and move towards interdependence. In the joint fires and logistics case studies, training was identified as a shortcoming. Appropriate joint training between U.S. Army ground controllers and pilots performing JCAS missions could have closed seams and ensured the use of proper doctrine, tactics, and equipment. Likewise, current logistics training is accomplished in service-specific fashion using service-specific doctrine perpetuating the unfamiliarity, and therefore, inability to work jointly across the spectrum of the logistics process.

Unfortunately, joint training exercises often fall prey to other requirements, including service-specific training needs. While Goldwater-Nichols gave Combatant Commanders responsibility for mission execution, it didn’t go far enough. According to General (Retired) Zinni, former Commander of USCENTCOM, one-third<sup>57</sup> of his planned joint exercises were cut, sometimes to accommodate service-specific training without regard for the importance of the planned joint (and sometimes multi-lateral) exercises. There must be a better balance between the needs of the service chiefs and the combatant commanders. Lieutenant General Wood agrees, citing a “lack of joint training

context”<sup>58</sup> due to service priorities and that opportunities are therefore missed to strengthen a culture which “values a joint fires solution over execution of a service battle drill.”<sup>59</sup>

To address the Lessons Learned from Operation ANACONDA, joint training programs have been expanded to facilitate the joint training of ground controllers from all services. In addition, the Joint Systems Integration Command (JSIC) is analyzing digital systems used in the joint fires mission to assess and solve interoperability problems<sup>60</sup> and the Joint Forces Command’s Joint Fires Integration and Interoperability Team is working with the services to improve joint fires at the tactical level.<sup>61</sup> At the National Training Center, Brigade Combat Teams are now accomplishing Joint Effects Training (JET) to learn and refine calls for fire, while enforcing disciplined protocols for clear and concise communication with support aircrews.”<sup>62</sup>

This paradigm shift towards joint training at the Brigade Combat Team-equivalent level and above must continue placing the priority for joint training ahead of single-service training. The services must seek out joint training opportunities first and whenever possible train within a joint environment. Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coastguardsmen can still receive valuable training on service-specific tasks while in a joint training or exercise environment but they also receive the additional benefit of doing so under conditions which more closely mirror those they will experience operationally.

To force the paradigm shift, the bulk of training funds which now go to the services should go to combatant commanders for joint training and exercises at the BCT-equivalent and above level. The services will continue to receive budget authority

for service-specific training below the BCT-equivalent level. This shift in funding ensures that authority to train forces goes to the same commander ultimately responsible for winning wars as envisioned under Goldwater-Nichols. Only then will the combatant commander have proper authority to prepare his forces to accomplish the missions given to him by the national leadership according to the planning he has directed and influenced.

#### The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's Role

Because Goldwater-Nichols strengthened the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and made his role central in validating service programs, it is impossible to evaluate the effectiveness of Goldwater-Nichols without discussing the impact of these changes on jointness. The Goldwater-Nichols Act revamped the role of the Chairman in order to address three of the ten Goldwater-Nichols objectives. According to Title 10 U.S. Code, Section 153<sup>63</sup> as currently written, the Chairman provides 1) Strategic direction; 2) Strategic Planning; 3) Contingency planning and preparedness; 4) Military advice on requirement, programs, and budget; 5) doctrine, training, and education; and 6) Other matters as directed. Most importantly, the Chairman replaced the Service Chiefs as the primary military advisor to the President, the Secretary of Defense, the National Security Council, and now the Homeland Security Council<sup>64</sup> with the goal of providing improved advice on joint requirements.<sup>65</sup>

First and foremost, there is general agreement that military advice has improved as a result of Goldwater-Nichols.<sup>66</sup> However, Beyond Goldwater-Nichols I questions whether too much voice has been given to the Chairman at the expense of Service

advice, although Service Chiefs remain advisors to the President, Secretary of Defense, etc.

