Navy and Marine Corps Opposition to the Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986

A thesis presented to
the faculty of
the College of Arts and Sciences of Ohio University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
Master of Arts

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June 2012

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This thesis titled
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ABSTRACT

WILLS, STEVEN T., M.A., June 2012, History

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The Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986 was the most comprehensive defense reorganization legislation in a generation. It has governed the way the United States has organized, planned, and conducted military operations for the last twenty five years. It passed the Senate and House of Representatives with margins of victory reserved for birthday and holiday resolutions. It is praised throughout the U.S. defense establishment as a universal good. Despite this, it engendered a strong opposition movement organized primarily by Navy Secretary John F. Lehman but also included members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, prominent Senators and Congressman, and President Reagan's Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger. This essay will examine the forty year background of defense reform movements leading to the Goldwater Nichols Act, the fight from 1982 to 1986 by supporters and opponents of the proposed legislation and its twenty-five year legacy that may not be as positive as the claims made by the Department of Defense suggest.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Ali, my son John, and my daughter Emily who endured long hours without me during its research and completion.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank former Navy Secretary John F. Lehman for taking time out of his busy schedule to speak with me about the Goldwater Nichols Act. I am also grateful to both Mr. Seth Cropsey for talking with me about his role in opposing defense reorganization reform, and Dr. Jeffrey Barlow at the Naval Historical Center for telling me about his involvement in the defense reorganization question. I am most thankful for the assistance I received in researching my work from the staff at both the Operational Archives Branch of the Naval Historical Center, and the Specials Collections Staff at National Defense University Library. Their assistance greatly aided my research. Finally, I would like to thank my advisor Dr. Ingo Traushweizer for his advice and guidance in completing this work.
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The Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986 was the most sweeping reform of the U.S. Defense Department since its initial establishment in 1947. A ten year retrospective of the act’s passage at the National Defense University (NDU) in 1999 detailed its six most significant achievements. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as an individual, was designated the principal military advisor to the President and other senior officials. The Chairman was assigned new responsibilities in the areas of strategic planning, logistics, net assessments, joint doctrine, and joint programs and budgets. A Vice Chairman position, outranking the other chiefs was created to assist the Chairman and act as the Chairman in his or her absence. The Joint Staff was expanded beyond 400 members and placed directly under the control of the Chairman. The power and influence of the deployed unified commanders was also increased by providing them authority over subordinate commands in their areas of responsibility, especially regarding joint training, force organization, and force employment. Finally, the Joint Specialty Officer program was mandated. This program was designed to ensure the services assigned some of their highest quality officers to joint duty.1 Nearly all in attendance at the 1999 NDU event concluded that passage of the legislation was a universal good.

Since its passage in October 1986 the Goldwater Nichols Act has been acclaimed as the most significant improvement in American military organization since the establishment of the National Military Establishment (NME) as part of the National

Security Act of 1947. It had an impressive bipartisan group of advocates in Congress, support from the Reagan administration, and from active duty senior military officers. An emotional Senator Barry Goldwater (R, AZ), Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), could only say after its passage, “It’s the only…damned thing I have done in the Senate that’s worth a damn.” Senator Sam Nunn (D, GA) had significantly contributed to the passage of the Act by mobilizing bipartisan support. Representatives Bill Nichols (D, AL), Ike Skelton (D, MO) and Les Aspin (D, WI) led a parallel effort in the House that included strong support from future House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R, GA). Senior officials in the Reagan administration also favored defense reorganization reform. In June 1985 the administration had commissioned the Packard Commission, a defense study group chaired by former Nixon administration Deputy Defense Secretary and industrialist David Packard to examine the issue of defense reorganization reform in conjunction with congressional efforts. Its February 1986 interim report agreed with nearly all of the reform measures being pursued by Congress. In the face of such ecumenical support, why did anyone in Congress or the administration oppose defense reorganization reform?

The opposition movement to defense reorganization reform in the 1980s was significant in that while it did not prevent major defense reform measures, it succeeded in preventing more radical reforms from being adopted. Although initially backed by Reagan administration Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, in its final stand against Goldwater and congressional reformers the opposition was primarily composed of

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civilians and military officers from the Department of the Navy and supported by a small number of Senators. This thesis will show that Reagan administration officials like Secretary of the Navy John Lehman and his civilian staff, former Navy Secretary John Warner (R, VA), and many serving and retired Navy and Marine Corps senior officers saw defense reform as a threat to both civilian control of the military and the naval service culture of independent operations.

The Navy and Marine Corps had a successful record in “watering down” reform attempts during the Cold War. In 1947, 1949, and 1958 they were successful in repelling attempts by the Truman and Eisenhower administrations to enact sweeping reforms that included additional powers for the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the expense of the service secretaries and uniformed service chiefs. In the previous instances, concurrent budget battles between the Navy and the other services over missions and responsibilities, notably the control of aviation assets and nuclear weapons aided in recruiting Congressional support for Navy opposition to defense reform.

The passage of the Goldwater Nichols Act has been well examined from the perspective of military and political science, but not as a subject of history. Available literature has largely been produced by those involved in the passage of the legislation and usually paints a heroic picture of pro-reform efforts while demonizing those who were opposed. Larger concerns of anti-reformers are seldom discussed at all, other than to label them as “service Parochialists” concerned with one military branch at the expense of U.S. national security. This omission is significant from a historical point,
since both sides of the debate based much of their arguments on U.S. military history of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. A detailed analysis of the anti-reform group and its beliefs adds to the overall understanding of why defense reorganization reform became an important issue in the early 1980s, why it succeeded in significant reforms, and also why those reforms were not nearly as far-reaching as many pro-reformers originally demanded.

The defense reorganization reform movement of the early 1980s was important in that it began in Congress vice the administration with strong support in the Joint Chiefs of Staff and from the nation’s forward-deployed military commanders. Command and control issues exposed in the Vietnam War, and a series of military disasters since the end of that conflict decidedly placed Congressional and public support behind defense reform activity. Congressional stalwarts who had protected the Navy from past reform efforts such as Representative Carl Vinson (D/GA) were no longer in office or, like Senator John Stennis (D/MS) in declining health were unable to mount the vigorous opposition required to defeat defense reform efforts. The Reagan administration’s defense buildup during the early 1980s had been controversial. The Pentagon was under attack from both the legislative branch and the press for excessive spending. Secretary of Defense Weinberger was concerned that a drawn-out battle over defense reform would weaken the administration’s ability to continue its rearmament program.\textsuperscript{4} The combination of these factors probably made some amount of defense reform inevitable before the end of the Reagan presidency.

Despite obvious disadvantages John Lehman and other anti-reform advocates mounted a skillful attack on the defense reorganization reform movement. Lehman’s position drew strength from forty years of Navy action to slow the pace of defense reform and preserve its service independence. He mobilized members of Congress, academics, media personalities, and senior active duty and retired officers in a very public campaign to discredit and repel the reform effort. Even though Lehman and his fellow anti-reformers failed in preventing the passage of significant defense reform legislation, they were successful in preventing a larger scheme of military realignment envisioned by reformers that included the elimination of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a working body and a radical reorientation of the armed forces along specific mission vice service lines. To understand the defense reorganization struggle that led to the Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986, it is necessary to review the defense reform debate that had been ongoing since the end of the Second World War.
CHAPTER 1: 1940-1980: DEFENSE ORGANIZATION: CREATION AND REFORM ATTEMPTS

The defense reform questions of the post-World War II era had their origin in four specific controversies. These were differing command and control structures, competition for new technologies and scarce resources, tension between Congress and the President over control of the military, and differing operational experiences in the Second World War. Military historians have tried to draw conclusions about the significance of these differences with varying results. Historian Allan Millett has described this as a process by which “the United States embedded an organizational structure that progressively reduced the autonomy of commanders and increased the likelihood of civilian intervention into the preparation and execution of military plans.”

Given what Millet describes as a progressive desire by American politicians since the start of the 20th century to “look to governmental reorganization as the solution to pressing public issues,” this postwar process would inevitably create an “organizational response that went beyond the relatively loose, highly personalized arrangements of FDR (Franklin Roosevelt) in formulating a postwar national security structure.” Harvard legal and defense scholar Gordon Lederman describes this system that arose in the wake of World War II from FDR’s loose arrangements as representative of “the U.S. military’s latest

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6 Millett, “The Organizational Impact of Military Success and Failure; An Historical Perspective,” pp. 1, 13.
attempt to resolve "inherent tensions" in the command and control of military forces.\textsuperscript{7}

The United States military’s “competing tendencies toward centralization or decentralization” have their roots in the individual operating traditions of its two senior military services and any history of defense reorganization in the post World War II era must begin with them.\textsuperscript{8}

Political scientist and Army War College professor Don Snider has studied service culture’s influence on their behaviors. He postulates that “derived over time from their assigned domain of war on land, sea, and in the air, these individual services have developed very different ideals and concepts that in turn strongly influenced their institutional cultures and behavior, particularly their strategic approach to war that establishes their claim on the nation’s assets.”\textsuperscript{9}

Land forces required a direct chain of command and centralized authority in order to move, supply themselves, and fight. This Army/ground forces philosophy represented an understanding that, “to be successful in battle, ground forces must be supported by other branches and services, and cannot even reach battlefields overseas without the aid of the other two services. Thus, historically its strategy has been based on an integrative, joint approach.”\textsuperscript{10}

Naval forces on the other hand departed from port and operated for months without the direct supervision of civilian authorities as a regular part of their peacetime mission. Naval battles were fought largely beyond the influence and often the visual ability of civilian policy makers. Snider describes the Navy philosophy as one that “emphasizes tradition and independence, as

\textsuperscript{7} Lederman, p.1.
\textsuperscript{8} Lederman, p.2.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
befits a service whose forces are „over the horizon” much of the time and whose personnel remain focused on „going to sea.”\textsuperscript{11} The Air Force culture that emerged after World War II somewhat bridged the gap between the two, favoring hierarchical organization at the expense of operational freedom. The Air Force also has its own deeply held philosophy that “air power is now the decisive instrument of war” thanks to its experiences in World War II and in conflicts such the First Gulf War of 1991 where air power played a significant role in victory. These differing command and control service visions would be a primary source of disagreement when political leaders sought service unification at the end of World War II.

Both services also competed to be the standard-bearer for new military capabilities. Informal cooperation between the services had been common before the 20\textsuperscript{th} century but ended with the advent of military aircraft. Alan Millett has commented that “the introduction of the airplane to military operations, which coincided with the creation of Service headquarters planning staff created inter-service tension that could not be accommodated by informal cooperation.”\textsuperscript{12} Each service adopted the aircraft into its particular service culture despite Congressional desires to the contrary. The Army sought to make its air component a separate part of the service with an independent operational structure. The Navy on the other hand directly integrated the aircraft into its existing operational structure. British military historian Geoffrey Till, writing in on the adoption of the aircraft by the U.S. Navy in the interwar period has said that, “certainly, it (the Navy) did not reject new technology out of hand. Rather it attempted to do what the naval

\textsuperscript{11} Snider, p. 155.
\textsuperscript{12} Allan R. Millett. “The Organizational Impact of Military Success and Failure: An Historical Perspective”, pp.5-6.
establishment has always done when faced with a dramatic change – accommodate it within a familiar framework.”

Congress was divided on the aviation issue. No less than eight bills originated in Congress between 1919 and 1920 calling for a separate Air Force, but none of them were reported out of the House Aeronautics committee for voting. Acting on the advice of one witness, Colonel William “Billy” Mitchell, both the House and Senate agreed that for the time the status quo should be preserved and that the Army and Navy would each retain their respective air components. The drive for a separate Air Force would continue throughout the interwar period. Mitchell would go on to greater fame and ultimate failure when his promotion of a separate air force brought him into conflict with his superiors. The aviation disagreements between the services are important in that for the first time the services were brought into direct competition to employ the same asset.

The advent and awesome capability of atomic weapons made this competition even more aggressive as the services struggled over which would employ the new “ultimate” weapons. The United States Army Air Force, after 1947 the United States Air Force, sought to maintain its monopoly on atomic warfare as demonstrated by the B-29 atomic weapon deliveries on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. As with the aircraft, the Navy sought ways to adapt its existing force structure to deliver atomic weapons, specifically with aircraft carriers and submarines. The questions

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of which service would control aviation and nuclear weapons would be used by both those in favor and those opposed to defense unification.

In addition to inter-service conflicts, as World War II approached there was a significant change underway in civil-military relations. Public acceptance of first the early 20th century Progressive movement and later New Deal programs of the 1930’s was parleyed by President Franklin Roosevelt into an ability to fundamentally reshape military strategy and policy. Allan Millet postulates that Roosevelt’s action essentially made “civilian control (of the military) and Presidential leadership synonymous, thus reversing the traditional role of Congress as the ultimate authority in civil-military relations.” 16 Roosevelt’s unilateral acts included the transfer of the service planning agencies to the executive office of the President in July 1939; the activation of the National Guard in 1940; the permanent stationing of the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor, HI in 1940; the extension of full military assistance to the Allies in 1940; the exchange of bases for destroyers with Great Britain in 1940; the creation of Lend lease in 1940; the mobilization of the Philippine armed forces in 1941; and the commitment of the Navy to an undeclared anti-submarine war against Germany in 1941. 17 There was concern at the time that Roosevelt had gone too far in militarizing government activity in preparation for war. Writing in 1937, political scientist Harold Lasswell said, “if the existing emergency is permitted to careen from bad to worse, it may be doubted whether civilian institutions are equal to the strain. The upshot may be the rise of the garrison state to

17 Millett, “Civilian Control of the Military”, p. 25.
displace the civilian state.”¹⁸ In his preparations and conduct of the first four years of the war Roosevelt was largely able to both control the militarized state he created and reassure civilian leaders that it was not a permanent structure.

This consensus forged by Roosevelt among himself and military and Congressional leaders did not survive the war. By 1944, Congress was eager to regain some of its lost influence and the House of Representatives created a Select Committee on Post-War Military Policy in March 1944. This Committee’s first task was to investigate all matters of U.S. postwar military requirements.¹⁹ This Committee and its successors would provide the battleground for the services to argue for their specific requirements where in the past they would have gone directly to President Roosevelt. Allan Millett believes the establishment of this committee also caused senior commanders to really begin thinking about, “the long-term organizational implications of their current operations.”²⁰ In early 1944 Senator Harry Truman as chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Wartime Abuses was already asking questions that would significantly affect the postwar relationship between Congress, the President, and the military. Truman was already a unification supporter and would author an article for Collier’s Magazine in July 1944 entitled “Our Armed Forces Must Be Unified”. In hearings Truman asked, “would the “various „extra-curricular agencies” such as the War Production Board (WPB), Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Office of Strategic Services (OSS) continue in some permanent form after the war? If so would they be absorbed into regular

government departments or become new coordinating agencies? Would the federal government, particularly the office of the president continue to grow in power and authority? Or, would a more associative form of government organized around public and private coordinating structures (somewhat as envisioned by Herbert Hoover and his New Era Republicans before the Great Depression) re-emerge to provide corporatist mechanisms to administer postwar America?"²¹

Finally, service competition was further exacerbated by the very different lessons of the war drawn by the Army and Navy. The Pearl Harbor disaster represented a clear case of a lack of military cooperation, and following the lead of its British ally, the United States organized its operational forces along officially defined joint lines for the first time.²² In the European theater General Dwight Eisenhower was the supreme commander with deputies for land, air, and naval warfare. Eisenhower’s organization was also combined with that of British for a truly allied joint leadership. Combat in the European theater was primarily an air and land affair. The crucial Battle of the Atlantic against the threat of German U-boats was strictly a naval affair that Eisenhower did not command. Naval power played a critical role in the transportation of troops and supplies within the European command, but the beyond its U-boat operations, the German Navy did not offer significant resistance to Eisenhower’s operations.

The Pacific Theater was a different story. Unlike in the European theater, the Army and Navy could not agree on a supreme commander. President Roosevelt eventually compromised and made both General Douglas MacArthur and Admiral

Chester Nimitz regional operational commanders based in Australia and Pearl Harbor respectively. Unlike the war in Europe, the Pacific war was a sea/air conflict fought over great distances where naval carrier-based aircraft rather than Army land-based aircraft provided most of the air power. Unlike Europe, all components of U.S. naval power including air, surface and subsurface units saw extensive combat against their Japanese counterparts. Ground troops were transported to their objectives by the Navy and directly relied on naval logistics support throughout the Pacific campaign. The Marine Corps played a significant role, especially in amphibious operations.

The postwar leadership of all four services reflects their respective experience of war in the theater where they had the primary operational role. General Eisenhower and his subordinates returned from Europe to form the leadership of the postwar Army while Admiral Nimitz and his Pacific fleet commanders returned to form the postwar Navy leadership. General MacArthur, who despite some conflicts had a much closer relationship with naval commanders in his theater than Eisenhower, had with his naval component remained in Japan as the postwar military governor. The Marine Corps had a series of Commandants whose primary experience was amphibious war in the Pacific, and the Air Force’s perceived success in the strategic bombing of Germany and Japan led to a succession of Air Force Chiefs of Staff from the ranks of the long range bomber force. Each had a radically different experience in “joint” operations and these competing philosophies would play out in the struggles over integration of the armed forces that immediately follow the war’s conclusion.
Each of these service chiefs also wanted to retain as much of their wartime power as possible in the postwar world. Allan Millett states that, “The Second World War system allowed JCS (Joint Chiefs of Staff) members (heads of the respective military services) close access to their political superiors, provided them a forum for joint deliberations, and gave them unprecedented power over their services, which ensured their decisions did not go unexecuted.” In addition he writes, the system “profited from the fact that FDR and the Service Secretaries did not interfere with the field commanders.”

This combination of differing operational cultures; competition to employ new military capabilities; a civil-military relations competition between the executive and legislative branches and differing experiences of operations in the Second World War created a potentially difficult climate for defense unification measures. The wrangling over unification of the services would begin even before the guns of the Second World War spoke in anger.

