Movement and Maneuver

Culture and the Competition for Influence Among the U.S. Military Services

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Preface

This report presents findings intended to assist the Office of the Secretary of Defense to understand the current character of interservice competition and how service culture impacts the ways in which the military services posture themselves to secure institutional relevance. We examine cultural shifts and competitive strategies that have developed over the last 30 years, focusing on events and patterns that have emerged since the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. In this report, we analyze the cultural characteristics and competitive strategies and tactics exhibited by the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Based on this analysis, we assess how each of the services and USSOCOM might adapt and respond if faced with major policy shifts in the future, focusing specifically on contingencies in the Asia-Pacific.

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Summary

In late 2001, amid the massive reorientation of the Department of Defense (DoD) to the counterterror mission, then–Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld directed the Marine Corps to study ways to better integrate its capabilities with U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Despite the pressure at the time to support USSOCOM as the lead prosecutor of the war on terrorism, and the possibility of significant resources provided to the Marine Corps to do so, the Marines spent most of the next four years arguing against the creation of a formal Marine special operations forces (SOF) command. In 2012, the Army, already overcommitted and strained by constant operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, responded with "anxiety . . . envy and skepticism" to the Air Force and Navy's signature operating concept, Air-Sea Battle, which included no role for landpower.[1] Today, each of the services has signed on to the operational concept known as Multi-Domain Battle, despite a continuing lack of clarity as to what the concept actually means.

There is a construct that policymakers and scholars use to understand the fundamental process of national security policymaking. It casts military concepts, capabilities, and forces as the logical result of U.S. national policy priorities. Yet in the cases just mentioned, and in countless others, services behave in ways that are impossible to explain according to this simple, normative idea of policymaking. To understand why a service argues against developing an important new capability or pushes for new roles and missions even when overcommitted, one must seek explanations below the surface of the policy process. While the mechanisms that move policy at this level may be hidden, they provide a richer and fuller picture of the reality of U.S. national security policy.

We have called this report *Movement and Maneuver* in recognition of the bureaucratic battlefield of sorts on which the services and other actors play out a competition that is driven by organizational cultures as much as by pure interest. Joint warfighting doctrine describes movement and maneuver as the conduct of operations by "securing positional advantages before or during combat operations and by exploiting tactical

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[1] Sydney J. Freedberg, Jr., "Army Scrambles to Play Catch-Up On AirSea Battle," *Breaking Defense*, June 7, 2012.

success to achieve operational and strategic objectives."[2] In the same sense, services adopt favorable positions relative to other national security actors and use their tactical advantages to press for strategic goals. This monograph draws out these behaviors in order to explain how and why services adopt the policy positions they do. Just as strategies in war shift and adapt in the face of new threats and opportunities, so too does competition change as the environment changes. Our ultimate purpose is to provide the reader a rough guide to navigate future institutional responses to a changing environment. How might the services react to a sudden change in resource levels or region of focus?

Our research makes three essential arguments:

- First, that service personalities are alive and well. They endure, but they also evolve slowly to allow adaptation to the present environment.
- Second, despite the changes brought about by the Goldwater-Nichols DoD Reorganization Act of 1986, commonly known as Goldwater-Nichols, services remain the most powerful organizational actors in national defense. However, their relative edge over the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), combatant commands (CCMDs), and the Joint Staff has decreased, leading to a more complex field of competition.
- Third, that this complexity, increased by Goldwater-Nichols, has created changes to the character of competition in the national security arena. The relevant actors have expanded to include elevated roles for the Marine Corps and USSOCOM, and the tactics and arenas of competition have changed.

Giving Shape to Culture and Competition

In 1989, RAND researcher Carl H. Builder published *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis*. Builder's book was the first to make the case that services have distinctive personalities and that, because the services overwhelmingly dominate the defense decisionmaking landscape, those personalities can reveal the future of national security policy. Builder's work is a major reference point for this research, but we also depart from Builder's analysis in a few important ways. In particular, Builder described service personalities as essentially a snapshot in time, and he ascribed little faith to the idea that Goldwater-Nichols could reshape defense relationships.

The study of service culture and competition is necessarily an exercise in interpretation. As Builder expressed it, "Do the American military services ever drop their masks of war and admit to their institutional self-interests? Rarely, I think, and then only within earshot of their own family."[3] In order to study these patterns of culture

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[2]   Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*, Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, January 17, 2017, p. III-33.

[3]   Carl Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989, p. 14.

and competition, we relied on scholarly literature; primary source documents; interviews with members of the services, veterans, and experts in the field; and workshop discussion forums. We established contemporary service cultures and identified service goals that resulted from cultural preferences. Where possible, we related these to the "canonical" personalities set forth by Builder, in order to highlight changes to, or differences with, those portraits. Unlike Builder, we treated the Marine Corps as a service, though it is not its own military department, and we treated USSOCOM as a service-like entity because of its high level of autonomy and elevated role in contemporary warfare, though we do not take a position on whether USSOCOM should become a standalone service. In most cases in which we use the term *service*, both the Marine Corps and USSOCOM are included.

Our study finds that competition today is by no means limited to a simple resourcing game but rather spans multiple arenas, as seen in Table S.1. Competition for resources remains strong, but the pressures of jointness and the ready availability of wartime funding—such as that for overseas contingency operations (OCO), a type of emergency funding—have made resourcing less of a zero-sum game. Services both compete through and compete for their personnel. Each service has a different approach to identifying joint and service institutional talent, and each values different joint assignments. These joint assignments, particularly at midlevels, are generally still prized less than service time is, with some exceptions. Another key arena of service competition is the fight for current roles and missions. Here, services will compete to fill key roles or, in certain instances, will fight hard not to be saddled with missions they find undesirable. For the Air Force, for example, unmanned aviation was a mission it culturally rejected for a number of years before finally becoming convinced it was a boon. In the realm of current roles today, the loss of domain dominance is a major concern for the services, particularly the Air Force and Navy. While the Army is concerned about near-peer competitors, the sovereign nature of land makes domain dominance less of an expectation. Finally, the apex of competition is the fight for future institutional security. In some sense, the other arenas of competition are merely intermediate goals on the path to future service autonomy and relevance. In its most

Table S.1
Arenas of Competition

Resources	Personnel	Current Roles and Missions	Future Institutional Security
DoD budget process and congressional appropriations (base budgets, OCO, acquisition of major systems and platforms)	Approach to personnel development and promotions, relative value of joint versus service experience, prioritization of certain assignments over others	Competition for roles in specific contingencies or ongoing military efforts	Roles and relevance a service hopes to secure in the future (specific missions, primacy over domains, concepts and technology development)

basic form, this can be seen in the fact that the Army, Navy, and Air Force each has as a competitive goal acceptance of its domain as central to modern warfare. In some essential way, then, each of these services is constantly fighting to ensure its place in future war. Interestingly, this is not true of the Marine Corps and USSOCOM, which are less tied to specific domains and tend to have military means as competitive goals.

Within each of the competitive arenas, the services adopt a wide range of positions, in some cases competing forcefully for a share, and in others relying on natural advantages to make a case for them. In the course of this research, we also discovered ways in which the services habitually tend to make their case across the arenas of competition. These are the arguments and the activities that the services like to employ no matter the subject of discussion. We called these tactics of competition, and they vary widely from service to service. Each tactic ends up being fairly culturally determined. A brief overview of service competitive goals and performance in arenas of competition is provided here to illustrate these concepts in action.

Army

The Army has three key competitive goals that suffuse its policy positions in the long term. First, it seeks acceptance of the centrality of ground combat in warfare. While this may seem to go without saying, the persistence of irregular warfare and the pressure of support missions have at times thrown this into doubt. The Army's second competitive goal is the preservation and growth of end strength and force structure, a natural corollary to the Army's central argument about ground combat and its nature as a mass force. Finally, the Army has a "fallback" goal of participation in every contingency. For the Army, there can be no war in which the Army does not play a role, whether that is serving as a task force headquarters or providing logistics and communication.

Across the arenas of competition, the Army typically feels secure in terms of its institutional security, but the ubiquitous nature of the Army means that it sometimes struggles to define the specifics of its purpose. The Army prefers to compete in the arena of current roles and missions, where it is comfortable in its ability to develop the concepts to drive war, and to field leaders to guide it. In the arena of personnel policies, the Army favors operational positions, whether service or joint, over either service-based institutional positions or strategic leadership. This helps to further other competitive positions, such as current roles and missions, but is not a strength in itself. Finally, because the Army sees its value to the nation as so fundamental and will ultimately undertake any role, it sometimes has difficulty articulating its argument for resources clearly.

Navy

For the Navy, a key competitive goal is the attainment of optimal force structure, which for the Navy concerns numbers and types of ships first, followed by the force structure to man the vessels. A second competitive goal is the acceptance of the endur-

ing relevance of sea control. Like the Army, this is an argument for the centrality of the service's domain to future warfare.

Conventional wisdom says that the Navy is highly skilled in the resource competition arena, and this remains true. However, the Navy no longer appears to see resources as a zero-sum competition among the services. Much of the Navy's energy is spent in reconciling the competing internal resource arguments between current demand and future needs. In personnel, the Navy places less value on joint assignments than the Army does, with the exception of retaining command of U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM). With the exception of the period immediately after the Cold War, the Navy has not doubted the future security of its institution, and it sees its missions of sea control and power projection as of enduring value. Because the Navy tends to favor independence as a service, and because it is unique in maintaining sea-based capabilities, it does not have a profound sense of having to compete for current roles and missions.

Air Force

Like the other traditional services, the Air Force's chief competitive goal is related to the relevance of its domain—in this case, to make air superiority a central tenet of American strategy. Next, it has a goal to portray the Air Force as a service that does more than enable other forces. The Air Force struggles to reconcile its view of itself as a warfighter with the view—often from other services—that air superiority supports land and sea victories. Finally, as a newer competitive goal, the Air Force seeks to reinforce dominance in space and cyber realms.

Resource competition is a preferred arena for the Air Force. By using strategic analysis, the Air Force is able to build strong arguments for resources. The Air Force is comfortable in the competition for future institutional security, which it engages in by building arguments related to near-peer competitors. Personnel competition for the Air Force is characterized by internal competition for status between specializations, rather than competition in the interservice arena. The Air Force still has unmet goals in this area in the form of joint operational leadership positions. The Air Force is challenged to compete for current roles and missions because air, space, and cyber have not been key domains of competition in recent wars. To some degree, this problem can be traced back to the Air Force's identity crisis as both warfighter and enabler.

Marine Corps

The Marine Corps has several competitive goals. First, it strives to demonstrate continued relevance by leveraging forward presence and furthering the idea of the Marine Corps as America's crisis response force. Next, it has the goal of preserving its forcible entry mission for contested environments, as well as a goal of preserving operational responsibility and autonomy. Finally, the Marine Corps has as a goal the preservation of its unique culture, which it sees as an inherent advantage.