To meet the mandates established by Goldwater-Nichols, the Chairman uses the Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS), an evolving process which provides military advice to national leaders based on an ongoing strategic assessment and direction to the armed forces through the Joint Staff. The products produced as a result of this process provide the aforementioned strategy, advice, and direction while assisting in both long-range, and contingency military planning. Overall, contingency planning has improved but still reflects Cold War thinking and is "...not characterized by new operational concepts, or a new vision of how we might conduct military operations."<sup>67</sup>

One of the Chairman's statutory means of influencing jointness is through his assessment of how closely the individual service programming actions support joint operating principles. The Chairman's Program Recommendation (CPR) is formulated within the Joint Requirement's Oversight Council (JROC) process and provides programming recommendations to the Secretary of Defense in support of joint capabilities. The Chairman's Program Assessment (CPA) is submitted after the services Programmed Objective Memorandums (POM) and provides an assessment of the conformance of the Services' POMs to joint priorities. Both the CPR and CPA are issued via personal correspondence between the Chairman and the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Defense may direct changes to the Services' programs based upon the CPR and CPA.

Assessments of strategy formulation since Goldwater-Nichols provide mixed reviews. The Beyond Goldwater-Nichols I Report calls the restructuring "much superior

to the prior system”<sup>68</sup> while commenting on the overall vagueness of strategy documents produced since 1986. Locher claims that strategy documents carry strong attachments to the past.<sup>69</sup> A considerable critique is that strategy and planning fail to drive budgeting decisions,<sup>70</sup> and therefore acquisition programs remain dominated by the Services.

There is relative agreement on the impact of Goldwater-Nichols on the efficient use of defense resources. By giving the Chairman expanded powers, Goldwater-Nichols was supposed to shift the emphasis in procurement from service to joint priorities. However, most argue that service priorities continue to dominate acquisition decisions.<sup>71</sup> This is partly a result of the inability or unwillingness of Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff since 1986 to use their influence to untangle questions on roles and missions<sup>72</sup> leading to the continued funding of duplicate capabilities. While the Chairman continues to provide statutory advice on service programs to the Secretary of Defense via the Chairman’s Program Recommendation and the Chairman’s Program Assessment, this advice has resulted in disappointingly small levels of change to service-dominated programs.<sup>73</sup> Admiral Owens believes the inability of the defense establishment to make hard decisions has squandered the post-Cold War period.<sup>74</sup> The once-heralded Joint Requirements Oversight Council (JROC), responsible for ensuring that the service POMs meet joint warfare requirements has been criticized for being a rubber stamp for service programs.<sup>75</sup>

Within the JROC’s processes, initiatives have attempted to improve the vetting process of programs prior to committing to a purchase including the Joint Warfighting Capabilities Assessment, initiated during Admiral Owens’ tenure. This promising

initiative designed to force the evaluation of proposed weapons programs against joint warfighting capabilities ended in frustration.<sup>76</sup> The JROC's processes were expanded through the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) which stood up in 2003. JCIDS uses eight Functional Capabilities Boards (FCB) to identify and evaluate joint capability gaps against Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, and Facilities – DOTMLPF. The result is a material or non-material (change in DOTMLPF) recommendation to the JROC. The full impact of the JCIDS process has not been realized, but it has already been criticized as too lengthy,<sup>77</sup> bureaucratic,<sup>78</sup> and “not promising”.<sup>79</sup>

The major concern is that the services are still driving the acquisition process according to service priorities at the expense of joint priorities even though Goldwater-Nichols sought to ensure that only combatant commanders as the operational warfighters, would have a principal role in determining military requirements and priorities. Combatant Commanders have always submitted their requirements via Integrated Priority Lists (IPLs), but they have now been invited to participate directly in the JROC process to ensure their needs are addressed. Other recent initiatives allow the fast-tracking of items, deemed ‘Most Pressing Military Needs’ (MPMN) and ‘Joint Urgent Operational Needs’, show promise. However, regardless of how successful these initiatives prove, the ability of a single Combatant Commander to influence projects with substantial developmental timelines remains minimal given his relatively short tenure as compared to the services involvement over time.