Responding to German success in defeating France in 1940 through combined arms efforts, the Acting Secretary of the Navy Lewis Compton requested on 1 July 1940 that the General Board, a loose organization of senior Army and Navy officers created in 1903 to study missions involving both services undertake a defense reorganization study. Specifically he requested the board to undertake a study of, “the question of combining the present Army and Navy Air Arms and creating an entirely separate and independent Air Force,” and to submit comments and recommendations as to “whether or

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24 Barlow, p. 57.
not this would be in the interest of the National Defense of the United States."\textsuperscript{25} The General Board did not approve of the combination of air arms, but it did issue an extraordinary statement endorsing some unification of military command. Pointing to Germany’s success in achieving unity of command as an example, the board declared that, “the size of the U.S. armed forces and the scope of military operations in modern wars made it impossible for the President of the United States to carry out his functions as Commander in Chief without substantial help.”\textsuperscript{26}

In June 1941 the General Board again took the lead in the unification struggle, this time proposing a Joint General Staff for the United States with one officer at the top reporting to the President. Naval historian Jeffrey Barlow postulates that the Board was attempting to create a more structured system for integrated war planning.\textsuperscript{27} The proposal was sent to the two services’ war plans units for evaluation. Not surprisingly, the Army found the proposal completely reasonable while the Navy rejected it out of hand. The Army was especially happy with the proposal for a single commander responsible to the President, while the Navy was drawn to the concept of a more collegial forum where joint planning could be prepared and transmitted to theater commanders. The Navy was equally concerned that any Army officer selected for supreme command would be unfamiliar in the employment of naval forces. In the end, President Roosevelt chose a middle ground and approved the creation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) following the Arcadia Conference in January 1942 with senior British leadership in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack.

\textsuperscript{25} Barlow, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid, p. 58.
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid, p. 61.
Roosevelt repelled attempts to further alter the system, including several bills in the 77th Congress to create a National Defense Department with a single Secretary of War. The President took direct action against these calls for a single Department in a 21 July 1942 news conference where he took issue with a New York Times article entitled “Unity of Command” in support of this proposal. In his response FDR stated that the article’s premise that the nation had no joint planning staff was “completely false.” On the other hand when Admiral King and other members of the JCS encouraged Roosevelt to make the JCS permanent through legislative means, the President demurred, citing his belief that legalization “would provide no benefits and might in some way impair flexibility of operations” which historian David Jablonsky suspects means Roosevelt’s flexibility to organize his military advisory unit as he saw fit. Formal codification of the Joint Chiefs of Staff would wait until after the war ended, but it did not prevent senior officers and Congress from continuing to investigate the possibilities.

Experience through the first two years of war caused Army Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall to submit a formal service unification plan in 1943 that contained plans for one Secretary of War with sub-departments for ground, sea, and air forces and for supply. Marshall may have had ulterior motivation in his plan based on his experiences in his dealing with the Navy and Marine Corps, and the civilian U.S. government before World War II. From his earliest days in service Marshall apparently felt that the Army had been unfairly treated by the nation’s civilian leadership. In retirement in the 1950s he related that, when on his first active duty service in the

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Philippines in 1902 that, “In those far off days, the soldiers of the regular Army got little attention or consideration from the Government or the Public.”

He reported to Brigadier General McPalmer in August 1927 that while serving in China with U.S. Marine Corps Expeditionary Unit under command of General Smedley Butler, Marines refused to use perfectly well-researched Army maps and insisted on mapping the terrain themselves. This, he told McPalmer was “a sample of the impossibility of cooperation between the services even on the smallest matter, when remote from the influence of the Joint Board.”

He told Navy Commander Admiral Ernest King”s chief of staff Rear Admiral Charles Cooke in 1943 that unification was necessary because, “in peacetime the Army had been unable to obtain its proper share of the military budget, this because the Navy always received a disproportionately large share.”

James Forrestal reported that while in conversation with Marshall, the General said, “the Navy was a „popular” service because it gave it to people to believe that it would keep war away from this country, and it always had more visible appeal that the Army had,” and further “there wasn’t much sex appeal to promenading over an Army post and watching soldiers spade up the garden.”

He was also frustrated that he frequently had to ask President Roosevelt, a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy and aficionado of all things maritime, to ”please not refer to the Army as „them” and to the Navy as „us.”

Whatever his true motive, Marshall

29 Dorwalt, p 71.
31 Barlow, p. 65.
32 Ibid, p. 87.
33 Jablonsky, p. 135.
would become a powerful advocate for unification in the immediate aftermath of the war.

Admiral King was completely opposed to unification. Jeffrey Barlow believes this to be a combination of fear that the a unified Department of War would undercut Navy budgets, and also that the very aggressive Army Air Force, currently campaigning for its upgrade to a separate service, would attempt to subsume Navy and Marine Corps aviation assets to strengthen its standing vis-à-vis the other services.\(^{34}\) Eventually the services agreed to a JCS special commission to gather information and undertake, “a detailed study and recommendation to the Joint Chiefs of Staff as to the most efficient, practicable organization of those parts of the executive branch….which are primarily concerned with national defense.”\(^{35}\)

This group, led by retired Navy Admiral J.O. Richardson, was created in May 1944.\(^{36}\) The committee interviewed senior officers throughout the Washington D.C. area, and then travelled overseas to meet with senior operational commanders in the field. The committee was empowered to ask questions on the validity of multiple defense organizations for the postwar world with differing levels of unification. Surprisingly, there was broad consensus for some unification in the form of a strong JCS, unified theater commanders, and for steps to create an independent Air Force. Army senior officers generally favored the concept of a single powerful Chief of Staff who commanded the others and reported directly to the President, but had some hesitation over a separate Air Force, or the American public’s view of this arrangement. General

\(^{34}\) Barlow pp 65-66.

\(^{35}\) Barlow p.74.

\(^{36}\) Ibid.
Mark Clark, commander of the Fifth Army in Italy, for example, thought the arrangement was good for the armed forces, but wondered whether the American people would accept the concept of such a high-ranking officer second only to the President. General Eisenhower, as expected, wholeheartedly supported the concept, but was not clear in his response whether the senior leader should be a military officer or a civilian.

Overall, according to David Jablonsky “with the exception of its chairman, the committee was in favor of a single department system of organization for the U.S. armed forces. That view, the report began “was supported by „Generals of the Army MacArthur and Eisenhower, Fleet Admiral Nimitz, and Admiral Halsey” as well as the great majority of the Army officers and almost exactly half of the Navy officers.” Furthermore, the report expressed support for,

The appointment of a secretary of armed forces who reported directly to the president and whose responsibilities would include budget preparation and general administration. Under the secretary would be a commander of the armed forces, in charge of the three services operating as coequal arms. This officer would also act as chief of staff to the president and would be in charge of strategic planning and direction of military operations under unified commanders in the field. The service chiefs would provide advice to the president on broad issues of general strategy and the budget, but they would not have any operational authority, which would be reserved for the commander of the armed forces.

Navy leadership, specifically Commander in Chief (COMINCH) Admiral King and Navy Secretary James Forrestal were skeptical of the Richardson Commission’s report. The report appeared to say that unification had already been decided, rather than proposed. Richardson published his own rebuttal to the unification conclusion stating, “there is real danger that one component will be seriously affected by the decisions of

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37 Jablonsky p. 134.
one man to the detriment of the effectiveness of the armed forces as a whole.” Admiral King further stated that Nimitz and Halsey’s views had not been properly reported and sent the naval member of the commission who had agreed with unification to a particularly arduous assignment in the South Pacific. It does appear that Nimitz and Halsey’s views may have been misrepresented. Nimitz and Halsey’s written testimony indicate both Admirals had no “fear” as they both put it of a supreme commander of armed forces that was not from their own service. Both were operational commanders and it seems plain that no commander would turn down a shorter chain of command between the President and themselves, or reject freedom from their service chief to organize, train, and equip their forces and they best saw fit. The commission’s report was accepted by the JCS, but no further action was taken on its recommendations.

The importance of the Richardson Commission was that it created a rallying point for both pro and anti-reformists. For the Army and Army Air Force, it demonstrated what they had believed since 1940 that unification of the armed forces under a single commander was logical, and when the question was put to officers leading unified forces in the field they would agree. It was even more important for the Navy and Marine Corps. It would serve to create a partnership between admirals determined to protect their services’ operational freedom, and corporate leaders working for the government. These corporate leaders would produce an effective competing strategic military organization and set the stage for conflict between services and systems in the immediate postwar era.

39 Barlow p. 83.
40 Jablonsky p. 135.
41 Barlow p. 82.
The surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 had galvanized Congressional and public opinion toward a postwar defense organization that would prevent another such surprise attack. The fact that a future enemy might also be able to use an atomic weapon delivered by long-range bomber made the desire to create a more stable postwar defense structure more urgent. *Life Magazine* proclaimed in 1945 how large has the subject of security grown, “larger than a combined Army and Navy.”\(^{42}\) The question was now not one of if unification of the armed forces would take place, but how much integration would be done and how much time would it take to accomplish. Congressional hearings on unification in 1944 led by Representative Clifton Woodrum (D, VA) had left Navy leadership concerned that the Army had gotten ahead in the unification struggle and Forrestal countered by commissioning his friend and wartime chief of the Army and Navy munitions Board Ferdinand Eberstadt to produce what Forrestal called a, ”positive and constructive recommendation.”\(^{43}\)

Forrestal and Eberstadt were representatives of the nation’s elite business class of Wall Street bankers, lawyers, and financiers called to Washington in 1940 as Franklin Roosevelt sought familiar friends from New York to begin mobilizing the nation for participation in the Second World War. Forrestal knew Eberstadt from their days as students at Princeton University and through mutual business acquaintances. Roosevelt used Forrestal to recruit other business professionals for war mobilization work. These executives “mobilized” for war organization were referred to as “dollar a year” men who served the national interest in return for no compensation. These men created a

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\(^{42}\) Jablonsky p.142.

\(^{43}\) Barlow p. 86.
competing class of government official in stark contrast to Roosevelt’s New Deal liberal intellectuals. Forrestal and Eberstadt, with their experience in the corporate and finance world, favored a decentralized corporate structure for government agencies as opposed to the single line of communication common in military structures.

When Navy Secretary Frank Knox died suddenly in April 1944, his deputy Forrestal succeeded to the position. He was almost immediately caught up in the unification struggle as the Woodrum Committee hearings continued and the Richardson Commission began its interviews of senior officers. Roosevelt’s death the following year deeply distressed Forrestal in that FDR was probably the Navy’s best defense against the unification movement. His successor Vice President Harry Truman had become an outspoken exponent of unification through his Senate service on Committees designed to prevent military service duplication of capabilities. Truman’s Army National Guard service in the First World War and his association with the Guard in the interwar period clearly placed him in the pro-unification camp. Forrestal was also extremely concerned over the Richardson Commission’s final report and directed senior naval officers to prepare an alternative plan.

According to historian Jeffrey Dorwart, Forrestal framed his opposition to department unification in terms of naval interests but also in ideological ones. He realized that, “the debate meant a struggle for the “system of coordinated and focused government action” against the continued centralization of state authority begun by the New Deal that could lead to socialism and dictatorship.”45 This put Forrestal in direct opposition to

44 Dorwart, p.31.
unification advocates like Eisenhower who while serving in the War Plans division just before the war said, “for two years here I have been called „dictator Ike” because I believe that virtual dictatorship must be exercised by the President, things are not going to take an upturn until more power is centered in one man”s hands.”

Forrestal was determined to oppose this system and in May 1945 he asked his old friend Eberstadt to help him in crafting an alternative to the Army plan advocated in the Richardson Commission. Forrestal specifically wanted to know 1) whether the single department, 2) reorganization of the current establishment, or 3) the creation of new structures would provide the best means of national security. Admiral King did not entirely trust the Wall Street lawyer”s judgment of national security affairs, but supported his efforts.

Eberstadt recruited a number of experts and spent four months analyzing the Army plan and crafting a response. He was especially influenced by the work of Harvard University”s Vice Chairman of the Graduate School of Public Administration E. Pendelton Herring, whose 1941 book *The Impact of War, Our American Democracy Under Arms* played a significant role in Eberstadt”s final report, as well as the works of Harold Lasswell on the garrison state, Hans Speier”s on class structure and total war, and Harold Laski”s study of the impact of war on the modern state. The goal would be a system that would allowed the United States to mobilize for total war without destroying individual freedoms and private enterprise. Political and economic needs would have to be balanced in any long-term structure considered since in practice the United States only

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46 Jablonsky p. 25.
47 Dorwart p. 93.
48 Ibid, pp. 96-97.
adopted measures like these in wartime and when crises passed, emergency agencies were abandoned.\textsuperscript{49}

Eberstadt also surveyed a wide cross-section of industry, legal, academic, and journalistic elites on the subject of defense unification. Eberstadt’s final report rejected unification. Its opening remarks would be used throughout the Cold War by unification opponents to describe the fundamental problems they saw in associating so much power under the control of so few:

Military efficiency is not the only condition that should influence the form of our post-war military organization. To be acceptable, any such organization must fall within the framework of our traditions and customs. It must be of such size and nature as to command public support. It must be aimed at curing the weaknesses disclosed in the late wars. And finally, it must be conducive to fostering those policies and objectives which contribute to the service and protection of our national security.\textsuperscript{50}

In its place he advocated for the creation of an independent Air Force, and a National Security Council and a National Security Resources Board, both composed of civilian professionals to ease tensions between the military departments, and advise the Joint Chiefs and the President. The first Executive Secretary of the National Security Council, Admiral Sidney Souers recalled years later that, “I felt strongly that the unification plan (proposed by Eberstadt) adopted was better than the Army plan. There is no question in my opinion that the Eberstadt report was effective as it was well thought out and provided a definite plan for unification instead of a merger.”\textsuperscript{51}

\textsuperscript{49}Dorwart p. 97.
\textsuperscript{50}John Lehman, Papers of Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman, Operational Archives Branch, Naval Historical Center, Washington D.C., Extracts compiled by BGEN J.D. Hittle on defense reorganization history, 1982.
\textsuperscript{51}Barlow p. 86.
General Marshall did not approve of the proposed corporate structure. In Congressional testimony on the respective plans for unification in late 1945 he commented that, “committees are at best cumbersome agencies, especially when the membership holds loyalty and advancement to chiefs installed in completely separate governmental departments.”

Despite strong support from President Truman, unification bills in both 1945 and 1946 failed to report out of committee, primarily due to navy resistance. A potential compromise piece of legislation, the Senate Thomas-Hill-Austin bill (S. 2044) that included elements of both the Army plan and the Eberstadt report failed to get Navy support. Much of the Navy’s resistance came from concurrent discussions over a report issued by the Joint Strategic Survey Committee of the JCS that was also mentioned in S. 2044 which attempted to begin determination on postwar missions for each service, notably which services would employ aircraft and what missions those aircraft might undertake. The arguments and counter-arguments over service missions sounded throughout continuing Congressional testimony. The Commandant of the Marine Corps and veteran of Guadalcanal General Alexander Vandegrift stated in testimony that, “the very existence of the Marine Corps stood as a continuing affront to the Army staff.” Eisenhower, then on overseas travel for General Marshall responded angrily, suggesting the Army should not “dignify” that accusation with a response, but added that the Army had an equally impressive list of amphibious operations in Sicily, Italy, and Normandy.

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52 Barlow, p. 87.
53 Ibid, p. 91.
54 Jablonsky p. 155.
that did not include any Marines.\textsuperscript{55} Traditional Navy defenders in the House were also quick to join the fray. House Naval Affairs Committee Chairman Carl Vinson called the proposed legislation a plan to “sink the Navy,” and that the idea of a single Chief of Staff “smacks of the Germany of the Kaiser and Hitler, and of Japanese militarism.”\textsuperscript{56}

In early 1946 cooler thinking prevailed. Truman lost some of his enthusiasm for the concept of the all powerful Chief of Staff, commenting to Army Secretary Robert Patterson that, “it was too much along the lines of the ‘man on horseback’ philosophy.”\textsuperscript{57} Eisenhower too could be conciliatory. He told Patterson that while he continued to be in favor of the single Chief of Staff, “he was not prepared to jump into the ditch and die for it.” \textsuperscript{58} The Senate publication of its Joint Investigation of the Pearl Harbor disaster in July 1946, with an entire section on failures in unity of command probably stimulated Truman into more aggressive action to end the standoff over unification.\textsuperscript{59} Truman ordered Secretary of War Robert Patterson and Forrestal to propose a joint plan to which both services agreed. He suggested to Forrestal over the phone that if the Navy would not go along at least with a single Secretary and an independent Air Force he would, “transfer naval aviation to the Air Force and the Marine Corps to the Army.”\textsuperscript{60} After six months of negotiation, the two service secretaries presented Truman a compromise agreement on 16 January 1947.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{55} Jablonsky, p. 155.  
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid, p. 153.  
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid, p. 156.  
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{59} Jablonsky, p. 159  
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid, p. 157.  
\textsuperscript{61} Barlow p. 92.
The agreement passed by Congress as the National Security Act of 1947 created a National Military Establishment that included three separate military services; the Army, Navy, and newly independent Air Force; a Joint Chiefs of Staff composed of senior service heads, and superior to them, three service secretaries; and above all, a cabinet-level Secretary of Defense responsible for all service matters to the President. 62

This agreement, however, was only the beginning of the defense unification struggle. The arguments presented during Congressional testimony in 1945 and 1946 hardened service positions that would remain near-constant for the next 35 years. In the Navy’s view in particular the Army was considered always out to take over the Marine Corps while the Air Force was always plotting how to take away the Navy’s aviation assets. New weapons and new combat capabilities strained the cooperation of the new Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Service Secretaries, and the new Defense Secretary James Forrestal. Nuclear weapons had turned the concept of war on its head and the services were struggling with how they would adapt to a nuclear era of warfare.