The Marine Corps is at a disadvantage in the arena of future institutional security because of its often-described institutional paranoia. However, this also makes it compete ever harder to convince the American people of the utility of the service. When it comes to the competition over current roles and missions, the Marine Corps, operating at the edge of sea and land, does not have claim to a large number of missions that cannot be done by another service. As such, the Marine Corps competes in this arena by being highly adaptive. In the resource arena, the Marine Corps strategy is typically to ask for only a modest amount in dollars and end strength. The Marine Corps uses personnel as a competitive arena to support its other goals across arenas. For example, it divides its senior-most internal positions between ground and aviation, ensuring that the Marine Corps is able to articulate both positions to the larger defense enterprise. In addition, the Marine Corps adopts something of an iconoclastic approach to competition in the personnel arena, priding itself on its elite recruitment and its young demographic relative to the other services.

U.S. Special Operations Command

While each service component of USSOCOM has its own rich culture, as a whole USSOCOM pursues three competitive goals. First, it seeks to maintain and grow its autonomy in the bureaucratic space, which it sees as the key to preserving its uniqueness and flexibility. Next, USSOCOM strives to limit the overuse of SOF on the battlefield. In particular, because of the popularity of special operations among politicians and policymakers, USSOCOM finds itself continually guarding against overuse of its forces. Finally, all services have preferred roles and missions, and USSOCOM is no exception: It seeks to retain primacy on a critical mission set that highlights SOF uniqueness and enables the command to secure resources to carry it out. USSOCOM's second two goals are often in direct competition with one another: Limiting overuse while at the same time striving to define unique value across critical mission sets is a challenging balance. In the past, this has been counterterrorism, and, while maintaining leadership there, USSOCOM is now also seeking to build leadership in new missions such as countering weapons of mass destruction (CWMD).

USSOCOM prefers to compete for current roles and missions, particularly for those that it deems to be within its niche, critical missions. It uses credibility, visibility, and branding, among other tactics, to succeed at getting the roles it desires. USSOCOM is increasingly focused on the arena of future institutional security, which can be seen in its acquisition of new critical mission sets. While composed of elite warfighters, USSOCOM faces challenges in developing those personnel without being a traditional service. Despite its inability to control the career development of its personnel, it excels at selecting high performers for key positions that interface with Congress, the interagency, and other places where it can secure the goodwill of decisionmakers. In the resource competition arena, USSOCOM remains unproven. It does not appear to compete for resources as a goal, maintaining a smaller budget due to its overall size.

However, because of the sustained policy focus on special operations, it has not yet been in the position of feeling severely underfunded.

Using Culture as a Guide

The goal of our research is to provide policymakers the tools to understand and forecast service behavior in response to changing operational and policy needs. To do this, we used our research on culture and competition, both historically and today, to make some judgments about services in the future. To better illustrate the impact of culture and competition on policy positions, we asked participants in two workshop sessions to respond to a simple bureaucratic scenario: If the services knew that the only thing DoD would be interested in for the next ten years was [X], how would each service react? In the first workshop, the policy focus was a renewed emphasis on China, and in the second, an emphasis on North Korea. We selected these two scenarios because they affect each of the services differently.

Army
The Army's vision of its future self involves a return to core principles of longer-term planning, a focus on readiness and modernization, and assurance of its indispensability in a land war. If defense policymakers continue to prioritize contingency funding over base budgets, the Army will be uncomfortable. Contingency funding keeps the Army trapped in an eternal present, deferring modernization and distracting from the work of strategy building. It places no limits on the demands of combatant commands, already seen to be implacable; increases the divide between the operational and institutional; and abets its preoccupation with the tactical over the strategic. The Army would seek a few key roles that mitigate the impact of "presentism" for the service: It would offer conceptual leadership to the joint force, even if this meant taking a supporting role in operations. It would build arguments for the future based on increasing assessments of risk to the nation and, in an extreme case, could even consider further modularity as a means of increasing flexibility and preserving force structure with fewer battalions and companies per brigade.

If DoD were to shift focus only to China for the next decade, the Army, perceiving the Navy in the lead, would fear loss of end strength and push its enablers into the reserve component to maintain combat power in active component units. It would persistently argue for a non-China-centric threat picture, noting that the Army would be responsible for deterring all other threats. The Army would build its Program Objective Memorandum (POM) around non-China threats, rather than prioritize less attractive China-related missions such as shore-based antiship missiles, resulting in requests for additional funding to execute those objectives. Finally, the Army would develop joint concepts on China to ensure Army equities, so that it pre-

serves the China-related missions it does want to conduct. By contrast, a policy focus on North Korea plays to the Army's strengths. The Army could float the possibility of war with North Korea as total war, requiring additional force structure to counter conventional threats, defensive operations and crisis management in South Korea, and more. The Army would grudgingly agree to support USSOCOM in its pursuit of the CWMD mission.

Navy

Like the Army, the Navy seeks a return to a more traditional, domain-based role in the near future, in particular, sea control missions and protection of sea lines of communications (SLOCs). If forced to choose between supporting these missions and directly supporting joint operations on and over land, the Navy's choice is clear: It would sacrifice jointness for its core missions. Predictably, in the future the Navy will continue to push for investment in building high-end, advanced ships, submarines, and aircraft capable of carrying out sea control missions against a near-peer adversary at sea. It would seek power projection capabilities through aircraft carriers with fifth-generation aircraft and advanced land attack cruise missiles able to launch from ships and submarines. If the United States is not focused on a competitor that can challenge sea control, the Navy would continue to press for its core interests but would point to unpredictability combined with the long lead time for shipbuilding to argue for continued investments in its core interests.

For the Navy, a China scenario means increased relevance due to the primacy of maritime operations. The Navy would use China's maritime intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) network and modern naval arsenal to justify procurement of the high-end ships and aircraft the Navy prefers. The Navy would likely also argue for forward presence beyond China by emphasizing the unpredictability of smaller conflicts. In a North Korea policy scenario, the Navy would not contest the primacy of landpower but would promote its ability to project power by striking targets via carrier-based aircraft and ship- and submarine-launched Tomahawk land attack missiles. This is in addition to being able to defeat the limited North Korean naval capabilities in the waters around the country. North Korea is clearly not the Navy's preferred policy focus and so, while accomplishing these goals, the Navy would also be highlighting other geopolitical threats that might use more-sophisticated naval capabilities and require a robust forward presence.

Air Force

In the near future, the Air Force is likely to argue the need for air superiority and command and control, targeting, and ISR aspects of its space and cyber capabilities. Whereas the Army and Navy sought a return to core missions, the Air Force seeks to return to these types of missions but also to add new ones, such as space and cyber, to its core mission set. This could imply more cultural change for the Air Force as its sense of identity expands. The Air Force, in particular, will continue to seek leadership

positions in the joint force, either controlling air assets or taking the lead in joint task forces and other operational constructs.

Unlike the Army and Navy, the Air Force does not have as strong a preference for either a China or North Korea scenario. Both contingencies support technological advancement investments in personnel. In a conflict with China, the Air Force would try to seize the opportunity to lead on antiaccess/area denial (A2/AD) missions and would seek to emphasize its battlefield criticality through cyber and space missions. In a North Korea contingency, the Air Force could argue its primacy, pushing for global strike, forward deployed air forces, and no land forces, not only as a way of asserting a level of control over operations but also to emphasize their importance. The Air Force may propose imposing costs on the enemy with a penetrating deep strike capability, technology suited to the high-end fight the service is best suited to lead.

Marine Corps

In the near-term future, the Marine Corps will continue to prioritize the creation of tactically proficient and adaptive forces, but it will experience some tension between two mission priorities: limited crisis response operations and operations in A2/AD environments. The Marine Corps is organizing itself for a broad set of contingencies, working with the Navy, special operations, and CCMDs to ensure it is utilized. With major investments in aviation, cyber, electronic warfare, and unmanned capabilities, the Marine Corps's culture may slowly be shifting toward a more technology-centric force.

A China scenario highlights the utility of technology for the Marine Corps, as it would spur the Marine Corps to invest in its expeditionary advanced base concept, which utilizes F-35s. Unmanned systems, air defense, and sea control systems would be increasingly important, and new missions such as cyber and electronic warfare may even be worth sacrificing some attention to maneuver units. Global forward posture and operational tempo would likely be reduced in order to increase the readiness of follow-on forces in the Pacific. In a policy scenario that prepares for a North Korea–focused conflict, the Marine Corps would return to an amphibious assault role, noting the special cultural legacy of the Incheon landing for the service. In this environment, the Marine Corps would optimize for operational maneuver from the sea. The Marine Corps would still require the F-35, partly due to the operational necessity of retiring older aircraft, and partly because North Korea has sufficient A2/AD capabilities to warrant the new craft. Unmanned systems would retain their importance, but the Marine Corps would likely be less inclined to reduce global presence and operational tempo because the Army's buildup of forces would create additional time to gather Marine Corps forces.

U.S. Special Operations Command

In future warfare, USSOCOM will continue to define for itself a central role in a critical mission set and will find strengths where traditional services struggle to reorient toward a changing environment. However, the command will face the same tension

it does today in balancing its appetite for new roles and relevance with ostensible concern for overutilization of its forces. It is likely USSOCOM will preserve its autonomy through partnerships with Congress and civilian agencies, as well as by securing additional authorities, again striving for balance by not becoming so autonomous as to lose arguments for budgetary support from the services. Some core USSOCOM specialties, such as unconventional warfare, could be lost as the command orients itself to pursue these newer missions.

Similar to the Air Force and Marine Corps, USSOCOM does not have a strong preference for preparation for either a China or a North Korea policy priority. USSOCOM would likely seek contingency-related authorities to allow it to support the services while accomplishing a niche mission. In a China scenario, USSOCOM would most likely press for an unconventional warfare role, particularly clandestine operations intended to disrupt Chinese lines of communication. In North Korea, USSOCOM would focus on the CWMD mission, though USSOCOM would not be able to supply all of the ground forces that would be required to accomplish the mission and it would likely seek support from a reluctant Army. Whichever policy scenario materialized, USSOCOM would still seek to retain some role in the global counterterrorism fight at the same time.

Culture and Competition in a New Era

After a decade and a half of active engagement abroad, largely dominated by counter-terrorism and counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts, the U.S. military is now facing shifts in the strategic environment that are driving examination, both internal and external, of each service's role in emerging security challenges. These evaluations reflect each service's enduring culture and its legacy of competitive behaviors.

For the Air Force and Navy, this is a time of optimism when defense civilians are at last willing to resource a more capable, more modern force for missions those services prefer to do. For the Army, this is a time of uncertainty: It argues that it must prepare for war with highly capable adversaries, while it continues to be dragged backward toward the irregular wars it has fought for 17 years. After heavy utilization in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Marine Corps finds itself searching for a way to accomplish its traditional mission in a new environment, a position it accepts with equanimity, if not a perverse relish. Finally, for USSOCOM, this is a time of rapid adaptation as it builds its next essential mission, its first major institutional transition since becoming the juggernaut it turned into after September 11, 2001.