## The Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS)

Since the JSPS is the Chairman's system, he is able to use it as desired so long as he provides the documents required by law. In the post-Goldwater-Nichols era, each Chairman's use of the system has varied according to the Chairman's personality and leadership style. While this system does provide flexibility, this flexibility does not ensure a system where the Chairman must confront tough issues. Because the JROC is seen as still operating along parochial lines, the Chairman is tasked to provide an unbiased recommendation on service programs on issues the JROC is unable or unwilling to deal with appropriately. Because the Chairman's impact on defense programs has been minimal, the author recommends a more structured mechanism which ensures the Chairman addresses redundancies, and justifies programs which do not enhance joint capabilities.

## Recommendations

Fixing the loopholes in Goldwater-Nichols which permit the Services to pay lip service to jointness while doing relatively little to implement joint concepts will take a significant amount of effort and the ability to make difficult decisions.

## Enforcing the Chairman's Role

Military advice to national leaders will become even more critical as fewer national leaders emerge without military backgrounds. The lack of discipline and accountability found in the current Joint Strategic Planning System allows the Chairman to avoid the tough decisions needed to further jointness. Congress should pass legislation that affirms the Chairman's statutory responsibilities and provides sufficient congressional oversight to ensure the Chairman fulfills his responsibilities in the manner

intended by Goldwater-Nichols. If neither Congress nor the Chairman is able to make difficult resource decisions due to political realities, Congress should establish an independent Capabilities Re-alignment Commission (CRC) to evaluate roles and missions and force the military to cut redundant capabilities. This CRC should be designed with similar processes and authorities to those of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission.

Current efforts to increase the participation of Combatant Commanders in the JROC processes must continue and prove successful. Finally, the pool of potential candidates for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff should be limited to those who have served as combatant commanders.

#### Creating Joint-minded Officers

Creating joint-minded officers remains one of the most difficult challenges as long as the services retain promotion and assignment authority. Theories on how to create joint officers range from creating a separate joint service starting at the O-5 level<sup>80</sup> to abolishing the individual services altogether and forming one service. The failure to create joint officers is two-fold. As mentioned, the Services retain promotion authority. This is likely to remain the case as long as the individual services exist. Secondly, joint education starts too late in an officer's career, well after the biases have been established. Officers should embrace jointness early in careers, even during commissioning programs. Service ROTC detachment and their curriculums could be combined to teach joint concepts with cadets gaining commission in their chosen branch upon graduation.

The military academy system should focus on jointness by adopting a baseline joint curriculum to be used by each academy and rotating student bodies through the service academies. Under this system, each cadet will spend the first and last year at his or her primary institution and the middle years at the sister service academies. While attending sister service institutions, the common joint military curriculum will be augmented by elements of the service history, culture, and capabilities from the service academy the cadet or midshipman is currently attending. Likewise, other commissioning sources should adopt curriculums with a joint focus. All subsequent levels of professional military education should build on this joint foundation by emphasizing jointness at the operational and strategic levels.

#### Organizing to Maximize Joint Capabilities

The current organization of Combatant Commands primarily along geographic boundaries with component commands inhibits jointness as military capabilities center primarily around the components. Consideration should be given to reorganizing along functional capabilities to align joint forces along joint functional capabilities providing the opportunity for joint forces to train and operate together in functionally oriented units. This reorganization would eliminate seams and identify and reduce excess capabilities service-wide. Capabilities would then be targeted in areas where needed during contingencies, national disasters, or as part of a coordinated theater security cooperation plan. Using this scenario, a notional U.S. Training Command (USTRAINCOM) would replace service-specific training with joint training for pilots, logisticians, ground controllers, and communicators. Similarly, a U.S. Joint Exercise Command (USJTXCOM) would assume responsibility for joint training as well as joint

concept experimentation and validation. In addition, Joint Combat Command (USCBTCOM) would be trained and equipped to respond to regional crises requiring the employment of combat power. Forces within USCBTCOM would adopt a Marine Air-Ground Task Force-like mentality and always train and exercise jointly using all required elements of national military power for a given scenario. Similarly, Joint Logistic Command (USLOGCOM) could combine all elements of the logistics pipeline to provide true focused logistics. Organizing in this manner would reduce the cultural-, trust-, and training-related roadblocks which currently prevent interdependence while identifying and eliminating redundant capabilities and adopting best practices from each of the services.