The newly minted Air Force desired to appropriate strategic air warfare and nuclear weapons in its sphere of control. It also opposed Navy efforts to produce a large aircraft carrier capable of launching its own nuclear weapon-capable aircraft. Barlow indicates this was not a simple budget contest. The Navy had read the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey compiled by the Army Air Force and had come to a different conclusion. Barlow argues that navy strategic planners working on the preparation of the Joint War Plans began to compare the Air Force’s projected strategic air offensive with its assumptions about available overseas bases, especially the United Kingdom, the

62 Jablonsky p. 157
ability to penetrate Soviet air defenses, and many other issues, they began to express serious concerns about the viability of the air offensive.\textsuperscript{63} The Navy also opposed on pure moral grounds the Air Force’s plans to intentionally target enemy civilian population centers. The result was a draft Navy plan in 1948 to offer precision-nuclear strike ability in tandem with Air Force strategic bombing plans.\textsuperscript{64} These competing Navy and Air Force views of strategic operations became a budget contest between the proposed new large Navy Aircraft Carrier, \textit{USS United States} and the Air Force B-36 strategic bomber as to which provided the most war fighting capability against Soviet air defenses in a period of falling defense budgets.

The Navy and Air Force also struggled over how much land-based aviation each would control, including aircraft controlled by the Marine Corps. Secretary of Defense Forrestal held two off-site conferences in 1948; one in Key West, FLA and one in Newport, RI, away from the pressures of Washington D.C. in an attempt to get the Chiefs to reach an agreement. The Navy was very happy with Key West and Newport agreements, since both conference reports preserved Navy and Marine Corps aviation assets as they were. The Air Force on the other hand was very unhappy since, although the Air Force was given control of “strategic” air operations, the Navy was still permitted to participate in the strategic air effort, including the delivery of nuclear weapons at determined by the JCS.\textsuperscript{65} The Air Force eventually and very grudgingly agreed at the Newport conference to allow for naval nuclear weapon use, but continued its public

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid, p.110.
\textsuperscript{65} Barlow, \textit{Hot War to Cold}, p. 187.
campaign to be the only service qualified to use them. Both events failed to produce consensus and further degenerated into Air Force claims that strategic nuclear warfare alone was the only method of combat worth planning for in the postwar period.

This inter-service bickering over missions and requirements took a toll on the health of Defense Secretary Forrestal who became less effective and extremely depressed. President Truman was unhappy with Forrestal’s slide in performance, and fired him on 28 January 1949.\textsuperscript{66} Before leaving office, Forrestal admitted to the President that the concept that created the National Military Establishment (NME) was in need of overhaul. He could not enforce budget discipline, nor could he get help from the service chiefs to determine roles and missions. He officially departed office on 28 March 1949 and died two months later, an apparent suicide by leaping out a Bethesda Naval Hospital window.\textsuperscript{67}

Forrestal’s successor, Louis Johnson, a former Army officer from World War I and former executive of the company that built the B-36 bomber, further antagonized the Navy and Marine Corps by cancelling the aircraft carrier \textit{USS United States} just three weeks after assuming the office of Secretary of Defense at the end of March 1949.\textsuperscript{68} Navy Secretary John Sullivan resigned in protest. The replacement of Sullivan by inexperienced newcomer Francis Matthews weakened the Navy’s overall position as an opposing force to the Air Force B-36 just as House Armed Services Committee Chairman Vinson opened hearings on the B-36 and by implication the large aircraft carrier.

\textsuperscript{66} Barlow, \textit{From Hot War to Cold}, p. 201
\textsuperscript{67} Ibid, p. 201.
Unification issues would also be on the table with the Air Force arguing for unification of all strategic, nuclear weapon-armed aircraft under its control. The Navy sought to counter Air Force strategic unification claims and set up a research office (OP-23) within the office of the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Administration office, headed by Arleigh Burke to be a “Clearing House” for the Navy on unification issues.69

The Air Force was extremely successful in arguing that its B-36 bomber was the right choice for strategic nuclear warfare. Secretary Matthews and CNO Admiral Louis Denfield were weak in arguing the Navy’s position. The Soviet detonation of their own first nuclear device on 29 August 1949 gave Congress and the President extra incentive to solve the issue as to which service or services would be the right choice to employ atomic weapons.70 The President and Secretary of Defense also got some much needed help in managing the NME when Congress passed a series of amendments to the National Security Act of 1947 in August 1949.71 Ferdinand Eberstadt, Forrestal’s original point man on defense reorganization, conducted extensive negotiations between the Air Force and the Navy that made adoption of the amendments possible. Congress renamed the NME the Department of Defense, and significantly strengthened the office of the Secretary of Defense by placing all of the service secretaries under his direct control. The Defense Secretary alone reported to the President for all military matters. The civilian Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), received an augment in personnel. The services retained limited power to appeal their case directly to Congress as a check against the President. Congress further empowered the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs by

69 Barlow, Revolt of the Admirals, p.168.  
70 Barlow, Hot War to Cold, p. 233.  
71 Jablonsky p. 178.
assigning him to preside over all JCS meetings, and permitting him a direct line of communication to the Defense Secretary and the President if the chiefs could not agree on a particular issue.\textsuperscript{72} The amendment stopped short of Truman’s desire to make the Chairman the President’s Principal Military Advisor, and did not lift the cap on the number of officers that could be assigned to the JCS staff.

Congressman Vinson a longtime friend of the Navy, wanted to postpone the sea service’s response to the ongoing B-36 hearings to give it a better chance to prepare. Actions however by a disgruntled Naval aviator named Captain John Crommelin, who thought his service wasn’t doing enough to protect naval aviation upset Vinson’s plan by leaking internal Navy documents critical of B-36. In what became known as, “the revolt of the Admirals,” multiple senior officers from all four services were drawn into a vicious war of words and Vinson’s hearings became a circus.\textsuperscript{73} Past CNOs Earnest King, Chester Nimitz, and future CNO Captain Arleigh Burke argued that naval superiority was threatened. Vice CNO Admiral Radford called the Air Force B-36 strategy “childish,” and said the B-36 was a weapon to be used in “mass killings of civilians.”\textsuperscript{74} Air Force Chief of Staff Hoyt Vandenberg said the Navy’s primary role was now fighting submarines and it did not need large aircraft carriers for that mission. The current Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Omar Bradley got into the fight as well by calling

\textsuperscript{72} Jablonsky p. 177.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid, p. 157.
the Marines “fancy dans” and charged that the days of amphibious warfare, such as seen in the Pacific war were over.\footnote{Michael T. Isenberg,} 

Although the work of the Navy’s OP-23 office was tarnished by the activities of Crommelin, enough Congressmen were convinced to support the Navy view that unification would not solve all the problems of the post World War II era.\footnote{Barlow,} In particular the Navy convinced Vinson to continue support for its opposition to unification. Jeffrey Barlow quotes a \textit{Saturday Evening Post} interview with Vinson just six months before the B-36 hearings where he stated that, “the only way we can really and immediately bring our superiority (against the Soviet Union) to bear is by air.”\footnote{Ibid,} Vinson’s support would prove crucial for the Navy when President Dwight Eisenhower began what would be the final significant defense reorganization movement before the 1980s.

The last significant defense reorganization legislation before the 1980s was the series of defense reforms supported by President Eisenhower in 1953 and 1958. Eisenhower had been the Army Chief of Staff from 1945 to 1948 and been invaluable to both President Truman and General Marshall in stating the Army view of defense reorganization that resulted in the National Security Act of 1947. The concepts of teamwork and adherence to a unitary chain of command had served the President well as the Supreme Allied Commander Europe during the war, as Army Chief of Staff, and as the first North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military commander.
Eisenhower had some success in pushing his concepts for unification in his first term as President. In February 1953, his Secretary of Defense, former General Motors executive Charles Wilson appointed a committee headed by then head of the International Development Advisory Board Nelson Rockefeller to study possible improvements in government structures, notably Defense. The biggest outcome of the Rockefeller Commission was to make the first effort to remove the JCS from the Chain of Command and focus their efforts as a “unified planning agency.” The Rockefeller Commission further recommended making the JCS Chairman responsible for managing the Joint Staff, a nudge in the direction of Eisenhower’s long-desired supreme Chief of Staff. It also augmented the powers of the Secretary of Defense by adding 6 additional assistant secretaries and a general consul to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) staff.\textsuperscript{78}

In his Organization Plan 6 proposed in April 1953 Eisenhower sought to give more power to the JCS Chairman by making that officer responsible directly managing the Joint Staff and its flag-level director. Eisenhower’s stated objective was to relieve the “clearly overworked” Joint Chiefs but in his memoirs he was more direct stating that, “my objective, was to take a least one step in divorcing the thinking and the outlook of the Joint Staff from those of their parent organization.”\textsuperscript{79} The President’s critics in Congress were not impressed. Representative Clare Hoffman (R/PA), Chairman of the House Government Operations Committee reviewing Eisenhower’s legislation scoffed at the idea that President was not still bent on creating a “Prussian-type military chief of


\textsuperscript{79}Jablonsky p. 228.
staff.” Hoffman stated, “I believe the „Man on Horseback” is well on the road and riding fast.”

The House of Representatives defeated Organization Plan 6 by a vote of 235-108, but since neither it nor the Senate had taken negative action within 60 days, the plan became effective anyway.

The combination of the new Department of Defense, new Presidential security entities such as the National Security Council, and new methods of strategic and operational planning associated with nuclear weapons had radically altered the security landscape by 1958. The most obvious change was what Allan Millett called, “the number of political appointees and civil servants who dealt with routine business that would have been defined as „service matters” before World War II”. Reinforced by a sense of victory in 1953 Eisenhower sought a significant advance in defense reorganization in 1958. The JCS had looked at its own organization in 1955. In 1957 the Chiefs established a committee led by Army Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff and future JCS Chairman Major General Earle Wheeler. Most notably it recommended a return of “executive agency responsibilities for the unified and specified commands to members of the JCS” and a return to the pre-1949 concept of the Defense Secretary without a significant staff.

Eisenhower rejected this trend. In November 1957 he hosted the Joint Chiefs for dinner and subsequent informal summit in the White House Red Room. The President said the public felt “deeply concerned” by “rivalry within the military establishment” and he

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80 Jablonsky p. 229.
thought this was due to military concern for individual services rather than national security on the whole? The Chiefs vigorously disagreed. Competition was good and not “harmful rivalry” replied Air Force Chief of Staff General Thomas White. Admiral Burke, the CNO argued that “JCS disagreements did not happen because of service connections” but rather” because of the individual experiences of the JCS members.” Burke concluded by saying that “complex issues did not have easy answers” and that the collective experience of the Chiefs was better in decision-making. These disagreements between Eisenhower and his JCS members may have been more the President’s problem than that of his senior uniformed advisers. Foreign affairs analyst and journalist Mark Perry writes that Eisenhower would “remain obsessed by the notion that military disagreement over his budget proposals (among other issues) constituted disloyalty, or, even worse, disrespect for the idea of civilian control over military affairs.” This could be interpreted as though Eisenhower sought to treat his chiefs much as he treated his subordinate commanders in World War II rather than as four star senior officers in their own right who might offer advice that contradicted the President’s own ideas.

Despite his failure to convince the Chiefs of the soundness of his proposal, the President pressed ahead with his plans for major reform in early 1958. Eisenhower proposed a unitary chain of command that ran from the President, to the Secretary of Defense, and from there, directly to the geographic Commanders in Chief (CINCs) of

84 Jablonsky p.267.
85 Ibid, p. 268.
86 Ibid.
U.S. forces stationed around the world. The addition of nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles made a defined chain of command vital in ensuring Presidential management and employment of nuclear weapons in wartime. The JCS would serve as a staff to support the Secretary of Defense. The service secretaries and Chiefs were to be removed from the chain of command. Eisenhower also wanted the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs to have a vote in the Chief’s decision-making policy, something the Chief did not have. Each Chief was to be required to place his service responsibilities below those of his joint mission, and delegate his service work to a subordinate if required.

Congress approved nearly all of President Eisenhower’s requests, partially on their own merit, and partially on the President’s own immense military prestige. It did, however, specifically limit the size of the Joint Staff, and required that, “the Joint Staff shall not operate or be organized as an overall Armed Forces General Staff and shall have no executive authority.” This was done in response to some critics, namely the Commandant of the Marine Corps who testified that a strengthened Joint Staff might morph into a Prussian-style General Staff, one of the generally accepted key villains of both Imperial Japan and Nazi Germany. Congress also refused the President’s request to remove the Joint Chiefs’ right to appear before Congress in support of their respective service budgets. With this act in 1958, defense reorganization reform debate continued, but no further sweeping changes were proposed until the early 1980s.

88 Jablonsky pp. 278-279.
89 Ibid, p. 279.
90 Lederman p. 22.
91 Lederman, p. 22.
92 Ibid.
How had early defense reorganization reform efforts established the respective sides for the arguments over the Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986? The reform side, with significant Army and Air Force support were advocates of a unitary chain of command, and a strong Chairman of the JCS advising the President and Defense Secretary in directing the nation’s globally deployed forces via the regional CINCs. Ground and air operations are the decisive fields of action and maritime operations are supportive in nature. Its proving ground was Eisenhower’s command in the Second World War in Europe where German and Italian armies and air forces were the primary opposition. Its guiding intellectual lights had been General Marshall, and General and President Eisenhower.

The anti-reform camp The Navy and Marine Corps had a much different view of defense reform. The maritime services were the heirs to a long tradition of decentralized control where individual commanders far from the seat of power exercised authority on their best judgment, often without the benefit or hazard of direction from Washington. Naval and Marine Corps officers knew that they were the nation’s first line of defense and attack. Army and Air Force officers did not understand naval operations and could not command in the maritime environment. The Pacific War of 1941-1945 was the basis for Naval strategic art, an area of vast distances were armies and air forces mattered little outside their limited shore-based envelopes. Maritime battle was paramount, because armies could not land and airfields could not be established unless the Navy and Marine Corps first secured a beachhead. The maritime forces intellectual leaders had been the Admirals that won the great Pacific war, the admirals who “revolted” against the B-36,
and civilians like Eberstadt and Forrestal who articulated to Congress why the sea
services needed a decentralized command structure.

The military conflicts between 1959 and mid 1980s would turn many of these
concepts on their heads. The growth of the civilian defense establishment and willingness
of multiple Cold War President’s to rely on its judgment over that of senior uniformed
officers would push the JCS further away from the center of national security decision-
making. Separated from the forces they nominally commanded by layers of civilian
defense bureaucrats, the JCS would be less effective in their command and control during
a series of less than successful military operations in the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s.
Systems analysis methods pioneered in the Defense Department in the 1960s would be
brought to bear on the question of how best to organize the nation’s top military
leadership. Finally, congressional demands for action in the wake of perceived
operational and budgetary problems in the Pentagon would result in serious consideration
for another round of defense reorganization reform.
CHAPTER 2: 1980-1985: MOMENTUM FOR REORGANIZATION

The start of the 1980s would also be the beginning of the most successful defense reform movement since that of the late 1940s that created the postwar U.S. military organization. The new reform spirit came from multiple directions. Failure to win the Vietnam War and a series of subsequent military operations that either failed, or had serious operational problems stimulated members of Congress, the executive branch, and the serving military to propose reforms to the nation’s military command hierarchy. Many of these individuals had been trained in systems analysis procedures popularized during the term of Robert S. McNamara as Secretary of Defense and would employ these measures in their analysis.

The start of the presidency of Ronald Reagan in 1981 was also a cause of the defense reform movement. The large military buildup advocated by the President caused many instances of cost overruns and other waste of funds in the defense budget. Reformers that came together to combat defense budget waste would later be a source of support in reform of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS).

A series of military problems and outright disasters served to reawaken desire for defense reorganization reform both in Congress and in the ranks of senior officers in the Pentagon. The lessons of the Vietnam War were different, depending on which group or organization compiled them. One of the most persistent lessons from the ranks of the executive branch was a lack of cohesive recommendations and poor decision-making on the part of the Joint Chiefs at each stage of escalation of U.S. military involvement. This
interpretation is well chronicled in works such as then Lieutenant Colonel H.R. McMaster’s *Dereliction of Duty*.

The inability of defense secretary McNamara in the presidential administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson to promote conditions for victory in the Vietnam conflict had soured many elements of the Washington D.C. bureaucracy against him. His disciples in systems analysis-based management however continued to find favor and employment in government. Systems analysts working in both the Department of Defense and as Congressional staffers had played a key role in implementing McNamara’s Planning, Programming, and Budgeting system (PPBS) in 1963 and sought to create a similar system to improve the process of decision-making in the JCS.

Potential reformers also identified a series of intelligence and special operations failures from 1968 to 1980 as proof of a need for reform. This included the North Korean capture of the intelligence ship *USS Pueblo* in January 1968, the rescue operation mounted to save the American crew of the merchant ship *Mayaguez* from Khmer Rouge naval forces in May 1975, and finally the failed rescue attempt of the U.S. embassy hostages being held by Iranian revolutionary elements in Tehran in April 1980 (*Operation Eagle Claw*).

In each of these cases, critics identified the upper echelons of the U.S. military command structure as the source of problems ultimately leading to operational failure in each case.

The election of Ronald Reagan to the presidency in November 1980 also helped to restart the defense reform movement. Reagan’s plan to increase military spending to

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94 Lederman pp. 29-31.
restore U.S. military superiority over the Soviet Union spawned a number of groups in favor of and opposed to his military spending proposals. One that sought to draw Democrats and Republicans together to make the right choices in defense spending was the Congressional Military Reform Caucus, founded by Senators Gary Hart and Representative William Whitehurst (R/VA) in 1981. In a *Wall Street Journal* article Hart stated that not only budgetary concerns, but also “non-budgetary problems that, although not related to defense spending, relate directly to winning and losing wars.”