Our research shows that there is no relief from the tensions of interservice competition. While the services have made genuine strides toward jointness, there is no fully unified military response to crisis, nor perhaps should there be. Moreover, there is no way to meet each service's needs equally, given the limits of budgets and oversight. This

means that the United States' civilian policymakers will never be able to make decisions that are truly service neutral. In some way, policymakers will always be forced to consider the implications of their policy decisions for the various services. And, in turn, they will most likely be limited in their options by the need to safeguard the futures of each of the U.S. military services.

Senior national security policymakers thus find themselves not only in a time of operational transition but overseeing an environment of high institutional flux where policy changes might profoundly affect service trajectories and will therefore be fought by the services. The coming years will remake the military, with effects that will be felt for decades. Success will be found in the art of the balance, pushing the services to serve the joint operational needs of the moment while allowing them to pursue core goals that will strengthen the future force.

Acknowledgments

Abbreviations

A2/AD	antiaccess/area denial
AAW	antiair warfare
AFSOC	Air Force Special Operations Command
ASB	Air-Sea Battle
ASD SO/LIC	assistant secretary of defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict
ASuW	antisurface warfare
ASW	antisubmarine warfare
BCA	Budget Control Act (2011)
BCT	brigade combat team
CCDR	combatant commander
CCMD	combatant command
CENTCOM	See USCENTCOM
CNO	chief of naval operations
COIN	counterinsurgency
CWMD	countering weapons of mass destruction
DMAG	Deputy Secretary's Management Action Group
DoD	Department of Defense
DoN	Department of the Navy
EOD	explosive ordnance disposal
ERI	European Reassurance Initiative

GCC	geographic combatant command
IA	individual augmentee
ICBM	intercontinental ballistic missile
IP	information professional
ISR	intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance
JSOC	Joint Special Operations Command
MAGTF	Marine air-ground task force
MARSOC	Marine Corps Special Operations Command
MCDP	Marine Corps doctrinal publication
MEB	Marine Expeditionary Brigade
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MEU	Marine Expeditionary Unit
MFP	Major Force Program
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDP-1	Naval Doctrine Publication 1
NSW	Naval Special Warfare
OCO	overseas contingency operations
OLA	Office of Legislative Affairs
OSD	Office of the Secretary of Defense
POM	Program Objective Memorandum
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
SEAL	sea, air, land
SES	Senior Executive Service
SF	Special Forces (Army)
SLOC	sea line of communications
SOCOM	See USSOCOM
SOF	special operations forces
SO/LIC	Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict

SSBN   Ohio-class nuclear ballistic missile submarine
SWO   surface warfare officer
TLAM   Tomahawk land-attack missile
TRADOC   Army Training and Doctrine Command
TSOC   theater special operations command
UAV   unmanned aerial vehicle
USASOC   U.S. Army Special Operations Command
USCENTCOM   U.S. Central Command
USCYBERCOM   U.S. Cyber Command
USEUCOM   U.S. European Command
USMC   U.S. Marine Corps
USPACOM   U.S. Pacific Command
USSOCOM   U.S. Special Operations Command
USSTRATCOM   U.S. Strategic Command
USTRANSCOM   U.S. Transportation Command
WMD   weapon of mass destruction

Introduction

Movement and Maneuver: This function encompasses the disposition of joint forces to conduct operations by securing positional advantages before or during combat operations and by exploiting tactical success to achieve operational and strategic objectives. Maneuver is the employment of forces in the OA [operational area] through movement in combination with fires to achieve a position of advantage in respect to the enemy.

—Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations*

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) is among the largest and most sophisticated bureaucracies the world has ever seen, with nearly 3.5 million personnel.[1] The defense enterprise operates on what appears to be a simple premise: that there are agreed-on national security threats and objectives, and defense officials propose concepts, capabilities, and forces to most effectively and efficiently counter those threats. But such simplicity is deceptive. The natures and ambitions of the many organizations across the range of defense actors shape their preferences within this larger framework. The purpose of this research is to explore these often-hidden mechanisms of defense policy, and the military services' role in them, in greater detail.

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[1] This includes 1,291,817 active duty military, 810,504 reservists, approximately 742,000 defense civilians, and 641,000 "full-time equivalent" contractors. Full-time equivalent is an estimate based on billing time, rather than head count. U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center, *Armed Forces Strength Figures for February 28, 2017*, Washington, D.C., February 28, 2017a; U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center, *Selected Reserves by Rank/Grade*, Washington, D.C., February 28, 2017b; and U.S. Government Accountability Office, *DOD Civilian and Contractor Workforces: Additional Cost Savings Data and Efficiencies Plan Are Needed*, Washington, D.C., October 1, 2016, p. 1.

Our Purpose

Why write a monograph about the cultures of American military services and how they compete? As anthropologist Clifford Geertz wrote,

> We are not, or at least I am not, seeking either to become natives (a compromised word in any case) or to mimic them. Only romantics or spies would seem to find point in that. We are seeking, in the widened sense of the term in which it encompasses very much more than talk, to converse with them, a matter a great deal more difficult, and not only with strangers, than is commonly recognized.[2]

By making the veiled aspects of service culture and decisionmaking more visible, our belief is that services, policymakers, and even the lay observer will be able to converse in a more fulsome and productive sense. In the trenches of the civilian and military defense bureaucracy, officials with too little time and too many competing interests make decisions with incomplete and imperfect information. In the world of policymaking, there is no such thing as objectivity; rather, "every person has a function to perform and that assigned responsibility markedly influences one's judgment."[3] As Richard Neustadt and Ernest May note in *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers*, the overarching tendency is for the decisionmaker to fluctuate between two imperatives: the desire to act immediately and the fear of being hustled into precipitate action. The policymaker becomes frustrated with those whom he or she perceives either to block action or to unduly hurry it.[4] Thus, in the heat of bureaucratic battle, senior leaders are likely to feel irritated with counterparts from other organizations, without taking time to understand the range of factors shaping those organizations' responses, and make decisions with this limited view of a competitor's intent.

The following study analyzes these organizational influences at the military service level and the types of responses they typically engender when the services are under pressure. We conduct this analysis in order to present a set of behavioral reference points for the reader, so that when pressure arrives in the form of new threats, or perhaps more to our purposes, when pressure is created by civilian policymakers for significant change to the military's activities, they will have a framework to evaluate the impact of their decisions.

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[2] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, New York: Basic Books, 1973, p. 14.

[3] Rufus E. Miles, "The Origin and Meaning of Miles' Law," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 38, No. 5, 1978, p. 400.

[4] Richard Neustadt and Ernest May, *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision Makers*, New York: Free Press, 1986, p. 2.

Organizations as Powerful Actors

The roots of this study lie in the bureaucratic politics school of international relations theory. This approach, popularized during the Cold War by scholars who sought to explain the sometimes-contradictory statements and postures of policymakers, emphasized the effects of organizational interests and bureaucratic complexity in policy outcomes.[5] Authors such as Graham Allison and Morton Halperin analyzed rivalries between institutions, complex decisionmaking structures, and cognitive biases of decisionmakers, among other aspects of the theory.[6]

To accept bureaucratic politics as a driver of foreign policy is to accept that the simple construct of security objectives begetting perfectly matched concepts, capabilities, and forces is an ideal that can probably never fully be met. Rather, the elements of defense posture—and even the national security objectives themselves—are profoundly influenced by imperfect organizations and leaders pursuing a variety of institutional and national goals.

This approach is conceptually linked to the field of net assessment as well, which suggests that by understanding the mechanisms of strategic decisionmaking in a government, one may gain insight into its likely responses to crisis. While our research does not attempt to be precisely predictive in nature, it does share with net assessment the idea that structure can be linked to performance in repeatable and predictable ways and is intended to provide signposts to guide policymaker expectations.

Much has been written about organizational culture and its implications. A 2009 review examines 70 instruments designed to assess various aspects of organizational culture but still concludes that there is no single ideal assessment tool.[7] This result would tend to support Geertz's earlier assessment of culture as more abstract and fluid. Joanne Martin, a prominent researcher of organizational culture, set out the state of the field in her 2002 book, *Organizational Culture: Mapping the Terrain*.[8]

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[5]   In many ways, the bureaucratic politics school rests on the previous work of scholars in the field of public administration, such as Charles E. Lindblom and Herbert A. Simon, and applies their understanding of organizational politics and complexity in order to explain foreign policy postures. See, for example, Charles E. Lindblom, "The Science of 'Muddling Through,'" *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1959, p. 79; Herbert A. Simon, "The Proverbs of Administration," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1946, p. 53; and James Wilson, *Bureaucracy: What Government Agencies Do and Why They Do It*, New York: Basic Books, 1989.

[6]   See, for example, Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, New York: Little Brown, 1971; Graham T. Allison, "Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 63, No. 3, 1969, pp. 689–718; Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, "Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications," *World Politics*, Vol. 24, No. S1, April 1, 1972, pp. 40–79; M. H. Halperin, P. Clapp, and A. Kanter, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1974; and Neustadt and May, 1986.

[7]   Tobias Jung et al., "Instruments for Exploring Organizational Culture: A Review of the Literature," *Public Administration Review*, Vol. 69, No. 6, December 11, 2009, pp. 1087–1096.

[8]   Joanne Martin, *Organizational Culture: Mapping the Terrain*, Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications, 2001.

She argues that there is a basic divide between those who treat culture as symbolism and those who treat it as a variable. She further argues that culture should be seen as the former, as a lens through which to understand everyday life in an organization, rather than the type of generic survey instrument that Tobias Jung et al. sought.[9] This tracks closely to the approach this study adopts, as well as to the burgeoning field of military organizational culture as a whole, as will be discussed in the following section.

Using Culture to Understand Competition

The term *culture* is a notoriously difficult one to define, easy to observe but hard to measure. Geertz, perhaps the foremost scholar of culture writ large, defines culture this way:

> Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning.[10]

Geertz's definition implies that "proving" culture is not possible. Rather, it is a set of behavioral codes, of symbols that carry meaning and help to explain behavior. Any of these can change its meaning or importance at any time, but over time these collective webs of meaning appear fixed. While Geertz's impressionistic definition of culture exists at many levels of social aggregation, Edgar Schein's work focuses on organizational culture in particular. Schein argues that the essence of a group is shared history and that in a group, culture emerges when spontaneous actions are successful and reinforced as "correct."[11] These correct behaviors can then be passed on to new arrivals to the group. Perhaps most useful for our purposes, Schein described layers of culture as artifacts, the outward processes or structures that are hard to interpret culturally; espoused beliefs and values, which are the avowed justifications for the artifacts we see; and underlying assumptions, which are the deep motivations of which the group members may not be consciously aware.[12]

Books on the study of military culture as a subset of culture abound, but as a subfield it is relatively new and unstructured. There is literature on the effects of national strategic culture on the conduct of war, such as Elizabeth Kier's work on French and British interwar doctrine, George Tanham's explanation of India's ambitions, or

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[9] Martin, 2001, pp. 4–5.