### Conclusion

Current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq provide substantial evidence the success of Goldwater-Nichols has been limited. If jointness is a journey, Goldwater-Nichols was moderately successful in reaching the first two milestones by improving the ability of the armed forces to deconflict their operations and, to a lesser extent, interoperate. However, the armed forces have a long way to go to achieve interdependence, the desired end-state. The need to realize these efficiencies grows almost daily as the future points to an increasingly fiscally constrained military sustainment, and modernization outlook.<sup>81</sup> Individual service cultures will continue to thwart efforts to progress towards interdependence as each service stands to lose something. Therefore, the only way to remain on glide-path towards interdependence and the resulting efficiencies envisioned by the framers of the original Goldwater-Nichols reformers is to expand Goldwater-Nichols to deal with the remaining

roadblocks. This will not be easy but is the only way to continue the transformation towards a leaner, more agile and more lethal military force.

## Endnotes

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<sup>6</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2020* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, June 2000), 8.

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<sup>9</sup> Richard M. Meinhart, *Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff's Leadership Using the Joint Strategic Planning System in the 1990s: Recommendations for Strategic Leaders* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 2003), 3.

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<sup>22</sup> Bruce R. Pirnie, et al., *Beyond Close Air Support: Forging a New Air-Ground Partnership* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2005), 115; available from [http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_briefs/RB170/](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB170/); Internet; accessed 13 March 2008.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2020*, 22.

<sup>24</sup> U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Airpower Perspective* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Air Force, Headquarters, 7 Feb 2005), 111; available from <http://www.af.mil/shared/media/document/AFD-060726-037.pdf>; Internet; accessed 13 March 2008.

<sup>25</sup> Note: There was no fratricide once the operation was initiated. However, during pre-operation maneuvering, an AC-130 erroneously engaged a forward echelon of Afghan soldiers. The absence of fratricide during the operation proved to be significant due to the confined battlespace and disparate units involved.

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<sup>27</sup> U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Operation Anaconda: An Airpower Perspective*, 5-6.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>29</sup> John Jansen, et al., "The Tower of Babel? Joint CAS Operations in Afghanistan," *Infantry Magazine* (January / February 2004): 34-35; available from [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0IAV/is\\_1\\_93/ai\\_n6123805](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0IAV/is_1_93/ai_n6123805); Internet; accessed 13 March 2008.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-36.

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<sup>33</sup> Charles E. Kirkpatrick, *Joint Fires as They Were Meant to Be: V Corps and the 4th Air Support Operations Group During Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Arlington, VA.: Association Of The United States Army, Institute Of Land Warfare, October 2004), 4; available at [http://www.ausa.org/pdfdocs/LWP\\_48.pdf](http://www.ausa.org/pdfdocs/LWP_48.pdf); Internet; accessed on 13 March 2008.

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<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>39</sup> Lieutenant General John R. Wood, "Forging Our Evolution Towards Interdependent Joint Fires," 6 June 200, available from <https://jfiit.eglin.af.mil/public/WoodSpeech.php>; Internet; accessed 14 March 2008. Speech given at Fort Sill, OK. concerning Joint fires.

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Clark A. Murdock, et al., *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols Phase I Report: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2004), 33.

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>52</sup> Kotter, 14.

<sup>53</sup> Locher, Locher III, "Has it Worked? The Goldwater-Nichols Reorganization Act", 106.

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<sup>56</sup> Wood, "Forging Our Evolution Towards Interdependent Joint Fires," speech.

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<sup>58</sup> Wood, "Forging Our Evolution Towards Interdependent Joint Fires," speech.

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