Hart and Whitehurst’s group grew to over 100 members of the House and 30 Senators by 1986 and provided a useful venue for pro-defense members of both parties to build support for defense spending, but also a bipartisan caucus where they could criticize elements of waste, fraud, and abuse generated by the Pentagon in the course of the Reagan defense buildup. This group would eventually prove crucial in mobilizing support for the Goldwater Nichols legislation in 1985 and 1986.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General David Jones, United States Air Force (USAF), is credited with the opening move of the 1980s defense reform movement. He testified before the House Armed Services Committee on February 8, 1982 that the year before he had undertaken a study to review options for the reform of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Nearly eight years in both senior service and joint positions had convinced Jones that the JCS system as it stood in 1982 was broken. In his testimony

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97 Locher p. 33.
Jones stated that significant organizational change would be required although not all of it need be legislative in character.98

Jones had served as Air Force Chief of Staff (COS) from 1974 to 1978, and in 1982 was serving in his final term as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS.) He had begun his career as a bomber pilot in the Second World War and risen methodically through the ranks. He had served as an aide to Strategic Air Command (SAC) Commander General Curtis LeMay in 1955 and held significant operational commands including that of the NATO Fourth Allied Tactical Air Force before his appointment as Air Force COS. Jones essentially picked up the arguments in favor of a single powerful Chief of Staff where they were left in 1958. Service Chiefs were concerned only with their own service and could not really be trusted to offer non-biased advice. Only the person of a strong Chairman, with a staff loyal to him or her alone could break this supposed deadlock and deliver efficient timely advice to the President. While Jones’ proposals were not new, he added one element to his call for reform in that he publically advocated the concept of efficiency over the traditional U.S. democratic process.

In the section of his “Why the Joint Chiefs of Staff Must Change” article entitled “Roots of the Problem,” Jones stated,

The roots of enforced diffusion of military authority can be traced to a period which precedes the founding of the republic. The Continental Congress distrusted standing armies and military heroes, even with George Washington in command, established multiple checks on his authority. The separation of powers and civilian control of the military have appropriately become deeply embedded in our culture, both in law and in custom as well as in the attitudes of our military professionals. In many cases however, the mechanisms erected to exercise such

98 Locher, p. 36.
controls have had the unintended effect of permitting, and often promoting serious organizational deficiencies.99

Jones may also have had personal reasons for advocating for a more robust structure. In his 2007 memoir, former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral James Holloway related that Jones, while serving as Air Force Chief of Staff, had been forced to assume the duties of Acting Chairman during the Mayaguez crisis of May 1975 while the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General George Brown was in Europe attending a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) conference. Holloway claimed that, “Apparently the President had been frustrated to the point of dissatisfaction with Jones” handling of the crisis. First, Jones was late in getting to the White House to meet with the Security Council. His reason (given) was that the stock photos he had wanted for his briefing were not „properly mounted.” Then, according to Bill Clements (then Deputy Secretary of Defense) instead of proposing a course of action, Jones asked the President what he wanted the Chairman to do. Whatever the reason, Ford did not want to see Jones again as acting chairman again and told Clements to have me take over.”100 Perhaps Jones attributed the negative aspects of this encounter with President Ford to poor JCS and Joint Staff organization.

Jones’ article and testimony may have been a surprise to members of Congress, but not to defense professionals in Washington D.C. In an October 1981 memo to Secretary of the Navy John Lehman, Brigadier General Don Hittle, USMC (ret),


Counselor to the Secretary alerted Lehman to Jones’ actions. He stated that, “you may recall that the Chairman (Jones), JCS, and a small group [former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Management and Readiness William] Brehm, and senior retired generals and one retired Navy Flag officer are examining possible ways to increase the Chairman’s authority. Bill Brehm was a good numbers man in systems analysis, but his credentials in defense organizations are dubious at best.” The memo concludes with “this whole operation is loaded with potential trouble for the Navy and Marine Corps, yet it is being handled, and viewed by some, in a too casual manner.” 101

Jones’ testimony and an article by the Army Chief of Staff General Edward Meyer that advocated replacing the JCS with a body of retired senior officers to advise the President prompted the House Investigations Subcommittee led by Representative Richard White (D, TX) to hold hearings from April through August 1982. Many of those testifying including Jones and Meyer advocated reform, but could not concur on what direction it should take. 102 Others including Army General Donn Starry, the Commander of the Army Readiness Command and innovator behind the joint Army/Air Force AirLand Battle Concept were opposed to many of Jones’ proposals. 103 While Starry agreed that the JCS “was unable or unwilling to set relevant military missions designed to support national political goals,” and “needed to become involved „at the front end” of the budget process,” he was happy with the current level of authority for the Chairman. 104

101 Papers of John F. Lehman, Box 4, 1-3, memo from J.D. Hittle to Secretary of the Navy, subject: Defense Organization, 22 October 1981.
102 Lederman p. 54.
Starry went on to note that, “the perceived need for unanimity, which has been frequently criticized, is self-imposed and may be corrected without need for new legislation.” He concluded by “categorically rejecting” any reform that separated a service chief from the strategy planning arena.

The White Committee produced a modest reorganization bill, House Resolution (H.R.) 6954 that passed the House of Representatives in September 1982, but died soon after when the powerful head of the Senate Armed Services Committee John Tower (R, TX) refused to authorize a similar Senate bill. Tower was believed to be a strong candidate for the position of Secretary of Defense in 1984, when the incumbent Secretary Caspar Weinberger was expected to leave the Reagan administration. While it appeared that Tower was not interested in reforming the office he aspired to hold, he later stated that he wanted a comprehensive reform package that considered all aspects of defense reform including budgetary, operational and organization components. The end result in any case was there was no complementary Senate action to support the House measure.

Representative Ike Skelton (D/MO) was the author of the first defense reorganization bill of 1983. Skelton’s bill (H.R. 2560) was more radical in that it recommended abolishing the JCS and replacing it with a council of retired senior officers, as had been recommended by General Meyer. Representative White’s replacement as

106 Locher p. 82.
107 Lederman p. 63.
Chairman of the Investigations Subcommittee, Representative Bill Nichols (D, AL), with help from Skelton pressed Secretary Weinberger into submitting a modest proposal for defense reform that became H.R. 3145. It provided for placing the JCS Chairman in the chain of command from the President to the unified commanders and eliminated some of the size restrictions on the Joint Staff. This bill too passed the House only to again expire due to Senator Tower’s unwillingness to take up the issue. Despite Tower’s resistance to piecemeal action on defense reform, these events signaled that another serious attempt to reorganize the Joint Chiefs of Staff was underway in late 1983 and early 1984.

It was obvious that while many of the themes of defense reorganization in the early 1980s were similar to those of the 1940s and 1950s, many of the participant roles had changed and the national security environment was very different than it had been 24 years prior to the current debate. The pro-reform team in 1982 was much more diverse. In addition to traditional Army and Air Force senior officers like Meyer and Jones, it also included defense civilians who were the product of the national security state created by the National Security Act of 1947 and its subsequent changes and amendments. As a result of both Eisenhower’s reforms of the 1950s and McNamara’s systems analysis work in the 1960s, the burgeoning Office of the Secretary of Defense had become a breeding ground for a new type of government technocrat. They fanned out through government to the legislative branch and sometimes outside to the growing body of private “think tanks” or as staff members in Congress or the Department of Defense, they made a growing case for reform of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Many had served in the military in the course of
the divisive conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, and sought methods and organizations to prevent repetition of the faults they saw in managing those conflicts.

William K. Brehm, William Lynn, Arch Barrett, James Locher and others like them would play a significant role in pushing a sometimes hesitant legislature into action. Barrett and Locher in particular were powerful influences respectively on the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. Barrett had written his own manifesto for defense reorganization reform entitled *Reappraising Defense Organization* while serving on a fellowship at the National Defense University (NDU) in Washington D.C. in 1981. Following his retirement from active duty in the U.S. Air Force, he found employment as a staff member in the office of Congressman White. Locher asserts that Barrett was so intent on getting Congress to look at defense reorganization that he began pressuring Congressman White to lead an inquiry into Jones’ testimony. Barrett told White, “when the top military officer says that the JCS system is fatally flawed, Congress can’t sit idly by. And your subcommittee is the one that has jurisdiction. You, sir, must lead this effort.” 109 White even allowed Barrett to question witnesses in the initial sessions.

General Jones later lauded Barrett for his efforts in keeping defense reorganization an active congressional issue. In 1999 he stated, “On the House side, the most supportive Members were Dick White, Ike Skelton, Bill Nichols, Les Aspin, and John Kasich. However, the most important help came from a staff member, Arch Barrett. Arch singlehandedly kept the subject alive for a major part of the 4½ years to enactment. There would not be a Goldwater-Nichols without him.” 110

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109 Locher p. 62.
110 Quinn, ed., p.7.
Locher was even more of an influence in the Senate Armed Services Committee. He had worked as Defense Department civilian in the Pentagon from 1969 to 1978 and already shared many of the same misgivings about the organization of the JCS as had been articulated by General Jones. His boss, Senator Tower, however was not interested in defense reorganization reform. In Locher’s account, in May 1982 Senator Sam Nunn (D/GA) had requested that Tower hold hearings on defense reorganization. Nunn had also just introduced an amendment to the current defense authorization bill requiring the Secretary of Defense to submit a report on proposed defense reform efforts. In a move to prevent this amendment that Locher implies Tower did not like, he agreed to hold hearings on the defense reform issue. When Tower did not schedule the proposed hearings, Locher took it upon himself to have one of the staffers he supervised write a memo to Tower advising him that he had agreed to hold the hearings and could do so before the end of the session.\footnote{Locher p. 83.} Locher does not indicate when exactly he became an ardent supporter of defense reorganization, but according to his book he was by at least June 1983. His impetus may have also come from working for Senator Nunn, before he worked for Tower. Locher would go on to be a major contributor to the reform campaign in his own right through his own rigorous questioning of senior officers during research for a SASC staff study, enthusiastically authorized by Tower that would eventually become the backbone of the reformist arguments in 1985 and 1986. General Jones also singled out Locher for praise as he had done for Barrett, stating, “Again a staffer, Jim
Locher, was absolutely essential to success. His outstanding study of the problems convinced many, and there would not be Goldwater-Nichols without him, also.”

Allan Millett has commented that the triumph of McNamara’s systems analysis and its accompanying “civilian activism” shoved the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the military departments to the periphery of operational decision-making in Washington D.C. This process had been underway since the end of the Second World War and the modifications to the Department of Defense and Office of the Secretary of Defense in 1949, 1953, and 1958 accelerated the trend. Although working in Congress at the time, Barrett and Locher represent the fruition of this process. Relatively low ranking appointed staff members schooled in systems analysis principles were essentially running a segment of government rather than advising it. Millett explains this as a function of the growing complexities of the Cold War. He states that

the most obvious product of the Cold War defense organization is the number of political appointees and civil servants who deal with routine business that would have be defined as „service matters” before World War II. The use of military force as an instrument of foreign policy is, political analysts argue, too complex to be left to military organizations. Instead, the inherent risk of nuclear escalation (however slight) and the complexities of alliance maintenance require early and active involvement by the President, his personal staff (principally his Assistant for National Security Affairs and the staff of the National Security Council), the Secretary of State, the Director of national Intelligence and the Secretary of Defense.

Ironically this effect placed military leaders further away from the locus of national security leadership and consequently they became less able over time to influence

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112 Quinn, p. 7.
113 Millett, “The Organizational Impact of Military Success and Failure; A Historical Perspective”, p. 13.
Presidential security decision-making. This also made them more vulnerable to charges of ineffectiveness by reformers.

The reform camp boasted a significant group of academics among their direct supporters. Academics, in particular political scientists, had been studying the defense reform question since the late 1940s. Political scientist Samuel Huntington was an early convert to the reform cause, as were Army and Constitutional historian Theodore Crackel and military historian Edward Luttwak. Crackel, a former Army Lieutenant Colonel wrote a series of policy papers at the Heritage Institute in 1983 advocating reform of the JCS. Huntington had been an active advocate of JCS reform since the mid 1950s and as early as 1957, he advocated a policy of what he called “objective civilian control.” In this concept, the system of divided constitutional authority by which the United States prepared for and fought wars would need to be replaced by a more professionally military force controlled by powerful civilian leadership.

Before the Second World War, service chiefs seldom if ever appeared in Congress. Congress in turn had little interest in military policy, preferring to concern itself with those supply and administrative parts of the armed forces that spent money. Huntington explained this with the following example, “if the military chief expresses his professional opinion to Congress, he is publically criticizing his Commander in Chief and providing useful ammunition to his political enemies. There is no easy solution to this

Huntington’s solution was greater professionalization of the military, including greater power for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs to stand above political wrangling between Congress and the President, as well as the political competition between the individual services. Huntington felt that greater unification would end what he called “servicism” and enhance professionalization of the services, thus allowing them to better execute their mission in an environment where Congress and the President competed for power. Huntington elaborated on his concerns most fully in mid 1985, by which time he was an active member of the reform camp. In a Nimitz Lecture at the University of California at Berkeley, Huntington concluded “we need a military staff and chief who will present a non-service military viewpoint to our civilian leaders. They are now denied such a viewpoint, and that seriously constricts their ability to exercise effective civilian control.”

Theodore Crackel had been Director of Military History and Strategic Studies at the Army War College in Carlisle, PA just before he retired from active Army service. Congressman Newt Gingrich (R/GA), a fellow lecturer at Carlisle helped him get a position as the director of the Heritage Foundation’s Military Reform Project where he wrote a series of pro-reform articles. James Locher later credited Crackel’s work as

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120 Locher, p.172.
instrumental in getting many conservative Republicans like Gingrich who did not normally criticize the military on board reform proposals.\textsuperscript{121}

Luttwak directly supported Jones’ call for reform stating that, “absolutely the first priority is to provide a central military staff that can present the true choices of national military strategy for the policy decisions of the President and the Secretary of Defense.”\textsuperscript{122} In addition to intellectuals like Huntington, Crackel and Luttwak, a number of senior retired officers including President Eisenhower’s military assistant General Andrew Goodpaster, and former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Maxwell Taylor, who despite being in poor health testified vigorously on several occasions before Congress on the need for reform of the JCS. Goodpaster was the Vice Chairman of Georgetown University’s Center for Strategic and International Studies Military Reform Project, and supported that group’s call for an empowered CJCS. Taylor was a supporter of General Meyer’s plan to scrap the JCS in favor of a group of retired officers. Taylor had recommended such an action in his 1960 book \textit{Uncertain Trumpet}.\textsuperscript{123} In 1961 he had assumed a similar role in that he returned to active duty from retirement to serve as President Kennedy’s “Military Representative” when, in the wake of the disastrous Bay of Pigs operation Kennedy sought a senior military advisor unconnected to the JCS.\textsuperscript{124}

Unlike in 1953 and 1958, the pro-reform team had significant support in both Houses of Congress and was bipartisan in character. Conservative Republicans like Senator Barry Goldwater (R/AZ) and liberal Democrats such as Edward Kennedy

\textsuperscript{121} Locher, p.171.
\textsuperscript{123} McMaster, p.14.
\textsuperscript{124} McMaster, pp. 9-10.
(D/MA) would make common cause in supporting defense reform issues. Moderates in both parties such as Nunn and Senator William Cohen (R/ME) were successful in bringing together a very diverse coalition that included Representatives Les Aspin (D, WI), Newt Gingrich, and future Defense Secretary Leon Panetta (D, MI). This new generation of legislators, some of whom had fought in conflicts from the Second World War to Vietnam often shared common beliefs with reformers about the ineffectiveness of the U.S. military in fighting Cold War battles and genuinely sought reforms that would improve military effectiveness against future opponents including the Soviet Union.

The anti-reform block in contrast had weakened from its strongest period just after the Second World War, but could still count on substantial support. Like the pro-reform group it too had changed in makeup since the late 1950s. In addition to its traditional strengths in the Navy and Marine Corps, it now also included senior officers from the other services. Senior Navy and Marine Corps officers had memories of the reform movements of the 1940s and 1950s and identified them with concurrent threats in those periods to reassign Navy and Marine Corps aviation to the Air Force and the Marine Corps itself to the Army. In one his earliest memos to John Lehman on defense reform, Don Hittle identified a *Washington Post* article by General Taylor on excessive defense spending on aircraft carriers and the Marine Corps as “the old Army-Air Force attack on our balanced seapower. The Army-Air Force „solution” is a single air force and the end of the Marine Corps as a major combat service.”

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125 Lederman p. 69.
126 Papers of John Lehman, Box 4, 1-3, Memo from Don Hittle to Secretary of the Navy on defense reorganization, 10 September 1981.
The most significant reform advocates, General Jones, and General Meyer had retired and been replaced by officers much less sympathetic to reform. The new Chairman General John Vessey, new Army Chief of Staff General John Wickham, Navy Chief of Naval Operations Admiral James Watkins, Air Force Chief of Staff General Charles Gabriel, and Marine Corps Commandant General Paul X. Kelley were either indifferent or in some measure opposed to the reform recommendations for the Joint Chiefs of Staff proposed by Jones and Meyer. While it may appear that President Reagan and Weinberger purposely appointed a large block of anti-reform JCS members, the reasons for their lack of support were more budgetary than anything else. Vessey’s successor as CJCS Admiral William Crowe related that during the Carter administration, budget cuts generated a great deal of inter-service rivalry and distrust, as well as a general distrust of Congress.\(^{127}\) That attitude carried over some into the beginning of Reagan’s first term and may have accounted for opposition to reform from this particular JCS.