[10] Geertz, 1973, p. 5.

[11] Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, 3rd ed., Jossey-Bass Business & Management Series, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004, pp. 15–16.

[12] Schein, 2004, p. 26.

Peter Lavoy's study of Pakistan's military paranoia.[13] These works rest inside a larger set of theoretical ideas put forward by authors such as Jack Snyder, Colin S. Gray, and Alastair Iain Johnston.[14] Other work seeks to understand the nature of war through studies of "warrior" culture. These works, such as Christopher Coker's book *The Warrior Ethos* or Charles Kirke's "Group Cohesion, Culture, and Practice," seek to understand individual and unit behavior on the battlefield as a function of culture.[15] Cultures are necessarily immersive, and therefore to best see culture, one must apply a lens.

Our lens is what we might call the military's bureaucratic cultures: service-based cultures of institutional and strategic decisionmaking, which must be understood in relation to broader service institutional identities. For example, to understand why most Air Force chiefs of staff have backgrounds in bombers or fighter planes, one must understand the relative value that larger Air Force culture places on those specialties above others. This is analogous to Schein's levels of culture—using what we can understand about underlying ethos and stated goals to explain the structure and positions of service bureaucracies. This is a very different cultural lens from the one that one would apply to understand warrior culture—for example, to understand why marines historically exhibit very high levels of will to fight in battle. This literature has a high degree of overlap with the literature on military adaptation and innovation, as several schools of thought suggest military change arises from organizational culture, both interservice culture and intraservice culture.[16] Of particular utility to this study, a body of work by Thomas Mahnken and James FitzSimonds surveys the attitudes of military officers from each of the services to ascertain their views of military transformation.[17] A number of works develop the theories of this field, such as those by Theo Farrell,

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[13] Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine Between the Wars*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999; George Tanham, "Indian Strategic Culture," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 1, March 1, 1992, pp. 129–142; and Peter R. Lavoy, *Pakistan's Strategic Culture*, Washington, D.C.: Defense Threat Reduction Agency, October 31, 2006.

[14] Jack L. Snyder, *The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-2154-AF, September 1977; Colin S. Gray, "National Style in Strategy: The American Example," *International Security*, Vol. 6, No. 2, 1981, pp. 21–47; Alastair Iain Johnston, "Thinking About Strategic Culture," *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 1995, pp. 32–64; and Colin S. Gray, "Strategic Culture as Context: The First Generation of Theory Strikes Back," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1, January 1999, pp. 49–69.

[15] Christopher Coker, *The Warrior Ethos: Military Culture and the War on Terror*, New York: Routledge, 2007; and Charles Kirke, "Group Cohesion, Culture, and Practice," *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1, 2009, pp. 745–753.

[16] Adam Grissom, "The Future of Military Innovation Studies," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 5, October 1, 2006, pp. 905–934.

[17] Thomas G. Mahnken and James R. FitzSimonds, *The Limits of Transformation: Officer Attitudes Toward the Revolution in Military Affairs*, Newport Papers 17, Newport, R.I: Naval War College Press, 2003a; Thomas G. Mahnken and James R. FitzSimonds, "Revolutionary Ambivalence: Understanding Officer Attitudes Toward Transformation," *International Security*, Vol. 28, No. 2, October 1, 2003b, pp. 112–148; and Thomas G. Mahnken and James R. FitzSimonds, "Tread-Heads or Technophiles? Army Officer Attitudes Toward Transformation," *Parameters*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Summer 2004, pp. 57–72.

Terry Terriff, Williamson Murray, Thomas McNaugher, and Austin Long.[18] Within the field of military innovation studies, there are scholars who espouse noncultural interservice and intraservice mechanisms for change, but a number of scholars in these subfields also have culture-related explanations for why these mechanisms surface in the manner they do. Key works in these schools are Owen Reid Coté's comparison of Polaris versus Trident missile development and Stephen P. Rosen's multicase study of intraservice innovation.[19]

The Masks of War and Service Competition

In 1989, RAND Corporation researcher Carl H. Builder published his seminal work, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis*. Builder was the first to argue, in a scholarly way, that military services have personalities and that these personalities influence how the services perceive problems and how they devise solutions. Since its publication, Builder's book has served as a touchstone for service-members and policymakers seeking to understand the invisible levers that shift defense policy. It is still read, referenced, and debated today.[20]

Our study is not intended to be "Builder redux," nor does it seek to upend Builder's arguments. But it does use Builder's collective work as its most formative reference point, albeit to ask a slightly different question.

In *Masks of War*, Builder advanced three linked arguments:

1. Institutions, while composed of many, ever-changing individuals, have distinct and enduring personalities of their own that govern much of their behavior.
2. The most powerful institutions in the American national security arena are the military services—the Army, Navy and Air Force—not the Department of Defense or Congress or even their commander in chief, the president.
3. To understand the distinct and enduring personalities of the Army, Navy and Air Force is to understand much that has happened and much that will happen in the American military and national security arenas.[21]

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[18] See, for example, Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff, *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology*, Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002; Williamson Murray, "Does Military Culture Matter?" *Orbis*, Vol. 43, No. 1, 1999, pp. 27–42; Thomas McNaugher, *The M16 Controversies: Military Organizations and Weapons Acquisition*, New York: Praeger, 1984; and Austin Long, *The Soul of Armies: Counterinsurgency Doctrine and Military Culture in the US and UK*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2016b.

[19] Owen Reid Coté, *The Politics of Innovative Military Doctrine: The U.S. Navy and Fleet Ballistic Missiles*, doctoral dissertation, Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1996; and Stephen P. Rosen, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military*, Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991.

[20] For example, the book was featured in the previous Army Chief of Staff recommended reading list, as well as the Joint Staff Officer's reading list: Raymond T. Odierno, *The Chief of Staff's Professional Reading List*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Army Center of Military History, March 2012; National Defense University, *The Joint Staff Officer's Guide*, Washington, D.C.: Joint Forces Staff College, 2000.

[21] Builder, 1989, p. 3.

In a world that is in many respects different from the one Builder described, our arguments nevertheless reflect Builder's, with important distinctions. We argue the following:

- Service personalities are alive and well. They endure, but they also evolve slowly to allow adaptation to the present environment.
- Post Goldwater-Nichols, services remain the most powerful organizational actors in national defense. However, their relative edge over the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), combatant commands (CCMDs), and the Joint Staff has decreased, leading to a more complex field of competition.
- The complexity increased by Goldwater-Nichols has created changes to the character of competition in the national security arena. The relevant actors have expanded to include elevated roles for the Marine Corps and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM or SOCOM), and the tactics and arenas of competition have changed.

The first of these points will provoke little dispute. In the past few decades, organizational culture explanations have become commonplace in describing military behavior.[22] The third point follows logically from the first two, and its further investigation forms the largest part of this monograph. The second proposition, however, requires a little more explanation. When Builder wrote, the 1986 Department of Defense Reorganization Act, more colloquially known as Goldwater-Nichols, was a new idea designed to elevate civilian and joint leadership on defense. Though *Masks of War* was published in 1989, Builder made no direct reference to Goldwater-Nichols, but he did express skepticism that the fundamental balance of power in the national security arena could be shifted through reform, saying,

> Thus, calls for restructuring the military services are not likely to lead to any significant changes. . . . Political reformers of the military, if elected or appointed to positions of power, will only succeed in prodding the American military institutions into rallying their many supporters in Congress and throughout American society.[23]

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[22] Varying types of organization-related explanations can be found in many works—for example, Theo Farrell, *Transforming Military Power Since the Cold War: Britain, France, and the United States, 1991–2012*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013; Harvey M. Sapolsky, *The Polaris System Development: Bureaucratic and Programmatic Success in Government*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972; Harvey M. Sapolsky, Benjamin H. Friedman, and Brendan Rittenhouse Green, eds., *US Military Innovation Since the Cold War: Creation Without Destruction*, New York: Routledge, 2009; Coté, 1996; Rosen, 1991; Terry C. Pierce, *Warfighting and Disruptive Technologies: Disguising Innovation*, New York: Routledge, 2004; Theo Farrell, Frans P. B Osinga, and James A. Russell, *Military Adaptation in Afghanistan*, Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2013; and Susan Lynn Marquis, *Unconventional Warfare: Rebuilding U.S. Special Operations Forces*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1997.

[23] Builder, 1989, p. 204.

Yet change it did. While Goldwater-Nichols was not the first attempt to temper the influence of the services both operationally and with respect to their advisory roles to the Executive Branch, it made structural reforms and clarified command relationships in ways not previously seen.[24] Goldwater-Nichols elevated the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff and civilian leadership, and it made the CCMDs more independent.[25] Each of these steps implicitly eroded the autonomy and authority of the service chiefs and institutional services.

But it would be a mistake to see the services as demoted too far in the defense decisionmaking process. Rather, our observations, woven throughout this study, suggest that services still wield considerable influence, but the manner in which they do so has shifted to suit these new bureaucratic realities. Our study begins with the introduction of Goldwater-Nichols, because we believe it to be a profound change imposed on the services.

Relative Power and Influence of Services

After the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the power of the CCMDs, Joint Staff, and OSD was rising. This pushed the service chiefs and their staffs away from an operational role and, with the elevation of the Joint Staff to something more than an integrating function, diminished their strategic roles. Service secretaries have felt the squeeze too: Former Air Force secretary and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown has argued that under Goldwater-Nichols, service secretaries are redundant, duplicating the resource manager function of the service chiefs.[26]

These elevated elements of the defense bureaucracy, pictured in their entirety in Figure 1.1, have grown vastly in size. OSD includes some 5,000 personnel:

> In the early 1960s, when DOD had 2.8 million active duty personnel and 1.6 million reservists, there was one Deputy, no Unders, and only three Assistant Secretaries. Today, with about half as many total military personnel, there is still one Deputy, but five Unders, and seventeen Assistants with a proliferation of Deputy Unders, Deputy Assistants, Principal Deputies, and so on.[27]

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[24] There are a number of useful and detailed overviews of the Goldwater-Nichols Act that go far beyond what we discuss here, such as James R. Locher III, *Victory on the Potomac: The Goldwater-Nichols Act Unifies the Pentagon*, rev. ed., College Station, Tex.: Texas A&M University Press, 2004; Thomas T. LoPresti, *The JCS System Before and After Goldwater-Nichols*, Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Fellowship Program, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, May 1991; and Clark A. Murdock et al., *Beyond Goldwater-Nichols: Defense Reform for a New Strategic Era*, Phase 1 Report, Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2004.

[25] Murdock et al., 2004, pp. 15–16.

[26] Harold Brown, "Why Civilian Military Secretaries Are No Longer Needed," *Washington Post*, October 18, 2012.

[27] Arnold L. Punaro, "Statement of Major General Arnold L. Punaro, USMC Ret. Before the Senate Armed Services Committee," Washington, D.C., November 17, 2015.