Enthusiasm in the House or Representatives for the anti-reform cause was weak, but in the Senate there remained substantial support including former Navy Secretary Senator John Warner (R/VA), former Marine Senator Pete Wilson (R/CA), former Admiral Senator Jeremiah Denton (R, AL), longtime Navy proponent Senator John Stennis (D/MS), Senator Phillip Graham, (R/TX) and the SASC Chairman Tower. In 1984, 18 Senators had prior Navy and 9 had prior Marine Corps service, including Tower who remained an active member of the Naval Reserve.\(^{128}\)


\(^{128}\) Locher p. 402.
The anti-reform team also assembled, albeit belatedly, a strong academic advocacy group of its own to combat pro-reformers like Huntington. Respected military historians including Allan Millett, Williamson Murray, and naval historian Jeffrey Barlow published works generally favorable to the anti-reform position. Barlow participated in a notable debate with Crackel, Les Aspin, and Richard Steadman in December 1983 at Heritage in one of the earliest direct confrontations between pro and anti-reformers. In response to reformer use of think tanks like the Heritage Foundation and the Aspen Institute to write policy papers in support of reform measures, anti-reformers enlisted the support of the Hudson Institute to support its campaign.

One significant trump card held by the anti-reform side was strong support within the current administration. President Ronald Reagan had been elected to office in November 1980 and one of his key campaign promises was a military buildup to counter the continuing threat from the Soviet Union. Reagan’s defense secretary Caspar Weinberger was an avowed foe of defense reorganization. Weinberger’s mission for Reagan was overseeing a significant increase in the defense budget to support Reagan’s campaign promises. When General Jones first raised questions of reorganization with Secretary Weinberger in mid 1981, Weinberger politely refused. Jones later remembered that Weinberger said, “he stated that he did not want to address reorganization, for many would conclude the joint system was all screwed up and that would impact negatively on the budget. My comment was that we were screwed up, many on the Hill knew it, and credit would be given if the subject was addressed. Although Secretary Weinberger was
very courteous whenever the subject was raised, I was never able to persuade him.”

Harvard political scientist and RAND scholar Thomas McNaugher has argued that Reagan was interested in reform, since National Security Advisor William Clark gave Weinberger a note in July 1982 urging him to not be seen as “stonewalling” on the subject of reorganization. In any case from at least 1982 through late 1985 Weinberger was left to manage the reorganization issue on his own and his opposition remained in place. Admiral Crowe said Weinberger “simply did not want Congress to butt into his business.”

Most importantly, the opposition found its chief Reagan administration organizer, intellectual heavyweight and primary cheerleader in navy secretary John Lehman. Since assuming the office of Navy Secretary in 1981, Lehman had led the Administration’s effort to produce a 600 ship Navy, a significant defense plank in the Republican Party’s 1980 platform. He was not hesitant to take on hallowed Navy traditions in pursuit of his goals. In 1981 he engineered the forced retirement of the long-time head of the Navy’s nuclear propulsion program Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, and he helped develop and advocate the aggressive Maritime Strategy of 1986 that proposed to send aircraft carrier battle groups and attack submarines into areas just short of Soviet territorial waters. When Assistant Secretary of Defense Paul Thayer demanded that Lehman eliminate the two carriers from the Navy’s budget, Lehman went over his head, first to

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129 Quinn, ed., p. 5.
131 Crowe, p.157.
Weinberger, and then to President Reagan, who Lehman persuaded to issue a press statement naming the new carriers *USS Abraham Lincoln* (CVN-72) and *USS George Washington* (CVN-73). General Colin Powell, then serving as defense secretary Weinberger’s personal military assistant, said that Lehman was, “the most able infighter in the building (i.e. the Pentagon). Lehman would never budge an inch in the competition among the services. To him, the Navy position was always the Alamo.” It is unclear if Powell was complimenting or insulting Lehman, or both, but he had been remarkably effective in pushing forward an expansive program of naval rearmament.

Lehman had risen far and fast since he began government service as a Nixon campaign foreign policy intern in 1968. Along the way he had enlisted first in the Air Force, and then later the Navy, where with the help of former Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Arleigh Burke, he was accepted into flight training and qualified as a naval flight officer (navigator/bombardier) in the A-6 Intruder carrier-based bomber. He remained as a Naval reserve officer, flying bombing missions in Vietnam between stints as a National Security Council staffer for Henry Kissinger, a stern taskmaster, but someone Lehman greatly admired and respected. On one occasion when Kissinger had used very harsh language toward his staff, including Lehman, and someone objected, Kissinger replied that, “since English is my second language, I didn’t know that „maniac” and „fool” are not terms of endearment.” Lehman had mastered many of his former

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133 Lehman, *Command of the Seas*, p. 189.
135 Locher, p. 254.
136 Lehman, p. 74.
boss” techniques, but he would need all of the bureaucratic skills he learned from Kissinger and more in the coming months.

Lehman made effective use of his own staff to organize the opposition movement of members of Congress and current and retired flag officers. Prominent among the anti-reformers were members of Lehman’s Department of the Navy Staff. His deputy undersecretary Seth Cropsey organized anti-reform lobbying efforts throughout government, the think tank community and the military education establishment. Don Hittle researched and presented historical perspectives of the reorganization movement from the 1940s through the 1980s. CNO Watkins and Marine Commandant Kelley lobbied their military counterparts to oppose reorganization efforts. Finally, members of the Navy Department staff including future Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Frank Kelso and future Admirals Paul Miller and Joseph Prueher kept the reform movement in Congress under close surveillance and reported back to Lehman detailed information on its progress in both houses of the legislature. The Navy also had an extended public relations apparatus including such organizations as the Navy League and Naval Aviation Association. These organizations, largely composed of retired officers who remembered the reform contests of the 1940s and 50s were not difficult to mobilize for the anti-reform effort, since they expected the usual attacks on naval aviation and the Marine Corps that accompanied previous reform efforts.

Lehman used the print media to make his anti-reform case. In a June 1984 article in the *Washington Post*, Lehman called defense reorganization reform, “an old bad idea resurfacing,” and accused the HASC of trying to create, “a Prussian-style general staff
reporting to a strengthened Chairman.” Lehman went on with his accusation to state that more staff in Washington D.C. prone to micromanagement equals less service competence in the field. Lehman also said the legislation was a dangerous threat to civilian control of the military by imposing an all-powerful military leader with large dedicated staff between theater CINCs and the Secretary of Defense. Removing the service secretaries from the chain of command and subordinating the JCS to one military leader also deprived the President and the Secretary of Defense from a diversity of military opinion. This diversity in military advice has been the key to past American military success. Lehman concluded by saying that the decentralized JCS concept was good enough for the Second World War. Why adopt the organization plan of the losing (German) side? Articles like this quickly made Lehman a lightning rod for the pro-reformers on which to focus their efforts. Pro-Reform Congressman Ike Skelton also sought to engage, and perhaps even persuade Lehman of the pro-reform group’s earnest efforts in a *Washington Post* article of his own on 15 June 1984 in which he expressed support for Lehman’s efforts to strengthen the Navy and Marine Corps, but deplored his opposition to reform. In a letter to Lehman, Skelton expressed regret that the *Post* had cut out many of his more conciliatory remarks, and ended with a friendly “Until our pens cross again.” A response in the *Washington Post* later that month by Military Reform Institute President and former staffer for pro-reform Senator Gary Hart (D/CO) William Lind was much more combative. Lind responded to Lehman’s argument by saying that, “the Navy has long used the Prussian hobgoblin to frighten Congress away from a

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138 Papers of John Lehman, Box 4, 6-9, letter from Rep. Ike Skelton (D/Mo) to Secretary of the Navy, 18 June 1984.
general staff,” and “if we want excellence from our high command, we need a general staff system.”

Lehman vigorously lobbied Secretary Weinberger to stand his ground on the defense reorganization issue. In a memo to Weinberger written after General Jones’ reorganization study completed its work in early 1983, Lehman articulated the basis of what became his stated themes in opposing defense reorganization. Many of these points were worked out by Don Hittle based on his experience in opposing defense reform going back to 1958. The Jones proposals were nothing new, and “a raid on the constitutional principle of civilian control of the military.” The proposals also were likely to “create needless suspicion of the system that helped produce the President’s defense budget, and gives ammunition to the opponents of this budget. A reorganization effort based on Jones’ proposals would be needlessly disruptive and weaken support for the President’s budget.”

The JCS as an organization was grounded in long-term American principles of separation of powers. A focus on speed in decision-making, as embodied by the general staff system “can give quicker decisions, but more often they will be wrong.” Strategic decisions “must be correct, as they set in motion not only military forces, but industrial, economic, and social forces—the marshaled war effort of the nation.” This “is what the JCS corporate system, with its built-in reality (in decision-making) provides.” Lehman also attacked the general staff system for its inability to provide multiple solutions. A

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140 Papers of John Lehman papers, Box 4, 4-5, Memo from Secretary of the Navy to Secretary of Defense, subject: JCS Reorganization Proposals Initiated by general David Jones, 1983.
141 Papers of John Lehman papers, Box 4, 4-5, Memo to Secretary of Defense”, 1983, p.4
142 Ibid
single Chief of Staff system, “one philosophy of war will at any time dominate,” and “to say that a Chairman (Chief of Staff) will, ipso facto, shed, on being appointed, a professional lifetime of service-oriented experiences, environment, and study in one service and become professionally neutered is pure nonsense.”\textsuperscript{143} Lehman was also concerned that the forcible assignment of officers to a joint staff would erode their abilities as combat leaders in their respective services. The excessive bureaucracy created by the chief of staff system would slow decision-making expand the size and scope of the civilian Defense Department at the expense of the military services.\textsuperscript{144} Finally as a service secretary, Lehman was also concerned about losing his authority to control the Navy’s budget process that was crucial to keeping the 600 ship fleet program to track to success.

Lehman’s statements seem to have been partially successful in retaining Weinberger’s support. In a letter from Department of Defense General Counsel William H. Taft IV to Representative Nichols on his latest defense reorganization bill (H.R. 3718), Taft said that while Secretary Weinberger supported putting the Chairman of the JCS into the operational chain of command, “the department opposes or finds unnecessary the other provisions of the bill.” These included having the Chairman supervise the Joint Chiefs, which Taft equated, “vesting (the Chairman) with Supreme military command in his own right.”\textsuperscript{145} In his own Annual Report on JCS reform that soon followed, Weinberger stated that “additional changes in the Chairman’s role should

\textsuperscript{143} Papers of John Lehman papers, Box 4, 4-5, Memo to the Secretary of Defense, 1983, p. 8.
\textsuperscript{144} Lehman, p. 390.
now await a careful evaluation of the implementation and impact of the new provisions.\textsuperscript{146}

Senator Tower launched his own enquiry into the defense reorganization reform issue in June 1983. Both House and Senate Armed Services Committees conducted extensive interviews and hearings on the defense reorganization issue throughout 1983 and 1984. Significant international events however interrupted and significantly affected the process. The terrorist bombing of the United States Marine Corps (USMC) barracks in Beirut, Lebanon and the invasion of Grenada, both in October 1983 provided the more incentive to the reformers in both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees. The specifics of the Marine barracks bombing, including the post-attack investigation and findings are detailed in the final report of the Long Commission, the fact-finding group named for its senior member Admiral Robert Long that was appointed by President Reagan to investigate the Beirut bombing. Specific to the defense reorganization issue, the committee’s report revealed that the chain of command for the Lebanon Marine peacekeepers was not well organized. The U.S. European Command (EUCOM) was responsible for the operation, but due to an awkward chain of command established for the Marines in Beirut, only the Commandant of the Marine Corps could authorize EUCOM communication with the peacekeepers. Investigators determined that information on potential terrorist activities had not been provided to the Marines due to arguments between EUCOM and the Commandant over command responsibilities. The investigators concluded that the operational chain of command failed to convey the

\textsuperscript{146} Papers of John Lehman, Box 4, 4-5, fragment of Secretary of Defense 1983 Annual Report on JCS reform, p.14.
appropriate level of warning to the U.S. Marine Peacekeeping force in Beirut and that lack of action contributed to the ineffective security posture in place on the day of the attacks.\textsuperscript{147}

The U.S. launched an invasion of the island of Grenada later that month to rescue U.S. students at a medical school and topple a Marxist regime on the island. This event is well documented in JCS Joint History Office report “Operation Urgent Fury,” and revealed some inter-service rivalries and problems. All of the services involved had different maps and radios. There were several incidents of friendly fire due to poor communication that caused the bulk of U.S. combat fatalities.\textsuperscript{148} Some Reagan administration officials such as Secretary Lehman blamed these faults on a perceived need for joint operations when a single service could do the job.\textsuperscript{149} These incidents however convinced Representative Nichols to initiate a new defense reorganization bill in HASC based on General Jones’ initial study and the subsequent testimony the Investigations subcommittee had received.

Nichols was a Second World War Army veteran who lost a leg in combat leading troops in the 1944 Battle of the Hurtgen Forrest.\textsuperscript{150} He made a long painful recovery and was eventually discharged as a Captain in 1947. Nichols had opposed the Beirut peacekeeping mission, but had been persuaded to support the Marine deployment. He had visited the Marine compound in Beirut just eight days before the attack and felt deeply

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Lehman, pp. 293-294.
\item Locher, p. 95.
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responsible for having contributed, in his mind, to needless deaths.\textsuperscript{151} The investigation that revealed the Marines’ highly confusing chain of command and lack of insight into EUCOM anti-terrorist measures convinced him to act in favor of defense reorganization. Nichols’ bill, specifically aimed at upgrading the power of the JCS Chairman came up for a vote in May 1984, again passed, and this time survived a conference committee session with the Senate to be signed into law by the President in October 1984.\textsuperscript{152} While providing only modest improvements to the joint staff and to the Chairman’s authority to set the Joint Chiefs agenda, Nichols’ bill was a first step.

The testimony elicited by Nichols’ and Tower’s committees included a wide range of opinions from current and past military and civilian defense leaders. The overall measure of these testimonies was remarkably mixed. Current and former service secretaries like John Lehman, Army Secretary John Marsh, and Air Force Secretary Verne Orr were opposed to any measure that would weaken their authority over their services. Former defense secretaries such as Harold Brown and James Schlesinger were in favor of reform, as were former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, former deputy defense secretary David Packard, and former Defense Department senior officials Richard Steadman, and Phillip Odeen. That support however was greatly divided. Packard, Schlesinger, and Odeen were very critical of the current JCS structure, while Steadman supported only gradual JCS change. Brzezinski wanted his former organization, the National Security Council to control all aspects of strategic defense

\textsuperscript{151} Locher, p. 150.
\textsuperscript{152} Lederman, p. 68.
planning and Harold Brown wanted to scrap all of the service secretaries. Without a common plan to reference, the pro-reform group remained divided and not effective enough to endorse any one solution.

Military officers either serving in Joint Commands like General Bernard Rodgers, the European Commander, and some former Chairmen like General Jones and General Taylor were very much in favor of reform. Jones pointed to reform as a way to improve long-term defense planning while Rodgers said empowerment of the CJCS was “the key to the national security arrangements of this country.” Nearly all of the admirals and marine generals were opposed. General Kelley said, “the existing JCS structure is sound,” and Admiral Watkins stated that the proposed reforms would just “add another layer of bureaucracy” Service Chiefs like Air Force Chief of Staff General Charles Gabriel and Army Chief of Staff General John Wickham supported the need for some change, but not at the price of separating their joint and service-specific duties. Secretary Weinberger remained generally opposed. His defining comment on reforming the JCS was, “the more formal those structures are, the more cumbersome them become.” The anti-reform group needed no common reference point as did reformers. The comments of Kelley and Weinberger that the system was sound and any changes would complicate it well encapsulated the general anti-reform argument

Both sides turned to various military education and civilian think tanks for analysis that would support their side of the argument and create the common viewpoint around which their respective sides could organize. Building on the success garnered the “Congressional Military Reform Caucus,” the reform camp sought organized intellectual community support for their positions. In 1984 the conservative Heritage Foundation came out in favor of defense reform legislation in its *Mandate for Leadership II, Continuing the Conservative Revolution*. A discussion of defense reform issues by Theodore Crackel rated only 18 pages in a document of 584 and did not constitute a significant part of the document. In fact only 4 pages of those 18 actively deal with reform of the JCS. Crackel’s recommendations cited Jones’ concerns and included what had become standard in reform documents. The office of Chairman needed strengthening, the joint staff needed to be independent and more robust, and that the Chairman needed to have a strong hand in allocating service roles and mission.\footnote{Stuart Butler, Michael Sanera, and W. Bruce Weinrod, *Mandate for Leadership II, Continuing the Conservative Revolution*, Washington D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1984, pp 431-448.} Some Heritage staffers including James Hackett and Navy Captain Spencer Johnson (on a fellowship at Heritage) fought to kill Heritage’s pro-reform work with some success, but only succeeded in delaying its publication until December 1984.

In February 1985 the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), another prominent Washington think tank released a study entitled *Toward a More Effective Defense*, recommending significant changes to the entire defense establishment including JCS command functions and defense program budgeting.\footnote{Lederman, p. 69.} This report was a much higher-profile document and included the endorsement of six of the last seven
Secretaries of Defense. Like Crackel’s work, the defense reorganization section occupied only part of the overall work. It was however a significantly greater percentage of the report that included 5 of 11 chapters. This study carried much stronger recommendations than Crackel’s study, including cuts in the service staffs, and a recommendation that even though the office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) may have grown in the absence of and as a result of a lack of a true military staff, OSD should not be cut. The former corporate structure provided by the competing services would be replaced by a combination of the new military staff and the OSD to provide the Secretary of Defense with multiple points of view.\(^{159}\) The CSIS report was criticized by at least one member of the drafting group as heavily biased. In a February 28 1985 letter to John Lehman, CSIS committee member and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Thomas Moorer said that his “nine page dissent received nine lines in the Georgetown Center (CSIS) report on one of the last pages.”\(^ {160}\) Moorer was the one member of the CSIS group firmly in the anti-reform camp. He had been interviewed by Senate staffers in December 1983 and forcefully articulated many of the points that the Navy would vigorously defend in 1985 and 1986. Notable among these were, “you know people say that the Supreme Court deliberates and the Congress debates, and the Joint Chiefs bicker. I mean, I never have seen anybody criticize the Congress because they didn’t vote 100% for every bill. It


\(^{160}\) Papers of John Lehman, Box 5, 1-8, letter from former CJCS Admiral Moorer to John Lehman, 28 February 1985.
is ridiculous to think that you are going to get complete agreement within the Joint Chiefs and as a matter of fact if that were the case, the President would be very ill-served.”