Figure 1.1
Department of Defense Organization
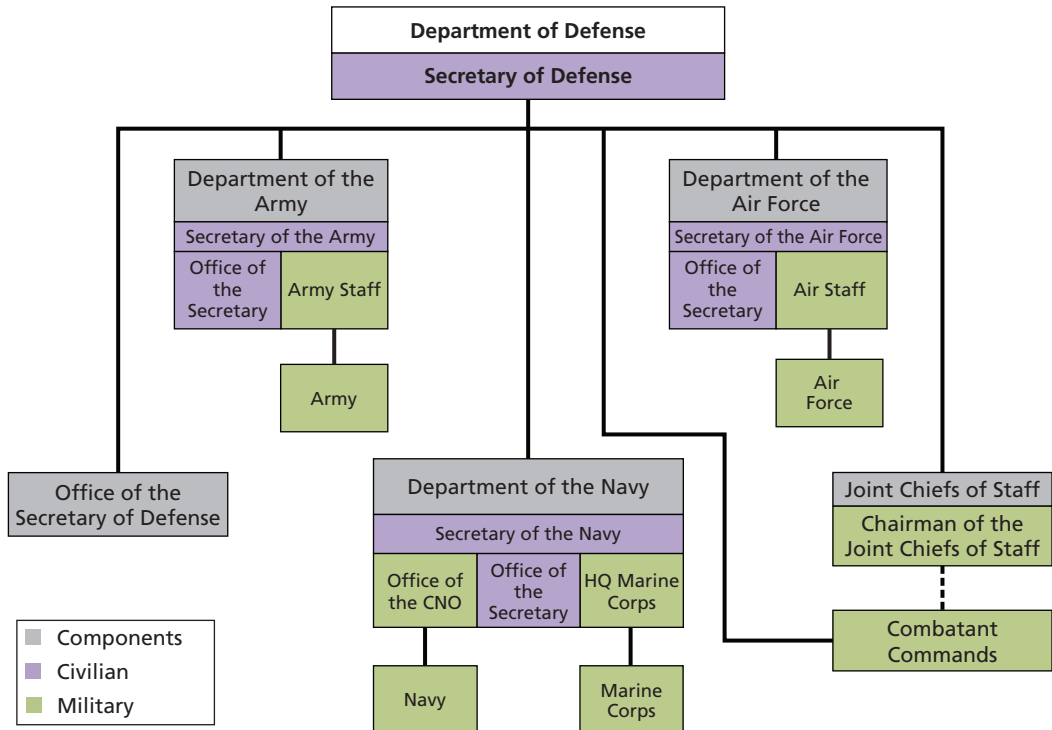
SOURCE: Adapted from U.S. Department of Defense, "DoD Organizational Structure," September 2, 2015.
RAND *RR2270-OSD-1.1*

Similarly, the Joint Staff is composed of nearly 4,000 personnel—a tenfold increase over its size when the DoD Reorganization Act was enacted in 1958—and the CCMD staffs number almost 38,000.[28]

While the give and take of competition has changed, services remain the most influential single entities inside the DoD system, and they shape and constrain policy at the highest levels. Service institutions may lose bureaucratic battles in the present, but they are the most future-focused entities in the national security enterprise. Because they alone are responsible for raising the forces and building the capabilities to conduct war, services also have the lion's share of the national security budget. While the political appointees at the helm of many parts of OSD will rotate through their positions in a matter of years, services have remarkable continuity of purpose across personnel rotations. In the following section, we provide a short overview of the relative power of services to other major actors inside DoD.

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[28] Michèle A. Flournoy, "Testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee," Center for a New American Security, Washington, D.C., December 8, 2015.

Geographic Combatant Commands, U.S. Transportation Command, and U.S. Strategic Command

The array of unified CCMDs in the military today is varied in purpose and influence, sharing a mission to conduct military operations in particular regions or with particular functional missions, such as homeland defense or strategic deterrence. In the complex landscape of contemporary service-based competition, CCMDs are both a field of battle and a competitive actor in their own right. That is to say, services compete for influential joint assignments at CCMDs or to gain a greater share of desirable missions within CCMDs, but CCMDs have competitive goals in their own right and constrain the ability of services to pursue their goals. The six geographic CCMDs, such as U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM or CENTCOM), have grown over the past several decades from small headquarters forces to vast platforms that oversee warfighting task forces, steady-state operations, and military cooperation and diplomacy. The three functional CCMDs vary greatly in the degree to which they are competitive forces inside the defense enterprise. U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) provides enterprise-wide transportation solutions for the military. While USTRANSCOM's influence is far reaching, it tends to have less of a voice in the types of competitive vignettes we discuss here. U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) is the custodian of several high-profile and still-emerging national missions, such as cyber and space capabilities. These are missions for which the services are actively competing. However, the competitive goals and cultural characteristics, to the extent CCMDs exhibit them, must be engendered by and passed among rotating personnel assigned to the CCMD. The organizations do not bear cultural imprints the way that the services do, as their personnel are by nature temporary and joint, bringing with them the characteristics of their home service. It is true that these CCMDs may yet develop distinct cultural identities, but this appears to be some way in the future at this point. U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) was established as a unified CCMD just before publication and was not analyzed in this report.

Because the CCMDs are so varied, it is hard to generalize about their influence relative to the services. But it is clear that CCMDs can constrain the ability of other actors to pursue goals and vice versa. In the defense enterprise, CCMDs own the problems, while the services own the solutions. That is, CCMDs drive current requirements by describing today's battlefield needs. Services resource these needs with capabilities that they have developed, often over lengthy periods of time. Because of the time lag between needs formulation and capability provision, services have a wide degree of latitude. Where a request falls in line with service preferences, they can cite CCMD demand signal as a supporting factor to their arguments, as the Army did with its pushback against a recommendation by the National Commission on the Future of the Army that it cut two infantry brigade combat teams (BCTs).[29] Conversely, if the

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[29] Jen Judson, "Milley: Cutting IBCTs Is a 'Bad Tradeoff' for Manpower Redistribution," *Defense News*, March 3, 2016.

request is for something the service does not want to develop or resource, the service can sometimes choose to use existing, if suboptimal, resources rather than spend its budget on the desired solution. This is similar to a tactic known as the "gold watch" or "goldwatching," when a service will "answer a budget cut proposal by selecting for elimination a program so important and valued—a gold watch—that Pentagon chiefs know political leaders will restore funding rather than go through with the cut."[30] The services also spend a great deal more time than the CCMDs on Capitol Hill, interacting with congressional staff, thus giving them the opportunity to shape which capabilities are funded and therefore available to the CCMDs.

U.S. Special Operations Command

Unique among CCMDs is USSOCOM. USSOCOM is the unified CCMD responsible for the special operations support to the geographic combatant commands (GCCs) and for manning, training, and equipping all U.S. special operations forces (SOF). Unlike the other CCMDs, USSOCOM has a dedicated budget, Major Force Program (MFP) 11, in addition to receiving support from the services. These budgetary and force organization responsibilities position USSOCOM as a servicelike peer and competitor in certain arenas. A major contention of our study is that USSOCOM's creation, along with the elevation of CCMDs under Goldwater-Nichols, has in many ways reshaped the face of service-based competition. USSOCOM's ability to shift between its servicelike and CCMD roles gives it some competitive advantages in the bureaucratic environment and allows it partially to bridge the institutional-operation divide that has characterized post-Goldwater-Nichols relationships between services and CCMDs.

Joint Staff

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, along with the vice chairman and service chiefs, supported by the Joint Staff, provides military advice to the President. The Joint Staff further assists the chairman to set the force-level strategic direction of the operational forces (though without operational command responsibilities) and integrates the capabilities of the military forces. Where once the service chiefs held sway over a relatively weak chairman, the revised lines of authority and staffing in Goldwater-Nichols added significantly to the influence of the chairman and Joint Staff. The size of the Joint Staff today means that in many cases it is capable of conducting its own, independent analyses, rather than harmonizing service inputs. Elements of the Joint Staff, for example, manage portfolios of required capabilities, adjudicating conflicts between CCMD demand and service provision and providing assessments of where gaps remain between CCMD problems and service solutions. Because of these roles, one could expect the Joint Staff to play host to interservice arguments at the level

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[30] Byron York, "Budget Hawks Question Pentagon's Doomsday Scenarios," *Washington Examiner*, February 21, 2013.

described by Builder in *Masks of War* as services vie to offload undesired requirements or inflate desired ones. Yet the general atmosphere of the Joint Staff is cordial. The Joint Staff plays a largely synchronizing role relative to the services.[31] In fact, participants in a workshop we held told us that in the development of the DoD Analytic Agenda, the Joint Staff practice was to forgo tough choices and allow each service to put what it wanted into the underlying concepts of operations.[32]

Office of the Secretary of Defense

Today, OSD is a competitive actor in its own right. Certainly, from the perspective of OSD, that office is at least as much participant as observer. Staff at OSD work to support the Secretary of Defense in exerting civilian oversight and advising the President on defense matters. At times, they can view their relationships with services as adversarial: in describing civilian views of service behaviors, there is an admittedly facetious colloquialism that the Army, Air Force, and Navy are, respectively, dumb, devious, and defiant.[33]

The Secretary of Defense and OSD have certainly gained influence relative to the pre-Goldwater-Nichols era, when the first under secretary of defense for policy resigned in frustration because his position lacked sufficient influence to do his job.[34] Today, Secretaries of Defense who are powerful and shrewd have the ability to compel service behavior, but not without limits. In a successful case, Secretary Rumsfeld signaled his desire to take a more active and directive role in reshaping the Army when, after a tense relationship with General Eric Shinseki as chief of staff, Rumsfeld took the unprecedented step of passing over all of the current senior officers in the Army to appoint General Peter J. Schoomaker to the position. Schoomaker was unique because he had already retired from military service, whereas service chiefs are generally selected from the active-duty ranks, and because his special operations background was a departure from the traditional branches from which the chief is typically selected.[35] Another case shows the limits of senior-level direction. In response to a 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review that identified demand for riverine capabilities, DoD directed the Navy to expand these capabilities, which it did, by creating a riverine capability under Navy

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[31] Flournoy, 2015.

[32] The DoD Analytic Agenda is a process designed to provide common underlying analytic scenarios for defense analysis, as discussed here: U.S. Department of Defense, "An Overview of the DoD Analytic Agenda: Resources for Analysts," presentation slides, MOVES Institute, Naval Postgraduate School, undated-b.

[33] While Scroggs labeled this an artifact of Capitol Hill, the authors have heard it used around the Pentagon. See Stephen K. Scroggs, *Army Relations with Congress: Thick Armor, Dull Sword, Slow Horse*, Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2000, p. 57.

[34] Bernard Weinraub, "Top Aide at Pentagon Is Quitting in Dispute," *New York Times*, March 8, 1979.

[35] Thom Shanker, "Retired Commando Chief Is Chosen to Lead the Army," *New York Times*, June 11, 2003.