Deputy under secretary Cropsey organized intellectual support for the anti-reform cause through a report issued by the Hudson Institute in September 1984 entitled *An Analysis of the Proposed Joint Chiefs of Staff Reorganization* critical of reform efforts and a Naval War College-sponsored forum on defense reorganization in May 1985 that also issued an unfavorable verdict on defense reorganization. Jeffrey Barlow in particular argued at the Newport event that, “the search for perfectibility is simply not obtainable through defense reorganization. Moving away from the corporate JCS system will only add strategic inflexibilities and will further narrow the range of alternatives presented to civilian superiors.” During the conference Williamson Murray condemned calls for a single Chief of Staff system actively based on the model of Imperial Germany. The belief that the German system was a useful model was “at variance with historical reality.” Murray said that his conference paper entitled “JCS reform, A German Example” would in his words, “aim to suggest that at the strategic level of decision-making-and that is what one is discussing in terms of JCS reform-the Germans provide a model of how not to accomplish an effective, competent and realistic ability to assess political and strategic realities, of how not to integrate the efforts of the services into accomplishing strategic

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161 Papers of James Locher, Interview with Admiral Thomas Moorer, conducted by Senate Staffer Jim Smith,” 6 December 1983.  
162 Locher, p. 180.
objectives and how not to provide a balanced, intelligent picture to civilian policymakers.”

Former CNO Admiral Jim Holloway gave one of the most memorable statements of the Newport event. When questioned whether or not the Joint Chiefs had given poor quality advice to civilian policy makers during the Vietnam War, he responded with a phrase he had been using since 1980, saying, “bad advice is frequently a euphemism for not providing the desired answer.” The attendee list was somewhat more balanced than in some of the pro-reform events and policy paper committees. In a memo to John Lehman, Seth Cropsey reported that Congressional staffer and reform advocate Arch Barrett attended the Newport event, as well as a staffer from Ike Skelton’s office who claimed the conference was not sufficiently “balanced.”

James Locher vociferously complained that the reports and conferences produced by Cropsey and other members of the reform group were heavily “biased” against reform. Just three pages earlier however he admitted that the pro-reform groups engaged in exactly the same behavior. In fact, Locher and fellow Senate Armed Services Committee staffer Rick Finn were both invited to attend the Newport event, but Locher reports they were detained on Senate business in Washington D.C and could not travel to Newport to participate.

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165 Papers of John Lehman, Box 5, 1-8, Memo from Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy Cropsey to Lehman, subj: Newport JCS Conference, 8 May 1985.
166 Locher pp. 175-180.
167 Ibid, p.177.
168 Ibid, p. 179.
Rhetoric aside, both camps mobilized known intellectual supporters, and retired military officers who supported their respective causes. Pro-reformers primarily used political scientists that examined a relatively short period of American history, usually from the end of World War II to the present. Pro-reformers acknowledged that the corporatist system, which involved the input of many civilian and uniformed leaders to the creation and management of national security, had been the primary means of defense organization in the United States from the beginnings of the republic to at least 1940. Specifically they argued that the creation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the Second World War, and the various modifications to its structure since had been and remained ineffective for the nation’s expanded military needs. The Cold War and nuclear weapons made rapid efficient decision-making more important and necessary than the corporate method of the past. Anti-reformers primarily employed historians as intellectual support for their cause. These experts examined the whole of United States military history rather than just the brief and perhaps aberrational Cold War period. They largely concluded that people and personalities rather than organization structures were the key to joint cooperation and military success. The pro-reform groups got more out of their respective think tank and educational work than did the anti-reformers. Pro-reform studies such as the Heritage and CSIS reports appeared almost a full year ahead of their antireform counterparts and seem to have been received by a wider audience, especially in Congress. Antireform reports were more comprehensive in their analysis, but their appearance in late 1985 and mid 1986 may have been too late to substantially affect the outcome of the competition. One of the best of these, an Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis study with

In his dissent to the CSIS report, former CJCS Admiral Moorer correctly summarized the history of defense reorganization reform movements from 1945-1985 when he stated: “Just as certain as the flights of swallows return to Capistrano, periodically a study appears which claims to be aimed at the correction of the many defects of the organization of the Department of Defense, with particular emphasis on the structure of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Most of these studies, through ignorance or intent, support the first steps in achieving a major reorganization which, if followed up, will ultimately result in a single Chief of Staff as well as an elite group of staff officers with little or no experience in combat operations.”  

The defense reform efforts of 1982-1984 were the most robust since 1958, but part of a similar regular pattern. The same arguments for a single Chief of Staff had been advanced and had been met with the mostly the same Navy response that had been given in the 1940s and 1950s. Pro-reformers had earlier and more effectively mobilized members of the military academic and think tank communities in support of their cause, but anti-reformers were making progress in the same areas with potentially more comprehensive arguments. As 1984 closed it was evident that the pro-reform camp was strong and might be successful in carrying through some measure of reform through Congress, but it was still doubtful whether any significant reforms would get past two significant “gatekeepers.” Senator

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169 Papers of John Lehman, Box 5, 1-8, Comments on the CSIS Defense Organization Project report—The Opposite View, Admiral Thomas Moorer, U.S. Navy (retired), former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 28 February 1985.
Tower was likely to weaken any bill that did not address reform holistically, and Secretary Weinberger would support him by continuing to testify that reform measures were constraining and what was needed could be created without legislative action. A series of events at the end of 1984 and the beginning on 1985 however, would radically reverse the fortune of the anti-reformers. Side-effects from the Reagan defense buildup, the retirement of one of the anti-reform bulwarks, the weakening of a second and the emergence of the reform group’s ultimate champions would weaken those opposed to defense reform and decisively place them on the defensive.

1985 was the decisive year in the 1980s struggle over defense reorganization reform. Three key changes from 1984 allowed reformers to score a decisive victory and accomplish many of the goals left incomplete at the end of President Eisenhower’s second term in office. These changes affected all three of the principal competing groups in the struggle; the civilian executive branch, the uniformed military, and the legislative branches of government. These changes included the retirement of Senator John Tower from the Chairmanship of the SASC, and his replacement by Senator Barry Goldwater, a committed military reformist; the replacement of General John Vessey by Admiral William Crowe, a cautious supporter of reform; and the appointment by President Reagan of a Blue Ribbon Commission headed by former Deputy Secretary of Defense and noted industrialist David Packard. Together these three changes would make reform of the institution of the Joint Chiefs of Staff a likely prospect, but not to the extent envisioned by some of the more aggressive members of the pro-reform camp.

The anti-reform camp lost its strongest Congressional defender against reform when Senator Tower retired from the Senate at the end of 1984. He had expressed a desire to then SASC Director Rhett Dawson to replace Weinberger as Defense Secretary, but Weinberger remained and Tower could not carry the same anti-reform weight while out of office. His replacement, Goldwater, would prove to be one of the reform movement’s greatest assets. He had served as a transport aircraft pilot and Chinese Air Force trainer in the Second World War and had remained an active member of the Air

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170 Locher, p.114.
National Guard, retiring as a Major General of the Reserves in 1967.\textsuperscript{171} He had been the Republican Presidential candidate in 1964, and although he lost to Lyndon Johnson, he retained the respect and admiration of members of Congress from both political parties. He faulted both civilian and Joint Chiefs leadership during the Vietnam War and blamed the U.S. loss on poor coordination and meddling by non-cabinet rank civilian officials in military decision-making. He enjoyed a strong bipartisan relationship with Senator Sam Nunn who would mobilize Democratic Senators to support Goldwater’s reforms. Goldwater lacked significant allies in the Department of Defense, but made up for it in his ability to form bipartisan agreements, the respect accorded him by the defense community, and his sheer unpredictability. Senator William Cohen (R, ME) best characterized Goldwater as, “enough of the maverick to say that something is not a good idea. The Pentagon can’t count on him to be a rubber stamp.” \textsuperscript{172}

Although Goldwater is widely credited as being the driving force behind the SASC’s renewed focus on defense reorganization reform, San Nunn deserves no less credit. He was a strong advocate during Tower’s tenure as SASC Chairman. JCS Chairman Admiral William Crowe gave Nunn rather than Goldwater credit for moving the legislation successfully out of the SASC. Crowe said Nunn had listened very carefully to testimony from Generals Jones and Meyer in 1982 and became convinced that a “comprehensive analysis would have to be undertaken and ultimately legislation written and shepherded through Congress.”\textsuperscript{173} The SASC staff study of defense reorganization reform that the committee produced would become a lightning rod for pro and anti-

\textsuperscript{172} Locher, p. 214.  
\textsuperscript{173} Crowe, p.147.
reform advocates. Its primary author would make the study a powerful tool for reform advocates and at the same time turn him into a focus for anti-reform critics.

SASC staffer James Locher, like his HASC counterpart Arch Barrett was the perfect choice to produce Goldwater and Nunn’s staff study. Locher was a West Point graduate who left active duty to serve as a systems analyst, first with the White House Working Group on Maritime Policy and later with the Office of Program Analysis and Evaluation in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. While serving in the Defense Department he earned an MBA from the Harvard School of Business Administration in 1974. Locher joined the staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee in 1978. He had been appointed by Tower to lead the initial enquiry into defense reorganization the Chairman promised in 1983. Admiral Crowe relates that San Nunn, who admired the work done by Locher in the intervening eighteen months in organizing and leading the SASC staff study effort persuaded Barry Goldwater to re-appoint Locher to complete an updated staff study for use in the current effort.  

While Locher was preparing his staff study, John Lehman and his staff at the Navy Department were preparing to actively resist this next round of defense reform. A series of formal questions sent from the SASC when Tower was still Chairman and due 4 March 1985 back to the Senate provided Lehman an opportunity to give full voice to his opposition beliefs. Throughout his response Lehman emphasized that civilian and military leadership bore equal responsibility for both operational and civilian tasks, the inference being that a powerful Chairman might usurp all military roles for himself and upset balance that Lehman said, “was never the case in the roots of civilian control in the

\[^{174}\text{Crowe, p.147.}\]
Anglo-American tradition.” Lehman blamed two decades of added McNamara bureaucracy for excessive cost and lack of efficiency in the Pentagon. He concluded that there was no need for change and that adding a powerful JCS Chairman and associated staff to the chain of command would only add “a further layer of complication, delay, and bureaucracy.” He might have been as brief as the Secretary of the Air Force Verne Orr who in his cover letter to Goldwater said there was merit in the phrase “if it ain’t broke don’t fix it,” and “change for sake of change, without reference to what we are changing, or why we are changing it, is detrimental to the organization generally and morale specifically.” In their responses the service chiefs rejected claims that they could not be “dual-hatted” and show equal concern for both service and national interests. CNO Admiral James Watkins said that the concept of “dual-hatting” actually “enhanced performance” in both jobs and that “no other source could equal the breadth of military experience or the thorough understanding of current capabilities and limitations of the U.S. Armed Forces as represented by the corporate body of the Joint Chiefs.” General P.X. Kelley, Commandant of the Marine Corps was more forceful in his defense of the current system. It provided for “free and open discussion of the issues,” it was not

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designed to generate consensus and in fact “full disclosure of contrary views should be heard.”

While the Service Secretaries and Chiefs argued that change was not necessary, Locher was completing finishing an SASC staff study that fully embraced change. Locher was specifically tasked to avoid the SASC staff director, former naval officer James McGovern, who Goldwater believed was leaking elements of the staff study to his friend John Lehman, and report directly to the Chairman or Senator Nunn. The Washington D.C. policy maker debate also continued over the summer of 1985 with press articles for and against reorganization. The HASC led now by Congressman Les Aspin was also preparing another round of defense reorganization reform legislation, but did not have a concurrent work like Locher’s in progress and hence lagged behind the Senate in preparing comprehensive legislation. Locher viewed the situation at that time as a complete standstill, complaining that Navy lobbying against reorganization had produced a public information battle stalemate by early fall 1985. The staff study, then nearing completion was designed to break the current status quo situation and set the stage for Goldwater and Nunn to promote dramatic new legislation.

They had appointed a Senate task force to review each chapter and provide comments. The Senate Armed Services Committee had been growing in power and influence since the mid 1970s and boasted what historian K.C. Johnson called an

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180 Locher, p. 221.
impressive group of “heavyweights”.\(^{182}\) Besides Goldwater and Nunn, this group included Republican Senators William Cohen, Dan Quayle, Pete Wilson, and Phil Gramm, Democratic Senators Jeff Bingaman, Carl Levin, and Ted Kennedy.\(^{183}\) The staff study itself contained 91 specific recommendations for change, but centered on 16 major points, most prominently on lack of focus on primary DoD missions, lack of service focus on non-service joint issues, supposed inter-service bickering, lack of timely or efficient advice from the JCS, excessive staff in the service departments, and budgetary and planning issues.\(^{184}\) The most controversial points involved the integration of the service secretariats with their service military staffs, the addition of more deputy Defense Secretaries to the OSD bureaucracy, and most significantly, the disbanding of the JCS in favor of a Joint Military Advisory Council (JMAC) of retired officers who could focus more on joint issues. The last issue alone was bound to try an immediate hostile response from the service chiefs.

The anti-reform movement was also preparing its plans for the next legislative contest. The Navy Department had closely monitored HASC Investigations subcommittee hearings in June 1985 and drafted an August 1985 set of reorganization “talking points” for Department staff. Goldwater’s renewed emphasis on reorganization and Locher’s staff study however remained the most significant threat. In Lehman, Seth Cropsey concluded that ”HASC is still a long way from SASC” in terms of producing

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potential legislation. The staff study was due for release in September 1985, but Cropsey obtained a National Security Council (NSC) report on its progress as early as 6 August 1985 from Christopher Lehman, John Lehman’s brother who was then a National Security Council Staff member. The NSC memo gave the Navy Department a detailed early view of Goldwater and Nunn’s plans for releasing and support for the study, as well as their plans for future legislation. The Navy Department also obtained parts of the unfinished staff study in September, either from intended leaks as cited by James Locher, or again through Christopher Lehman.

In a 20 September memo to John Lehman, Cropsey described the study as “likely to form the core of the staff information available to the Senate” and described its overall emphasis as, “reducing the authority of the Military Departments, which are asserted to be the cause of the (undocumented) problems facing defense. On the civilian side, this means further growth in OSD, and a re-orientation to mission-specific Assistant Secretaries of Defense. On the military side, e.g., JCS, it is more of the same CSIS junk.” Cropsey suggested briefing friendly members of the SASC on the more contentious points and concluded by recommending to Lehman that he “address the same issues: the report is amateurish, relies on outdated management ideas, is internally self-contradictory, and lacks evidence and expertise.” Locher’s staff study was a significant document, but there were several significant defense budget struggles in progress. 1985

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was the busiest year for reform hearings by the Armed Services Committees and Government Operations and Affairs Committees and reform of the JCS was competing with several reform projects. Christopher Lehman had further reported that most Senators were interested in seeing the Packard Commission’s interim findings before making a decision on the JCS.

As the Navy had discovered in September, Goldwater scheduled a retreat for Senators of the Defense Organization task force at the Army installation Fort A.P. Hill on 05 and 06 October 1985 to discuss the final draft of the staff study and meet with a group of defense experts to discuss its provisions. Of the defense experts invited to attend, only former JCS Chairman Admiral Thomas Moorer could be counted as a firm opponent of reorganization and Senator Gramm had to insist on his inclusion. The Admiral reported to Lehman that he argued against the primary points of the staff study, specifically the proposed JMAC that Moorer argued would be ineffective since the retired officers proposed for this board would not be as knowledgeable as the active serving members of the JCS on all aspects of military business including research, current operations, and other service-specific issues. He reminded the attendees that the U.S. had tried that approach before with the venerable General Board from the first decades of the 20th century and that, “it was a failure even back in the days when events moved much

188 Whirls, p. 498.
189 Papers of John Lehman, Box 5, 1-8, “7 Oct 1985 memo, unsigned, but probably from ADM Moorer, entitled, „Notes on Camp Hill” detailing Goldwater’s 5/6 Oct 85 Retreat at Fort A.P. Hill”.
slower. Locher concluded that the event was successful and that Senators Gramm and Wilson were won over to the reform movement during this meeting.

John Lehman tried to negotiate directly with Goldwater and Nunn on reorganization in hopes of convincing them to moderate some of their proposals. A 19 November 1985 memo from Senator Nunn indicated he and Goldwater would agree to meet with Lehman, but no meeting ever materialized. Lehman later related he felt Nunn and Goldwater had no desire to discuss anything of the points with him since they were convinced their opinion was correct and that they would ultimately be victorious in any legislative contest. Even though apparently supremely confident of victory, Goldwater and Nunn had scheduled a series of what would become pivotal hearings on the staff study with Secretary Weinberger, and the Service Secretaries and Chiefs in November and December 1985. It would be the last direct exchange between the reform and anti-reform camps and proved memorable.

Secretary Weinberger testified before the SASC on 14 November 1985 and proved to be a very capable witness who could not be easily provoked into to making statements beyond his written comments already submitted to the Committee. Anti-reform Senators generally asked Weinberger questions that would trigger an anti-reform response from the Secretary and this technique was entirely successful. Questions from Senator Jeremiah Denton (R/AL), a former Navy Admiral, John Warner and Pete Wilson allowed Weinberger to state the following points: the JCS should not be changed; the six

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190 Papers of John Lehman, Box 5, 1-8, “7 Oct 1985 memo, unsigned, but probably from ADM Moorer, entitled, ‘Notes on Camp Hill’ detailing Goldwater’s 5/6 Oct 85 Retreat at Fort A.P. Hill”.
191 Locher, Victory on the Potomac, p. 345.
192 Telephone interview with John Lehman by the author, 18 January 2012.
missions for DoD listed in the staff report were inaccurate and misleading; and there was little inter-service disagreement, and that when there was, he and President Reagan remained satisfied with both the JCS system and the advice it provided.\textsuperscript{193} Weinberger further stated that he only received “watered down consensus-type views” from the JCS in his early days in office, perhaps implying that the leadership of then CJCS General Jones, and not the JCS system was responsible.\textsuperscript{194}

Goldwater had begun the hearing with a softer tone than he had used in the lead up to the staff study’s release and told the assembled group that the DoD system was “bent quite a bit and we want to straighten it out a little”.\textsuperscript{195} When their turn came however, pro-reform Senators asked aggressive questions, trying to draw out more emotional or hasty answers from Weinberger. Senators Cohen and Nunn attempted to get Weinberger to make contradictory statements in regard to a report DoD had recently issued on the 1983 Grenada invasion and occupation by U.S. forces. When Nunn told Weinberger that General Jones had said JCS advice was not good, Weinberger replied that Jones had only begun to really complain about that after his retirement. Nunn in particular launched into a blistering attack on Weinberger on the results of U.S. operations in Grenada, especially over the case of equipment interoperability. Weinberger proved very adept and avoided any mention of conflict between the report and his past and present testimony. When exhorted by Nunn that he ought to look at it again, the following exchange erupted:

\textsuperscript{193} Papers of John Lehman, Box 5, 1-8, Navy Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) report, testimony of Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger before the SASC, Barry Goldwater (R/AZ) Chairman”, pp. 4-5, 14 November 1985.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid, p. 1.
Weinberger: I have taken a look at it. I am familiar with it. I have said many times lessons from it have been clearly set out for us which we believe we have profited from and changes we have made. There is not the slightest suggestion that everything was perfect in that operation. But to say those communications problems interfered with the success of the operation is to fly in the face of facts. They did not. They did indicate some things that needed to be done.

Nunn: That is very crafty wording, the operation was successful, therefore, nothing interfered with the success of the operation because it was successful. That is ridiculous.

Weinberger: You have exactly the opposite, sir with respect to the question put to me by Senator Exon which related to the Iranian (hostage rescue) operation. There things did happen that interfered with the success of the operation. What you have to do is separate out the magnitude of these things. This is not to say you should not profit from them or you should not make changes. But to say that there was serious interference with the success of the operation is to misstate the facts.

Nunn: Nobody used that term but you Mr. Secretary. I will not play on the ballfield. That is a way of phrasing a question and answer that has no relevance to a critical and objective examination of what went wrong. That is a lawyer’s phrase. I congratulate you as a lawyer, but as Secretary of Defense, I do not think that is an appropriate method by which to proceed.\textsuperscript{196}

Weinberger and Nunn’s continuing argument over the significance of the Grenada report continued for some minutes until finally interrupted by Senator Kennedy. Goldwater concluded the hearing by further castigating Weinberger, stating that Weinberger had not answered the questions asked by the committee and suggested the Secretary read it again.

The Service Chiefs appeared on 05 December and confined most of their objections to placing them directly under the authority of their service secretaries. This would seem a logical concern given that under the staff study, now frequently called the “Locher report” for its principle author, the service chiefs would no longer serve in a joint capacity. Although it is not specifically stated in the Locher report, they would most likely then revert to their pre-JCS positions directly under service secretary supervision.

CNO Watkins attacked the study directly, stating, “What disappoints me in the study is

\textsuperscript{196} Papers of John Lehman, Box 5,1-8, Transcript of Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger’s testimony before the SASC, 14 November 1985” pp. 83-85.
the apparent lack of objectivity and its obvious slant, the result of excessive weight given
to selected individuals and their studies espousing one particular point of view.”

The testimony of the Service Secretaries and Deputy Defense Secretary William H. Taft IV before the SASC on the staff study followed on 6 December. John Lehman tried to make a strong opening statement, suggesting that the Committee’s proposed reforms should not, “impair civilian control,” and “structure their work around the decentralization and accountability” programs of Secretary Weinberger. Pro-reform Senators struck back at Lehman immediately by asking him a series of questions not directly related to JCS reform, much as they had unsuccessfully tried to do with Weinberger. Nunn repeatedly questioned Lehman about his past statements on removing 6000 government bureaucrats in DoD who apparently did not report to any defined superior. Lehman was forced to admit he had made that statement “in a fit of pique” and that he had really meant to say DoD should get rid of (a total of) 85000 bureaucrats in all defense agencies. Nunn continued to attack Lehman, even to the point of asking him why the Navy had so many more phone numbers than the Air Force and Army combined in the DoD phone directory. Lehman could only reply, “Well, I guess we just have more telephones.” Senator Exon asked Lehman why the General Dynamics Corp. had been suspended from government contracts for 48 hours without a specific cause indicated. Senator Kennedy took up the questioning from there, harassing Lehman over the dismissal of a wing commander at Miramar over a $600.00 ashtray he purportedly

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197 Papers of John Lehman, Box 5, 1-8, Oral statement of CNO Watkins before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Department of Defense Reorganization, 5 December 1985.
199 Ibid.
purchased. Only later was John Warner able to rescue Lehman though a more innocuous series of questions. The other service secretaries faced minimal questioning by comparison. Through skillful use of Congressional procedures pro-reform Senators had been much more successful in preventing the service chiefs or Lehman from stating their anti-reform positions than they had been in limiting Weinberger’s testimony.

Weinberger however had already decided to make concessions. In letter to Goldwater and Nunn, Weinberger proposed a significant compromise in that he would accept “certain proposals to strengthen the role of the Chairman of the JCS, such as codifying the following functions now being performed by the Chairman: heading the JCS; attending the NSC meetings subject to the direction of the President; and providing alternative views of the JCS.” Weinberger added that he could also accept the designation of the Chairman as the principle military advisor to the President provided he was also required by law to present the alternative views of the other JCS members. Weinberger also agreed to the designation of a four star deputy Chairman, although not that the deputy be the designated acting Chairman. He completely rejected the idea of a Joint Military Advisory Council (JMAC) calling its replacement of the JCS “a net harmful impact on our national security.” Weinberger further stated that he had initiated several internal reviews of existing procedures, in particular a review of JCS publication #2 “Unified Action Armed Forces” which governed joint war-fighting with

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201 Papers of John Lehman, Box 5, 1-8, Letter from Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger to SASC Chairman Barry Goldwater, 02 December 1985.
202 Ibid.
an expected completion date of 30 June 1986.\textsuperscript{203} This attempt to affect change by use of internal process indicates Weinberger was likely bargaining for more time to initiate changes within the Department of Defense that would placate the SASC and at the same time, give support to several reform provisions. He had done this in 1983 when significant defense reorganization reform legislation was under consideration in the House of Representatives. In a 19 December 1985 return letter to Weinberger, Goldwater and Nunn stated “they were pleased that you determined that there was merit in a number of the proposals to improve the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the unified command system.”\textsuperscript{204}

The Navy viewed Weinberger’s 02 December letter as a significant concession. In “Memorandum for the Record,” published a week after, the Navy Department indicated that Weinberger’s letter had “substantively altered the context of the debate of the reorganization issue, confirming the certainty of significant legislation.”\textsuperscript{205} Despite this concession, the Navy Department would not give up easily, ending with the statement, “A comprehensive and coherent alternative (to the Locher report) is essential, a damage limiting counter-strategy is unsatisfactory,” and “laying the foundations for a Presidential veto should be pursued.”\textsuperscript{206} With Weinberger’s exit from active participation in the anti-reform cause, John Lehman became the most significant remaining opponent to reform legislation.

\textsuperscript{203} Papers of John Lehman, Box 5, 1-8, Letter from Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger to SASC Chairman Barry Goldwater, 02 December 1985.
\textsuperscript{204} Papers of John Lehman, Box 5,1-8, Letter from SASC Chairman to Defense Secretary Weinberger, 19 December 1985.
\textsuperscript{205} Papers of John Lehman, Box 5, 1-8, Memorandum for the Record: Status of the Defense Reorganization Issue, 09 December 1985.
\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
General Hittle was again on scene to provide useful intelligence on Senate reaction to the reforms proposed in the Locher report. In a 23 December 1985 memo he indicated that Locher may have reached the limits of his influence and that cooler heads in the Senate might be amenable to less dramatic legislation. Hittle reported that SASC Staff Director Jim McGovern told him there was a belief that Locher was “too close to the study and lacked objectivity,” and thus any potential defense reform legislation he might draft would be “extreme.”

McGovern said that Goldwater did not support the more radical elements and had asked him to become more involved in creating the proposed reform legislation. McGovern also told Hittle that this legislation would need to be “toned down” in order to gain enough of a majority in the SASC to be presented for a full Senate vote. Hittle further reported that the overall feel of the SASC was one favoring some reform, but not the drastic reforms advocated in the Locher report. After having lunch with Locher as well, Hittle was convinced Locher did not understand the SASC’s true feelings on reform since he believed there was strong support in the Committee for his study as written. Lehman, the Navy Department staff, and Senior Navy and Marine Corps officers would use Hittle’s information to undermine the more drastic reform measures and convince legislators to support a compromise bill that allowed for some reforms, but not such drastic measures as the JMAC or the abolition of the JCS.

Lehman continued opposition to reform by lobbying individual SASC members, trying to get Secretary Weinberger back into active opposition, and applying a political spin to the argument. His fight had become more complicated for the added reason that the Locher report had emboldened the reformer-dominated House of Representatives to

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207 Papers of John Lehman, Box 5, 1-8, Memo from BGEN Hittle to Lehman, 23 December 1985.
introduce bills from both Representatives Aspin and Skelton in January 1986 that called for reorganization of the JCS as suggested by Generals Jones and Meyer in 1983. Lehman, Cropsey, and Hittle lobbied both Senators on the SASC and their staffs, particularly those without a strong opinion to join their side of the argument. They specifically targeted Senators John Glenn (D/OH), John East (R/NC) and Dan Quayle (R/IN) as potential converts to the anti-reform cause. The Department of the Navy opened an office specifically to coordinate responses to specific parts of defense reform legislation and created a database to analyze the provisions of the proposed House and Senate reforms with an anti-reform response for each. Lehman wrote to Secretary Weinberger and labeled the Locher report and the proposed Senate legislation to implement its recommendations as “an outdated return to the policies of McNamara. What supreme irony that Goldwater has become the unwitting tool of the liberal „whiz fogies.“208 Finally, Cropsey collected a convincing series of quotes from Democratic reformers showing that they were already seeking to use the defense reform issue for political purposes in the November 1986 elections. These included statements by Sam Nunn and Les Aspin to the Democratic Leadership Council in March 1986 where the two specifically addressed military reform as necessary since, “Reagan’s failure to develop a coherent military strategy,” and “living in a dream world, out of sync with reality,” was one of the reasons for their efforts to bring about defense reorganization.209

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208 Papers of John Lehman, Box 6,1-8, Hand-written memo to Secretary Weinberger from John Lehman, 31 January 1986.
209 Papers of John Lehman, Box 5,1-8, Memo from Seth Cropsey to John Lehman, 30 December 1985.
Goldwater and Nunn were also getting tougher and playing more aggressively, especially in regard to Lehman’s opposition movement. Goldwater threatened to hold up action on the defense budget and military promotions if defense reorganization reform did not get a timely vote.\textsuperscript{210} He discovered the existence of the Navy office on defense reorganization in February 1986 and not only sent a blistering note to Weinberger asking, “the activities of the Secretary of the Navy and those under his command who actively campaigned against our attempts to perform our constitutional duties to oversee the military comported with prohibitions (against such activity?)”, but also tipped off the \textit{Armed Forces Journal International} magazine who wrote an article about Goldwater’s complaints in their March 1986 issue.\textsuperscript{211} Goldwater continued to harangue Weinberger on the point of the Navy’s anti-reform activity to the point that Seth Cropsey was eventually barred from discussion of defense reform topics with members of Congress without prior approval from the Office of the Secretary of Defense.\textsuperscript{212} Goldwater’s wrath extended even to Weinberger directly and to President Reagan, both of whom sent letters to Goldwater in March 1986 assuring him they were not opposed to defense reform and welcomed his legislative efforts. John Lehman would later say defense reform was a „retirement gift” to Barry Goldwater and nothing would stand in the way of that.”\textsuperscript{213}

Senator Warner remained an active member of the anti-reform team when the proposed Senate defense reform bill entered markup sessions on February 4 1986.\textsuperscript{214} He

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\item \textsuperscript{210} Goldwater, p. 447-448.
\item \textsuperscript{211} Papers of James Locher, Box 14, Folder 020 DoD (Mar) “Letter from Barry Goldwater to Caspar Weinberger”, 6 March 1986.
\item \textsuperscript{212} Papers of James Locher, Box 14, Folder 020 DoD (May) “Letter from Caspar Weinberger to Barry Goldwater”, 23 May 1986.
\item \textsuperscript{213} Interview with John Lehman by the author, 18 Jan 2012.
\item \textsuperscript{214} Lederman, p. 73.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
offered 87 written and forty oral amendments to the legislation to exempt the Navy from many of the joint staff provisions. Lehman joined the other service secretaries and service chiefs in writing last-ditch opposition letters to the SASC attempting to stir up some opposition. His letter concluded with, “we need less bureaucracy, not more; fewer bureaucratic layers, not more; less congressional micromanagement, not more, and more decentralization and accountability rather than a return to the „whiz kid’’ theories contained in your staff draft.” Secretary Weinberger’s letter to the Committee was more conciliatory and included support for the supreme authority of the Chairman of the JCS over the service chiefs provided that there was no weakening of the specific powers of the Defense Secretary. The Navy opposition was rapidly losing the battle to prevent all reform efforts, but perhaps on its way to moderating the overall outcome. Senator Warner, aided by Senators Denton, and Wilson continued the amendment battle until February 6 when a key Navy-desired amendment that would rotate the position of Chairman among the service chiefs when the chairman was absent was defeated by a vote of 10-7. Warner was successful however in getting nearly 50 amendments to the proposed Senate legislation, the addition of which he credited to the “help he had received from the Pentagon and retired (military) community.”

The support of the Packard Commission for the reform package in late February convinced President Reagan to issue a letter in support of the legislation on 26 April. The

215 Lederman, p.73.
216 Papers of John Lehman, Box 6,1-8, Letter from Secretary of the Navy John Lehman to Chairman of the Senate Armed Service Committee Barry Goldwater”, February 1986.
217 Locher, Victory on the Potomac, p. 378.
218 Papers of James Locher, Box 14, folder 020, DoD (Mar) “memo from Asst. Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs to Secretary of Defense, subj: SASC draft legislation news conference, 06 March 1986".
Senate approved the “Barry Goldwater Department of Defense Reorganization Act” on May 7 1986 by a vote of 95 to 3. Senator Warner voted in support of the bill. The House followed in the same month with the William Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act: by a vote of 406-4. Conference Committee procedures began in August 1986, and the Senate and House passed the joint Goldwater Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act respectively on 16 and 17 September 1986. President Reagan signed the act into law on 01 October.\(^{219}\) Lehman and Cropsey continued to fight the legislation right down to its signature by the President. Lehman and his service chiefs Admiral Watkins and General Kelley sent a letter to Weinberger on 23 July 1986 to protest the downgrading of service chief responsibilities and specifically a House bill provision to integrate the staffs of the civilian service secretaries with their service chiefs’ staffs. Although successful in this effort, an 11 Sep 1986 memo from Cropsey to Lehman was still bleak on the overall result of the defense reorganization legislation, especially on the growing powers of the CJCS to “advise appropriateness of service roles and missions; recommend broad allocation of defense resources, and advise on Military department budgets.”\(^{220}\)

The retirement of JCS Chairman General John Vessey, who still had six months of service in his second term left open the possibility for another front for reformers to influence the JCS to support reorganization efforts.\(^{221}\) Vessey had opposed reorganization and testified before both the SASC and the HASC to that effect. Vessey viewed the JCS

\(^{219}\) Lederman, pp. 74-76.
\(^{221}\) Perry, p.334.
as an advisory board and not a command structure, which given the last 30 years of DoD expansion, often at the expense of the JCS, had left little other real operational authority for the senior service officers. When questioned by a HASC Investigations subcommittee letter if he was concerned if civilians in the Pentagon were making decisions that should be more properly made by uniformed military officers, Vessey replied, “The Joint Chiefs make few decisions, per se. Our function is to advise the President, the Secretary of Defense and the NSC and carry out the policies of the Secretary and the President.”

Vessey was replaced by Admiral William Crowe, a former Unified commander of the Pacific Command (PACOM.) Crowe played a unique role in the transition of the Joint Chiefs from their overt hostility toward all aspects of defense reform to a grudging acceptance of the new legislation. He instituted a number of changes as Chairman to move the chiefs toward reform measures before passage of the legislation. He brought the chiefs and legislators like Goldwater, Nunn, and Nichols together for sometimes stormy, but also effective meetings where both sides could express their concerns. His support for reform and his work to slowly bring the on Chiefs on board with the proposed changes weakened the Navy’s attempt to bring all the service chiefs into uniform opposition to reform legislation.

Crowe is often referred to as a defense reorganization reform supporter. In a retrospective article in 1999, Locher referred to Admiral Crowe as someone who believed that “significant reform was necessary,” and supported reform efforts from his first day in

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Foreign Affairs analyst and journalist Mark Perry on the other hand accused Crowe of being overly loyal to Secretary Weinberger, even for a CJCS Chairman and only developed support for reform after a year in office. Whatever contradictions exist in Crowe’s service as Chairman, both Locher and Perry agree Crowe played a significant role in at least muting some of the chiefs’ stronger opposition to reform. In his own autobiography, Crowe sees himself as more a mediator and conciliator than a hard-nosed pro-reformer like Generals Jones and Meyer. He is supportive of reform, but also willing to criticize reformers harsh tactics.