Expeditionary Combat Command.[36] However, the new command has arguably simply made "cursory modifications that only superficially alter its core identity."[37] Historically, the Navy has not embraced riverine warfare, and the initial plans to stand up this capability did not provide the number and type of boats necessary to fulfill the identified riverine missions.[38]

The Changing Character of Competition

The third pillar of our argument is that the persistence of service culture in an increasingly complex bureaucratic environment has changed the arenas and tactics of competition. When we speak about competition, there are a few senses in which we can understand the subject. The first would be pure competition, as in a footrace, where each entrant is seeking to cross a common finish line first—for example, gaining a particular dollar amount in resources. A second sense in which we can understand competition is as a more nuanced process in which each entrant has distinct goals and adopts strategies that allow it to achieve those goals most fully in an environment of limited means. In this complex form of competition, the type we discuss in our study, competitors may strategically collaborate with other actors, cede ground for the present in the hope of future gains, or pursue their goals unilaterally and without reference to the positions of others. A further characteristic of service-based competition is that it exists in an atmosphere where each entity fundamentally acknowledges the others' existence. While some actors may have residual existential fears, Navy leaders probably do not believe that America's security is possible entirely without an Air Force, for instance. And while Marine lieutenant general Victor Krulak famously declared that America wants but does not actually *need* a Marine Corps, the other services are not actively advocating to eliminate the more than 180,000 marines from the ranks. Thus, even at its fiercest, interservice competition is limited, rather than total.

Against this backdrop, the wider field of competition creates new and varying alliances that favor different modes of competition. For example, the larger civilian voice in the defense policymaking process appears to create an increased opportunity for services to collude to fend off civilian interference. One person we interviewed described meeting with the uniformed services and feeling "as if they all huddled and

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[36] U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, Washington, D.C., February 2010; and Winslow Wheeler, "Is the Fleet Steaming Forward . . . or Backward?" *Project on Government Oversight*, December 5, 2012.

[37] Daniel A. Hancock, "The Navy's Not Serious About Riverine Warfare," *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*, Vol. 134, No. 1, January 2008, pp. 14–19.

[38] Robert Benbow et al., *Renewal of Navy's Riverine Capability: A Preliminary Examination of Past, Current and Future Capabilities*, Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, March 2006, pp. 1–2; Hancock, 2008.

had coffee five minutes before the Three-Star Programmers or the DMAG [Deputy Secretary's Management Action Group]."[39] While this may prevent each service from achieving its maximal gain relative to the other services, it increases predictability for the military and furthers the perennial service goal of autonomy. Or, as one person expressed it, "I stand with my cousin against everyone else, I stand with my brother against my cousin, and I stand with myself against all others."[40]

Use of this strategy may be selective based on the level of resources available and the clarity of civilian guidance. While we were unable to test this hypothesis during our research, discussions suggested that a resource-constrained environment does not automatically produce greater and more rancorous competition between the services, so long as there is clear guidance about priorities.[41] The greater incentive may be to cooperate with other services to push for a bigger pie rather than compete for a bigger slice. Where resources are constrained but guidance is less clear, competition between the services is greater.

With the vast and complex array of actors, the character of competition has also shifted. The table-thumping arguments of the service chiefs have largely disappeared, in favor of the more subtle and obscure tactics of internecine warfare. What former under secretary of defense for policy Michèle Flournoy described as the "tyranny of consensus" has become common policy practice among defense actors.[42] The complex synchronization and approval process she described as taking place across the multitude of defense stakeholders makes the word *no* more powerful than it used to be. When a dissenting view is automatically elevated to senior levels for discussion, the actor most able to halt a process or to drag its feet has an advantage. As one service-member told us, "They [services] realized they could make a public play or they could just keep rolling."[43]

This suggests that culture itself may be a competitive advantage amid the cacophony of voices in the defense policy universe. Culture is inherently unifying, with common goals and messages. That clarity of purpose and common playbook almost certainly help the services to act collectively and consistently across issues and time.

In Builder's work, competition between the services is essentially a protective mechanism, designed to shield services from outside interference or joint efficiencies.

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[39] OS02, defense civilian, March 7, 2017. The Three-Star Programmers is the committee that reviews the Program Objective Memoranda (POMs) and prepares issues for the DMAG. The DMAG is the principal advisory committee to the deputy secretary of defense.

[40] AR12, former senior Army officer, November 10, 2016.

[41] This proposition arose during discussions in Workshop 2 and was refined in discussions with OS02, defense civilian, March 7, 2017.

[42] Flournoy, 2015.

[43] AR05, Army officer, March 31, 2017.

But it is also clear that competition may have positive aspects. Competing operational concepts may lead to innovative ideas and more-flexible policy options. Coté argued that too much jointness served to suppress innovation, and he wrote that the innovative development of the Navy's Polaris missile spurred the Air Force to its own innovations, whereas the Trident II ballistic missile was developed in a more joint atmosphere and did not seed competition elsewhere.[44] Generally, in our analysis we do not pass explicit judgment on whether a particular instance of competition is a net good or bad. Our focus is descriptive, with a particular eye to helping the reader forecast how services will respond—for good or ill—to new challenges.

Studying Culture and Competition

The challenge of writing a monograph like this is that, as Schein suggested, service preferences are difficult to observe. Defense actors seldom document these parochial motives because they are seen as less than virtuous. When they are presented, it is often to paint a portrait of services as selfish. For example, General Tommy Franks, in his memoir, *American Soldier*, gave an account of presenting his plan for the 2001 war in Afghanistan to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He chastised the service chiefs for rampant self-interest:

> One after another the Chiefs offered their views of the concept. The Army argued the efficacy of Land Power, and described the difficulties of sustaining Army forces. The Marine view suggested "From the Sea" as the most effective approach to war-fighting—even in a landlocked country. Airpower was offered by the Air Force Chief as the most powerful of the contributing arms. None of which, of course, meshed totally with CENTCOM's operational concept—or my view of joint warfare. . . . The briefing had been intended to provide information on a campaign that CENTCOM had carefully and laboriously developed, with the inputs of our Army, Navy, Marine, Air Force, and Special Operations Component Commanders—three-star generals nominated by these same Service Chiefs. I had no tolerance for this parochial bullshit.[45]

Because services rarely put aside their masks of war and admit to or explain self-interest, we, as observers, are forced to make inferences based on a range of possible explanations for behavior. This is an overarching limitation of our subject matter, which we sought to compensate for in the design of our research.

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[44] Coté, 1996.

[45] Tommy R. Franks, *American Soldier*, New York: HarperCollins, 2009, pp. 275–276.

Approach

The central question our research team asked was, what do service cultures and modes of competition tell us about how the military would respond and adapt to major shocks, such as major policy shifts or watershed events? To conduct this research, our team relied on scholarly literature, official documents, interviews, and workshops. Our review of relevant literature included a large number of books, articles, and dissertations on service cultures and behaviors. Official documents such as service strategies, budget submissions, testimonies, commission reports, and more provided insight into the services' official positions and their challenges in the larger defense policy world. From this review of literature and recent service history, we built a rough time line of the history of outside events and service evolution, from the advent of Goldwater-Nichols until the present.

To investigate the iterative nature of external shock and service response as it evolved across that time period, we convened a half-day workshop with experts from the services, including USSOCOM and the Marine Corps, as well as OSD. In the workshop, experts debated the significance of specific milestones in service development and discussed the cultural dynamics that led the services to adopt their positions. This, in turn, fueled further documentary research into several of the milestones. The resulting historical overview of service-based competitive dynamics can be found in Appendix A.

Chapters Two through Six take an in-depth look at each of the services, focusing on cultural traits and competitive behaviors. Each of our service chapters uses similar methods and follows a similar structure. Because of the challenges in finding documentation of the invisible forces of culture and competition described earlier, our method was driven by semistructured interviews that allowed our discussants to speak candidly about their profession.[46]

We asked interviewees to speak about their service's grand ideas and petty squabbles, and anonymity allowed them to speak freely. We conducted 70 interviews with current and former military and civilian officials ranging in rank from O-3 to O-9 and in seniority from action officers to deputy assistant secretary of defense and higher. Interviewees were selected based on several factors. Some academic experts and former officials were selected based on their previous body of published work, public statements, and policy efforts, if applicable. Current officials were identified based on their role in competitive processes and previous experience in relevant positions. Others were identified by suggestions of colleagues familiar with our research.

Where possible, we had two interviewers for each interview, one writing on the relevant service and one writing on another service, so as to increase our ability to view the services in relation to each other. Some interviewees, particularly in SOF, were able

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[46] The interview protocol can be found in Appendix B. Our interview procedures were reviewed by a human subjects protection committee and determined to not include human subject research.

to speak about multiple services. One limitation of this study is that we did not interview enlisted military for this analysis. While in many ways enlisted servicemembers are the keepers of warrior culture for the services, the vast majority of servicemembers involved in the bureaucratic competitive processes we describe here are officers. For a study of bureaucratic cultures and decisionmaking, we feel we have well represented the services' cultural knowledge.

To ensure that we were not only exposed to service thinking in a vacuum, we held an additional two workshops with representatives from each of our services and OSD. This allowed us to vet some of the services' more contentious propositions in an environment where they could be debated. All comments were off the record, in order to ensure participants could be unrestrained.

The service-based chapters first lay out the central ideas that motivate each service, its ethos, core competencies, and perpetual goals. This gives us a picture of what each service is seeking and why. In Schein's cultural terms, these would be the underlying assumptions and espoused values. Next we look at the positions adopted by the services across four arenas of competition.

What we call arenas of competition are the broad areas in which the services fight for dominance (see Table 1.1). Each chapter presents these arenas in the order that best fits that service's competitive preferences. One fundamental arena of competition is resources, which mostly consists of the DoD budget process and congressional appropriations. It includes the base budgets for things like operations and maintenance, but it also looks at the role that funding for the war on terror, labeled overseas contingency operations (OCO) funds, has had on competitive positioning. This is the arena most commonly associated with competition in the literature.

Next, we looked at personnel as an arena of competition. This topic encompasses attitudes toward personnel development—for example, the relative value of joint as opposed to service experience—but we also look at the degree to which services seek out particular joint assignments and why.

A third arena of competition we call current roles and missions. This is the competition to be the lead service in any specific contingency. This can often flow from

Table 1.1
Arenas of Competition

Resources	Personnel	Current Roles and Missions	Future Institutional Security
DoD budget process and congressional appropriations (base budgets, OCO, acquisition of major systems and platforms)	Approach to personnel development and promotions, relative value of joint versus service experience, prioritization of certain assignments over others	Competition for roles in specific contingencies or ongoing military efforts	Roles and relevance a service hopes to secure in the future (specific missions, primacy over domains, concepts and technology development)

obtaining particular joint positions, as leader of an operational task force, perhaps, and can often drive resources to a service in the short term. Our fourth arena of competition is the search for future institutional security. In many ways, this is the apex of competition. Security in the future equates to existential stability, autonomy, relevance, and prestige. Services compete for future relevance by providing value in the form of intellectual and operational leadership. To secure their futures, services may compete to own critical new domains and missions, such as cyber or space. They may craft a public narrative of their vitality to the nation's security. Or they may develop new concepts and technologies that use their core strengths to defeat the possible enemies of the future.

The tactics of competition are the specific behaviors that the services use to compete across the four arenas we have identified. The Marine Corps, for example, has a robust program of congressional liaison that assists it to pursue its goals across all arenas. The Air Force uses strategic analysis to build robust and often data-driven arguments to push for its goals over a range of issues. We have not attempted to create a taxonomy of competitive tactics. Each service's set of tools is unique, and forcing them into a substructure would rob them of their descriptive value.

Chapter Seven of this monograph takes what we understand of the history of service responses to changes in the bureaucratic and operational environment and combines that with our portraits of the services to look forward. Given the dynamic nature of both the operational environment and the policy prescriptions to meet it, how can we expect services to handle change and uncertainty going forward? This chapter also presents the results of simple scenario exercises that we conducted in our latter two workshops. In those, we asked how the services would respond to a drastically changed policy environment where top defense policymakers cared only about a single issue for the next ten years. The two issues we examined were competition with China and competition with North Korea. This was intended to focus on institutional politics, not operational plans, and so we discussed with participants the likely service institutional responses across the arenas of competition. This simple exercise provided a great deal of insight into how services handle change, whether unexpected or long hoped for.

Finally, the study's concluding chapter provides thoughts on the future balance of service interests and policy priorities.

A final word on the scope of this study: Our discussion focuses predominantly on the military services, and this probably creates a skewed portrait. A detailed portrayal of OSD would certainly identify preferences and patterns of behavior, if not a clear and enduring culture. Such a subject would materially enhance our understanding of competition inside the Pentagon. Certainly, the wide array of CCMDs is also deserving of lengthier treatment to better understand how the influence of CCMDs constrains or expands policy formulation. Unfortunately, every book must have limits to its scope, and our choice was to adopt a strong focus on the services and the servicelike aspects

of USSOCOM. While CCMDs may own the present, it is these institutions that write the future, in fascinating and often subtle ways.

Inclusion of the Marine Corps as a Unit of Study

Although part of the Department of the Navy (DoN), the Marines today embrace a unique culture among the services and retain sufficient budget autonomy to discern preferences and competitive postures. Moreover, the operational relevance of the Marine Corps to the wars of the past few decades and the prevalence of current and retired Marine general officers in national security leadership make it difficult to write a monograph about services today that excludes the Marine Corps.

Inclusion of USSOCOM as a Unit of Study

We have included USSOCOM as a unit to analyze alongside the traditional services in this report. While we acknowledge that USSOCOM is not a service and does not behave like one in several important ways, it does have an emerging culture that marks it as distinctly servicelike. USSOCOM has an identity and preferences that shape its positions relative to other defense actors. Among policymakers, USSOCOM is often considered a separate option from the other services for employment against various contingencies. From this lens, USSOCOM is a competitor against the other services despite receiving substantial support from them.

Moreover, we can learn a great deal about service culture and competition from understanding USSOCOM's rapid adaptation to service-based competition. Understanding how USSOCOM operates across competitive arenas can provide the services a lens to more clearly see their own behaviors. USSOCOM also exhibits specific competitive strategies and tactics that may be useful examples from which the traditional services can draw.

We do not, however, advocate that USSOCOM become a service: That topic is beyond the scope of this report. Our Marine Corps and USSOCOM chapters are necessarily longer and more detailed than the preceding service chapters. Whereas in the earlier chapters there are canonical personalities to discuss and debate, in these chapters we deal with less settled areas of scholarship and stake larger intellectual claims.

The Army

S. Rebecca Zimmerman

Perhaps more than for any other service, the portrait that Carl Builder painted of the Army's culture in the mid-1980s holds true today. Builder's work grew out of his research on the "Army style of analysis" and his time as a visiting analyst at U.S. Army Concepts Analysis Agency.[1] In fact, the underlying ideas of *Masks of War* were developed during that year at CAA, when Builder was asked to explore "why the Army does so poorly in strategic planning" in comparison to the other services.[2] So it is not surprising to learn that the Army generally feels itself well represented by Builder. For Builder, the Army sees itself as the nation's most selfless service, and this holds true today.[3] But 17 years of continuous high operations tempo have given voice to the perception that the Army is perhaps too selfless relative to other services. Thus, the Army's central dilemma today is between current usage and future readiness, which is more fundamentally a problem of the operational Army versus the institutional Army.

In this chapter, we will discuss the fundamental traits that shape the U.S. Army, its origins as the midwife of American nationhood, and its purpose as warriors. From those, we will derive the Army's central ethos and the ideals that guide it. Next, we describe the Army's central capabilities and what this leads the Army to press for in the defense policy space. We review the Army's positions and preferences in the four competitive arenas we outlined in the introduction, as well as some of the habitual tactics the Army uses to make its case. We end by discussing how the Army is seen from outside the institution.

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[1] Carl Builder, "On the Army Style in Analysis," presented at the Twenty-Fifth Annual U.S. Army Operations Research Symposium, Fort Lee, Va., October 8, 1986. Much of Builder's work on this subject is in the form of RAND Internal Notes, which cannot be cited here. Today, CAA is known as the Center for Army Analysis.

[2] Builder, 1989, p. xi.

[3] Builder, 1989, p. 91.

Major Defining Characteristics of the Army

On occasions of pageantry, it is not unusual for official Army celebrations to mention the founding date of the service: June 14, 1775. Whereas in the Navy's case this may be attributed to the allure of tradition, in the Army's case it underscores the fact that it was the Army that brought the nation into being, not the other way around. The Army's identity is thus wrapped up tightly with the idea of nationhood and the citizenry. There is a sense that the Army embodies the nation and vice versa, that it has arisen from the nation in order to protect the nation. For most of its history, the Army's concept of fighting wars was premised on mass mobilization, adding to its sense of being linked to nationhood. With the advent of the All-Volunteer Force in 1973, the idea of the citizen-soldier gave way to that of the professional soldier, but the idea of a special relationship with the American people survives. Its ties to the nation are further enriched by the Army's National Guard and Reserves, which provide a tangible link between the Army and its nation.

A second tenet of the Army is that it has a fuller and more intimate understanding of war than the other services. Until the end of World War II, the defense cabinet positions consisted not of secretaries of the Navy and the Army but rather of a secretary of the Navy and a secretary of war. Classical works of military strategy, such as *On War* by Carl von Clausewitz and Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, are typically written from the perspective of ground combat, further linking landpower to strategy in the Army. If the Air Force and the Navy are enamored of their domains, the Army believes that it alone understands the true and full nature of war. Both in the course of this study and in professional life, soldiers are apt to describe their profession by quoting T. R. Fehrenbach's history of the Korean War:

> You may fly over a land forever; you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it and wipe it clean of life—but if you desire to defend it, protect it, and keep it for civilization, you must do this on the ground, the way Roman legions did, by putting your young men into the mud.[4]

The greatest intellectual heroes of the Army are long deceased—Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, and Thucydides—suggesting that war is something eternal, a fundamental, unchanging aspect of human nature.

The Army's personality is further shaped by its sheer mass, which allows the Army to be present nearly everywhere, conduct any type of operations, and create "facts on the ground" both operationally and bureaucratically. The Army's approach to

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[4] T. R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War: The Classic Korean War History*, 50th anniversary ed., Dulles, Va.: Potomac Books, 2001, p. 290. For mentions of Fehrenbach in interviews, see, for example, AR09, field-grade officer, March 22, 2017.

managing its massive force is to inculcate a culture of frankness and attention to detail, which in turn shapes the force's mores for competition:

> The Army produces leaders for combat on land, and in producing these leaders in this large hierarchical organization, they emphasize the values of honesty and straightforwardness. The Army finds comfort in detail and precision in its internal communication. If the Army tells you something, they tell you warts and all.[5]

Like the other services, the Army has numerous branches with distinct goals and cultures. Robert Zirkle of the Institute for Defense Analyses argues that, unlike the Air Force, which has the "monarchical" dominance of a single community, the Army is best seen as an oligarchy.[6] Branch distinctions within the Army tend to reflect an informal grouping of the branches as combat arms, combat support, and combat service support. While combat support branches include combat tasks, such as signals and military policing, they are generally grouped together with the combat service support (sustainment) rather than the combat arms. This reflects the Army's central focus on combat. But as debates arise about the character of future war, arguments for new ways of war have often been shaped by power relationships between the branches. One case of this is the development of the Bradley fighting vehicle, which was hindered because mechanized infantry was unsupported by the armor and infantry communities that dominated Army culture.[7] Ultimately, though, writes Zirkle, the utility of the Bradley on the battlefield launched a doctrinal reform that split the infantry community into two camps: a light infantry and a "heavy" infantry, the latter of which became doctrinally linked with the armor community, reducing the power of the light infantry as a constituency.[8]

One of the debates inside the Army today, the primacy of maneuver versus fires, is closely tied to branch identities and equities. The "traditional" combat arms consist of armor, infantry, and artillery, whereas aviation and air defense artillery are comparative newcomers.[9] Maneuver is the province of the traditional core of the combat arms:

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[5]   Congressional professional committee staff member, quoted in Scroggs, 2000, p. 59.

[6]   Robert Allen Zirkle, *Communities Rule: Intra-Service Politics in the United States Army*, doctoral thesis, Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2008, pp. 63–67.

[7]   Rod A. Coffey, *Doctrinal Orphan or Active Partner: A History of US Army Mechanized Infantry Doctrine*, master's thesis, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Army Command and General Staff College, 2000; and W. Blair Haworth, *The Bradley and How It Got That Way: Technology, Institutions, and the Problem of Mechanized Infantry in the United States Army*, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999.

[8]   Zirkle, 2008, p. 140; and Robert A. Doughty, *The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946–76*, Leavenworth Paper 1, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, August 1979, p. 24, http://usacac.army.mil/cac2/cgsc/carl/download/csipubs/doughty.pdf.