Crowe devoted an entire chapter of his memoir to the Goldwater Nichols Act where he criticized the Joint Chiefs for “watered-down” positions, and poor quality of joint staff officers. He also criticized the Navy for being generally opposed to in his words, “anything that looked sounded or smelled joint.” Despite these criticisms, Crowe also took great pains to offer explanations as to why the Navy had the worldview it did. He explained that the Navy and Marine Corps needed a greater portion of their officers at sea or other operational assignments in peacetime than the Army or Air Force. This enabled the Army and Air Force to place more officers in staff positions, particularly in Washington D.C. than the Navy could. This shortcoming on the Navy’s part in not placing more importance on staff duty made the Navy, in Crowe’s opinion subject to an inferiority complex since its staff officers had less experience in “negotiating tricky Washington terrain.” The former Chairman also explained how the retired senior officer community of each of the services complicated their ability to

Quinn, p.15.
Crowe, p. 148.
Ibid, p. 149.
support reform. The retired community would often lean on an individual chief to oppose a particular reform measure so much, that even if he was in favor the current chief had no choice but to oppose.

Crowe offered praise to Jim Locher for creating the staff study that Crowe participated in while serving as the Pacific Commander, but also took Locher to task for being unnecessarily rude and harsh toward the opposition. Crowe described Locher as “smart and dynamic,” and rates the staff study he produced as “an exceptionally interesting, 650 page report (on) American armed forces organization and decision-making that was one of the best ever compiled.”

Crowe also said that “Locher succeeded in alienating a great many people. He was a good scholar, but he was young and quite convinced of the rightness of his views. The Chiefs were not pleased by the whole undertaking in the first place, and they were irate at Locher’s far-reaching conclusions and at the antagonism toward the JCS they sensed from him.”

This middle-ground position became very useful for Crowe in that he could advocate reform measures without seeming to officially join the reform movement. Crowe’s representatives, notably his staff attorney Captain Richard DeBobes, USN met regularly with both Locher’s SASC staffers working on draft language for the Senate defense reform bill and with Defense Department and service representatives (among the John Lehman’s Navy Dept. staff) providing point papers opposing reform to Secretary Weinberger. Crowe convinced the chiefs to re-write Joint Publication #1, the document that spells out the command structure of the U.S. military. In doing so he convinced the

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226 Crowe, p.147.
chiefs to moderate some of their strongest oppositions to reform. Crowe advised Secretary Weinberger to at least “get out in front” of the defense reform movement, but in Crowe’s words, Weinberger preferred to “go down fighting” the measure.\footnote{Crowe, p. 157.}

The most significant role Crowe claims for himself in the final approval process for reform legislation was in getting Congressman Nichols to drop the HASC provision to create a specific Joint Officer Corps with congressionally-mandated selection and promotion requirements that all the chiefs rejected as “a horrendous case of congressional micromanagement.”\footnote{Ibid, p. 158.} Mark Perry quotes unnamed Congressional sources as saying Crowe’s role was even more significant. Although there is some debate between Perry and Crowe himself as to how big a reform supporter the Chairman really was, his decision to at least not oppose the measure and support the bulk of its provisions convinced many Congressmen to vote in favor of the legislation.\footnote{Perry, p. 338.} Crowe’s actions, whether decidedly in favor of reform or only mildly supportive played a critical role in mitigating opposition from other senior military officers and probably rallied more Congressional supporters to the pro-reform side.

Spiraling defense budgets and public criticism of wasteful government spending would give defense reorganization reformers their third significant victory that ultimately ensured the passage of the Goldwater Nichols Act. The Reagan defense buildup had continued into the President’s second term, but was now frequently a target in both Congress and the press for some spectacular excesses. The “$640.00 toilet seat” made famous by the by a May 1985 \textit{Washington Post} cartoon by artist “Herblock” among other

\footnote{228 Crowe, p. 157.} \footnote{229 Ibid, p. 158.} \footnote{230 Perry, p. 338.}
criticisms jeopardized the administration’s rearmament plans. On 17 June 1985, apparently at the behest of National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane, President Reagan appointed a Blue Ribbon commission led by former Deputy Secretary of Defense David Packard to investigate defense reform. McFarlane had been the National Security Council (NSC) crisis action officer during the Mayaguez incident in 1975 and was a strong proponent of defense reorganization reform. In 2002 he was to say that, “For twenty years as a Marine, and nine more in the White House, I watched with growing anguish the pointless loss of life caused by dysfunctional Pentagon decision-making.” In 1985 however, he concealed his direct support for defense reorganization due to a fragile working relationship with Secretary Weinberger. Despite pleas from SASC staffers to directly confront the Defense Secretary on the question of reform, McFarlane refused. John Tower would later say got McFarlane to authorize administration action by giving him a copy of Locher’s staff work on the subject. In any case McFarlane told SASC staffers in April 1985 that he would get the president to appoint a Blue Ribbon Commission on the subject.

Previous administrations had followed the same route, only to have their recommendations ignored by Congress or suppressed by administration allies of the individual military services. President Reagan was not explicitly opposed to defense reorganization and both James Locher and Harvard scholar Gordon Lederman suspect the

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232 Lederman, p. 70.
234 Ibid, advance praise.
236 Perry, pp. 332-333.
President agreed to McFarlane’s recommendation in order to protect his rearmament program and his friend Caspar Weinberger from criticism. Weinberger for his part immediately endorsed the Commission. Although Senate staffers like Locher claimed Weinberger was arrogant and just assumed his management style would be vindicated, John Lehman says that Weinberger’s primary mission, like the President’s was Reagan’s defense buildup, and that all other issues were prioritized below that in importance. The Defense Secretary would not risk his longtime friend Reagan’s cornerstone legacy of military strength.

Packard had been a deputy Secretary of Defense in the Nixon Administration and was a known proponent of reform. In a 20 June 1985 New York Times interview, Packard said that the Pentagon was “as wasteful and disorganized as it was two decades ago,” but that it was a systemic fault and not that specifically of Secretary Weinberger. The commission was purposely bipartisan and included pro-reformers such as future Secretary of Defense William Perry and retired Air Force General Brent Scowcroft, and anti-reformers such as Frank Carlucci, Weinberger’s first deputy, and retired Admiral James Holloway. While the focus of the Packard Commission was the Defense Department’s Planning, Procurement, and Budgeting system (PPBS), it also intended to examine the organization and decision-making process of the JCS. President Reagan’s appointment of what became known as the Packard Commission substantially tipped the battle for defense reform in favor of the reformers. The administration was now on the

237 Lederman, p. 63.
238 Interview with John Lehman by the author, 18 January 2012.
pro-reform team, and Lehman and other anti-reformers would have to conduct their campaign without the direct support of Secretary Weinberger.

The interim Packard report, delivered on 28 February 1986 largely agreed with the SASC working legislation in that:

1) The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is empowered as the President’s principal military advisor with authority over the JCS and responsibility to the Secretary of Defense and the president. A Vice Chairman should also be appointed to chair the JCS in the Chairman’s absence.
2) The Chairman should have extensive budgeting authority based on advice from the theater CINCs and translate that advice into budget guidelines to the services.
3) The Chairman would be empowered to recommend military strategy to the Secretary and the President based on the advice of the CINCs.
4) The Unified and Specified Commands (theater CINCs) should be further empowered to conduct their missions without service interference.
5) The statutory limit on the number of officers that can be assigned to the Joint Staff should be abolished.  

That really is not surprising since the Commission and the SASC staff had close contact from September 1985 through the February 1986 release of the interim report. Packard had concluded an 18 Sept 1985 breakfast meeting between the SASC Defense Organization task force and his commission members by saying, “it is time to do something fundamental and that Congress and the commission must keep in communication.” The commission’s first meeting as a group on 08 October 1985 was a brief by Goldwater, Nunn, and Locher on the staff study. These close contacts between the SASC staff and the Packard commission went on throughout the latter’s existence according to James Locher. A convergence of views between the two groups would not have been unexpected. The Packard Commission establishment essentially made the Reagan administration part of the pro-reform team and nullified much of Secretary Weinberger’s support for anti-reformers. Its preliminary report supporting pro-reform

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241 The President’s Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, pp. 11-12.
242 Locher, Victory on the Potomac, p. 392.
efforts significantly contributed to Goldwater and Nunn’s legislative effort that began in earnest in February 1986.
CONCLUSION

Goldwater and Nunn’s collective legislative efforts, the addition of a CJCS who was supportive of the proposed reforms, and the Packard Commission’s initial report were enough together to prevent the anti-reform forces led by John Lehman from stopping any reform legislation from being enacted. Previous reform efforts in Congress in the early 1980s did not have advocates as senior or influential as Barry Goldwater and Sam Nunn. The nation had experienced the Vietnam War, and military failures such as the Pueblo incident of 1968 and the failed Iranian hostage rescue mission in 1980. There appeared to be real evidence, as Goldwater and Nunn suggested, that the system that had been so successful in the Second World War needed overhaul. Their proposed legislation was bipartisan and proposed to not only fix military command and control, but also to cut waste in the spiraling military budgets without actually criticizing defense spending.

The defense reform battle in Congress in the early 1980s was significantly different that those of the late 1940s and 1958. No specific weapon systems like the B-36, or the super carrier, whole services like the Marine Corps, or significant service components like Navy or Marine Corps aviation were at risk of being cut or eliminated. Previous defense reform proposals came from the executive branch and when combined with budget issues became partisan political contests that could be manipulated by the individual services to preserve their programs and prerogatives. Unlike 1947, 1949, or 1958, the military was enjoying budget increases under the Reagan military buildup. No Senator or Representative would be responsible for the loss of defense jobs in their state.
or district if they voted in favor of the Goldwater Nunn legislation, or the Aspin Nichols version in the House.

The addition of Barry Goldwater to those legislators pursuing defense reorganization reform in January 1985 was pivotal to the legislation’s success and the defeat of Lehman’s anti-reform campaign. The legendary Senator’s long term support of the military, influence with senior members of the Reagan administration, bipartisan cooperation with Sam Nunn, and ruthless use of his powers as Chairman of the SASC succeeded in resurrecting defense reorganization reform and placing it in the first rank of Congressional, military, and Reagan administration business by the fall of 1985. There were a series of House defense reorganization bills ably sponsored and managed by Bill Nichols, Les Aspin, and Ike Skelton, but without an accompanying study as demanded by Goldwater and Nunn, their bills would have to wait for the Packard Commission initial report to gain significant interest and support. The fact that the legislation became Goldwater’s legacy project when his retirement from the Senate was announced made direct opposition futile.

The appointment of Admiral Crowe to the CJCS position was of great importance to pro-reformers. General Jones had been CJCS when he first advocated reform in 1982, but had retired almost immediately after his call for reform. Having a serving CJCS to promote reform and prepare the Joint Chiefs for its implementation soothed injured egos among the nation’s top military officers and muted most of the remaining criticisms, although senior Navy and Marine Corps leaders continued opposition to specific parts of the legislation right up to President Reagan’s signature on the legislation.
The addition of the Packard Commission to the pro-reform advocates made direct opposition from Weinberger or even President Reagan impossible. It would have been difficult for Reagan and Weinberger to completely reject the recommendations from a commission they appointed and endorsed and led by a respected senior Republican Party member like David Packard. Both the President and his Defense Secretary ultimately valued their rearmament program over questions of the military’s chain of command. Secretary Lehman and the service chiefs were left alone to run the opposition movement.

In the twenty-five years since its passage, pro-reformers such as Senator Nunn and James Locher have claimed that the Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986 was a resounding victory for the reform camp over so-called “service Parochialists” like Lehman, Admiral Watkins, and General Kelley. Success in the 1991 Gulf War, perceived success in the Balkan Wars of the 1990s, and initial success in both the wars in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 seem to confirm the act’s success in the eyes of its proponents. A closer analysis of the Goldwater Nichols Act and its place in an almost fifty year struggle between pro and anti-defense reform efforts indicates a much less decisive outcome.

Of the 12 specific recommendations in the Locher report defined as “most important,” none were adopted in the final Goldwater Nichols Act legislation. The closest to come to fruition was the establishment of a joint career specialty in each service. The actual legislation provided for the designation of an officer joint specialty “in addition to their principle military occupational specialty.”

recommendation that was nearly included in the legislation was a provision to combine the service secretary and service chiefs’ staffs together (with significant cuts for both in the process,) but it was removed during Conference Committee proceedings thanks to efforts by Senators friendly to Navy concerns. The Chairman’s powers were expanded as initially recommended by General Jones, including designation as the President’s principal military advisor (PMA), and additional responsibilities in budgeting, strategic planning, and allocation of missions to individual services but the Joint Chiefs of Staff remained in place. The Unified Commanders also received expanded powers to train, equip, and direct their component air, sea, and land forces, responsibilities they previously shared with the service chiefs. Locher himself later claimed that the bulk of his entire report was merely a ruse by himself, Sam Nunn, and other staffers to compel anti-reformers into negotiations that would result in the adoption of policies strengthening the CJCS and the Unified commanders. Barry Goldwater appears to refute that claim in his own memoir. In a retrospective of the future of defense reorganization he states, “Our committee focused on six major missions of the Defense department: nuclear deterrence, maritime superiority, general power projection superiority, defense of NATO Europe, defense of East Asia, and defense of Southeast Asia.” These were the same six missions the Locher report desired around which to organize the military. Goldwater continued, “Under reorganization, the objective is the mission, not the service.” These statements seem to indicate Goldwater’s real goal was exactly what was stated in the staff study. Whatever the actual intent, the outcome of the defense

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244 Goldwater, p.451.
245 Ibid.
reorganization reform struggle of 1985-1986 produced a relatively moderate bill that largely echoed the recommendations of the 1985 CSIS report, the Packard Commission and General David Jones’ original proposals from 1982 rather than the more radical suggestions of the Locher report.

The overall effectiveness of the Goldwater Nichols Act remains in question by some critics despite repeated pronouncements of success by its creators and those in the Department of Defense vested in its provisions. The additional powers and responsibilities of the CJCS at the expense of the service chiefs remain a target for critics. In the 2001 edition to his book, Command of the Seas, John Lehman remarked that, “total control of operational forces is now in the hands of the unified military commanders. There is no civilian authority except the Secretary of Defense,” and “This is not a healthy situation for a democracy. In peacetime it makes operational forces immune from civilian management. In war it could lead to grave developments. This loss of civilian control is the result of the drive for unification and jointness.”  

Three instances from the last twenty five years detail this concern. John Lehman cites the end of the Gulf War in 1991 as the first example. CJCS general Colin Powell ended the ground war in Kuwait and southern Iraq after only 96 hours based in some part by news reports that the U.S. and its allies had already destroyed the bulk of the Iraqi armored forces and might appear to be “killing Iraqis just for the sake of killing them.” The Unified Commander General Norman Schwarzkopf agreed despite earlier statements indicating he wanted to destroy

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246 Lehman, p. 382.
the elite forces of Iraq’s Republican Guard before stopping the ground war.247

Schwarzkopf later negotiated the cease fire and end of the first Gulf War that allowed the Iraqis to fly helicopter patrols that proved crucial in suppressing an anti-Saddam Hussein revolt that occurred just after the conflict in the Gulf concluded. Goldwater Nichols had empowered CJCS like Powell and Commanders like Schwarzkopf at the expense of service secretaries and service chiefs who might have been in position to provide President George H.W. Bush and Defense Secretary Richard Cheney with more diverse and effective advice.

Lehman also describes the hunt for Osama Bin Laden before September 2001 as another example of Goldwater Nichols’ limitations. He detailed one episode reviewed by the 9/11 Commission where President Bill Clinton was offered several opportunities in 1998 by the Central Intelligence Agency and Special Operations Command (SOCOM) to capture or kill Bin Laden. These plans included some risky elements including landing troops to attack Bin Laden’s facilities on the ground, but were well supported by intelligence. CJCS General Hugh Shelton and Joint Staff leadership were opposed to such measures. In the end, in Lehman’s words, an opportunity to kill Bin Laden in 1998 was lost. The 9/11 Commission proceedings directly support this statement in a quote from Secretary of Defense William Cohen stating, “I would have to place my judgment call in terms of, do I believe that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and former commander of the

Special Forces Command, is in a better position to make a judgment on the feasibility of this than, perhaps, Mr. Clark.”

Finally, if the defense decision-making process had remained more decentralized, would the United States have rushed so quickly into war in Iraq in 2003? Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, his JCS Chairman General Richard Myers, and Central Command CINC General Tommy Franks controlled all aspects of war planning and execution. In an unplanned, accidental intervention in this process, Army Chief General Eric Shinseki commented during Congressional testimony on unrelated Army issues that the number of troops required for occupation of Iraq after an invasion was too low after being pressed by Senator Carl Levin (D/MI) for an answer. Rumsfeld and Myers quickly refuted his remarks. Many in the press believed that Shinseki’s replacement as Army Chief of Staff was announced months earlier than normal due to his comments.²⁴⁹ If the Army Secretary and Chief of Staff had been more involved in planning for the postwar occupation of Iraq, would the war and occupation have continued to their current duration of 8 years?

These three examples, in additional to a continuing inability to control spiraling defense costs remain questionable legacies of the Goldwater Nichols Act of 1986. Navy and Marine Corps opposition to defense reorganization reform in the 1980s could not prevent reform entirely, but preserved some of the corporate structure of national security planning first articulated by Ferdinand Eberstadt, James Forrestal and Admiral King at

the end of the Second World War. The JCS as an institution representing both service and joint concerns remains, although now firmly dominated by a more powerful chairman whose position and authority has overridden more sound military advice on several occasions since 1986. The pro-reform camp finally achieved an empowered Chairman as envisioned by Generals George C. Marshall and Dwight Eisenhower, but that officer is not in the direct chain of command as envisioned by its unitary command system originators and the military remains organized by service rather than by function or mission. Although near universally praised and admired in the Department of Defense and uniformed military, the Goldwater Nichols Act is a product of the late Cold War and its persistence into the post-Cold War world without significant revision is troubling. Given that nearly every other Cold War-era plan or provision of the U.S. military has been extensively re-examined since 1991, perhaps it is time for a review of the provisions of the Goldwater Nichols Act.
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