[9]   Zirkle, 2008, p. 25.

infantry (both light and heavy) and armor, whereas the fires community unites the artillery and air defense artillery branches. For most of the Army's history, fires have been considered a supporting element to combined arms maneuver, the pinnacle of Army operations. But advances in technology in the late 1990s made fires more relevant and resulted in a debate over the relative strengths of the two communities.[10] In an era in which modernization is necessary to contest near-peer competitors in Europe and Asia, there is broad agreement that both maneuver and fires modernization are important. However, given finite dollars, new doctrine such as Multi-Domain Battle emphasizes the role of fires relative to maneuver and could result in the same type of shifting power relations between the communities as arose in the mechanized infantry.[11]

Service Ethos and Guiding Ideals

Warrior Ethos

The foundational aspects of the Army idea, namely its role in creating America's nationhood and its deeper understanding of warfare, are reified in Builder's description of the Army's ethos as "the nation's obedient and loyal military servant."[12] Builder was not the first to describe the Army this way. That honor may have gone to Lindley Miller Garrison, secretary of war from 1913 to 1916, who famously told the cadets at West Point,

> The American Army has become the all-around handy man of the Government. . . . You may be called upon at any time to do any kind of service in any part of the world—and if you would not fall below the standard your fellows have set, you must be ready and you must do it, and you must do it well.[13]

The personality thus painted by Builder is of a faithful warrior who will do whatever the nation asks of it. Builder's description of the Army warrior ethos still resonates profoundly with the Army and those close to it. It was common to hear respondents describe the Army's ethos as "We do what you ask us" or hear them say, "The Army are the people's people."[14]

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[10] A. Dwight Raymond, *Firepower, Maneuver, and the Operational Level of War*, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: School of Advanced Military Studies, Army Command and General Staff College, 1992.

[11] Shawn Woodford, "Multi-Domain Battle and the Maneuver Warfare Debate," *Mystics & Statistics* (blog), February 20, 2017.

[12] Builder, 1989, p. 33.

[13] "American Army the 'Handy Man of the Government': Uncle Sam's Soldiers Are Called upon to Do Most Varied Kinds of Odd Jobs, Ranging All the Way from First Aid in Floods and Other Disasters to Building the Panama Canal," *New York Times*, 1914, Magazine Section. This image was reinforced decades later when Samuel P. Huntington, writing about this period, echoed the term *handyman*: Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957, p. 261.

[14] AR09, Army officer with OSD experience, March 22, 2017; AR42, defense civilian, March 22, 2017.

Bureaucratic Ethos

To understand the Army's competitive personality, we must also understand the Army's "bureaucratic ethos." Many of those who described the Army as the nation's devoted handyman did not stop there but went on to note that it remains so to its own competitive detriment, saying, "The Army can't understand why the nation doesn't love it as much as it loves the nation."[15]

One senior officer described the Army as "the bluetick hound of the DoD. We do what's necessary when it's asked of us. We don't say no. That's not true of other services."[16] A former field-grade officer said, "The core Army ethos is that you will need [a force capable of foreign regime change]. So even if you're unwilling to fund it, the Army will do its best to build the force so that inevitably, when you realize you need it, it will be there."[17] The sense one gets is of the Army as a bit *too* selfless, too concerned with service over self-interest and competition. This further implies that the Army, overall, believes that it is bad at competing in the bureaucratic arenas, and in fact this can be seen in the very formulation of Builder's original research question: Why is the Army so bad at strategic planning, relative to the other services?

Warfare Is Human, Leadership Divine

Another salient aspect of the Army idea that results from both its sense of national responsibility and its affinity for the timeless aspects of combat is a reverence for the plebeian that is distinctive among the services. The Army is largely tactically focused, and it consistently argues that war is messy, violent, and fundamentally human.[18] While each of the services values its people, in the Army, the "grunt" or "Joe" is elevated in the imagination. Whereas naval officers typically eat in a separate wardroom, an officer in battle traditionally does not eat until his soldiers are fed. This is in part a recognition that in land warfare, it is the grunt who bears the greatest risks of battle.[19] This is sometimes described by the frustrated as the behavior of an Army geared toward the lowest

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[15] Workshop participant, December 14, 2016. An interesting take on this argument can be seen in the debate between then-chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell (U.S. Army) and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright. Secretary Albright asked, "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?" to which he replied that "the U.S. military would carry out any mission it was handed, but my advice would always be that the tough political goals had to be set first." According to the Powell Doctrine, there is a preference for "real war" over handyman tasks. Colin L. Powell and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey*, New York: Random House, 2010, p. 576.

[16] AR88, senior Army officer, November 21, 2016.

[17] AR58, former Army officer and senior expert, November 4, 2016.

[18] SO21, former Army officer with special operations experience, November 15, 2016; AR88, senior Army officer, November 21, 2016.

[19] Ironically, this coexists with the harsh reality that for much of the Army's history, enlisted forces, particularly conscripts, felt themselves to be poorly treated by the officer corps. Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1964.

common denominator.[20] But for the Army, the timeless pursuit of battlefield victory is an inherently human endeavor—every battle is won or lost by the accumulated successes or failures of the individuals on the battlefield. Therefore, the Joes are the heart of the Army, and the true measure of an officer is in his or her ability to lead the troops. As we shall see, this contributes to Army ideas about what value it offers in a joint operational environment (raw leadership ability), which personnel roles are important (operational command), and what its resourcing priorities are (end strength and force structure).

Core Competencies

Sustained Landpower

While the Army does not feel fundamentally tied to the land domain, its defining capability is land warfare. As the current chief of staff of the Army, General Mark Milley, said upon his swearing in,

> War is an act of politics, where one side tries to impose its political will on the other. And politics is all about people. And people live on the ground. We may wish it were otherwise, but it is not. Wars are ultimately decided on the ground, where people live, and it is on the ground where the U.S. Army, the U.S. Marine Corps, and the U.S. special operations forces must never, ever fail.[21]

If, in the Army's view, it is the decisive force, and wars are decided on land, then land-power is the Army's core capability. Milley's statement clearly distinguishes the Army from the Navy and Air Force but allies it with the other land-power-related services: the Marine Corps and SOF. While there is a greater affinity there, the Army still separates itself from these entities. Whereas the Marine Corps is expeditionary and SOF conduct specialized mission sets, the U.S. Army is a tool of broad-spectrum, sustained landpower.[22] The nation requires a massive land force to seize and hold ground over a long period of time and to do so at a moment's notice.[23] The apex of the Army's land-power mission is combined arms maneuver, which is

> the application of the elements of combat power in unified action to defeat enemy ground forces; to seize, occupy, and defend land areas; and to achieve physical, temporal, and psychological advantages over the enemy to seize and exploit the initiative.[24]

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[20] Andrew Exum, *This Man's Army*, New York: Gotham, 2005, p. 29.

[21] Quoted in C. Todd Lopez, "Ground Forces 'Must Never, Ever Fail,' New Army Chief Says," *DoD News*, August 14, 2015.

[22] As one soldier said of the Marines, "They don't have to do all the stuff we do." AR09, Army officer with OSD experience, March 22, 2017.

[23] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[24] Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, *Unified Land Operations*, Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, October 2011, p. 6.

For the Army, this expresses the essence of war, and the Army believes that "being a brigade commander in combined arms maneuver is the hardest task you will ever have."[25] Officially, the Army also considers wide area security to be a core competency of the Army.[26] Wide area security is "the application of the elements of combat power in unified action to protect populations, forces, infrastructure, and activities; to deny the enemy positions of advantage; and to consolidate gains in order to retain the initiative."[27] While both are key tasks of the force, the Army spends a great deal more time and attention thinking about how best to conduct combined arms maneuver than wide area security.

The Foundation of the Force

A second, but less frequently discussed, defining capability of the Army is what might be termed foundational support. The Army functions as the backbone of global defense operations, providing support to the rest of the military and DoD:

> Army forces provide capabilities that help create the conditions necessary for U.S. operations through a broad range of actions found in theater of operations force structure, including logistics, air defense, network infrastructure, and port opening. The Army combines forward-deployed forces and rotational forces to develop, maintain, and operate the theater structure.[28]

In addition to these theater support functions, the Army also serves as the executive agent for 40 out of 69 DoD responsibilities.[29] Executive agents provide operational or administrative support for matters that affect more than one service or DoD component. The Army carries executive agent responsibilities for functions as diverse as the DoD Combat Feeding Research and Engineering Program, the Military Postal Service, the Multinational Force & Observers–Sinai, and DoD Support to United Nations Missions.[30]

On the surface, these support missions would appear to run counter to the Army's fundamental nature, since they do not involve the central tasks of combat. However, they also reinforce the Army's idea of its essential nature, of the nation's dependence on the Army. The Army has gradually come to accept this to a greater degree than in

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[25] AR99, former senior Army civilian, April 21, 2017.

[26] The Army defines its core competencies as combined arms maneuver and wide area operations. Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, p. 6.

[27] Army Doctrine Publication 3-0, p. 6.

[28] National Commission on the Future of the Army, *Report to the President and the Congress of the United States*, Washington, D.C., January 28, 2016, p. 7.

[29] National Commission on the Future of the Army, 2016, p. 8.

[30] National Commission on the Future of the Army, 2016.

the past.[31] For example, the Army now sees it as a source of pride that it provides this support, highlighting it as the first figure in the National Commission on the Future of the Army report to Congress, under the section "Why America Needs an Army."[32]

Competitive Goals

The Army's competitive goals are the activities it tries to pursue and the assets it tries to preserve and grow. Following from our discussion of the Army's nature as both loyal servant and consummate warrior and our observation that the Army's core competence lies in the application of landpower and service as the foundational force, it should come as little surprise that the Army's two competitive goals are to seek acceptance of its preferred mission, which is ground combat in the form of combined arms maneuver, and to preserve or grow end strength. An additional goal that the Army pursues, almost as a fallback position, is participation in every military contingency.

Acceptance of the Centrality of Conventional Ground Combat

The Army is often accused of taking its experience in Europe during the world wars, and particularly World War II, and clinging to it wrongly as the image for the force it should strive to be. Builder took particular exception to this static view of the Army, declaring, "For the Army, Europe is the only invitation it will get to the prom of its fondest memories."[33] A European contingency means more of the core combat specialties that are central to the Army's core competencies and fewer of those it cares less for, such as air and missile defense or antiship cruise missiles.[34]

Throughout the Vietnam War, the Army struggled to accept that victory meant setting aside its preferences for conventional, state-based conflict. As one anonymous senior officer famously stated, "I'll be damned if I permit the United States Army, its institutions, its doctrine, and its traditions, to be destroyed just to win this lousy war."[35] In one of the final chapters of *Masks of War*, titled "The Army's Identity Crisis," Builder argues forcefully that this attitude must change if the Army is to survive shrinking budgets and the era of strategic nuclear weapons. For Builder, there is one chance for the Army to fundamentally shift its image of war and its identity:

> The Army, however, alone among the services, could face a wartime trauma short of Armageddon, yet sufficient to force fundamental and painful institutional changes. If the Army were confronted with a major irregular war on its doorstep

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[31] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[32] National Commission on the Future of the Army, 2016.

[33] Builder, 1989, p. 187.

[34] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[35] Brian M. Jenkins, *The Unchangeable War*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RM-6278-2-ARPA, 1970, p. 3.

(e.g. in Latin America), under circumstances in which air or naval power were clearly unnecessary, and then unleashed to do its "thing," it might conceivably fail. That kind of failure could cause the Army to change.[36]

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq surely ought to have met Builder's criteria for a change to Army culture and preferences. While Afghanistan is far away, the attacks of September 11, 2001, knocked on America's front door and created a great sense of urgency. Far from the ocean and with little use for the Air Force's preferred airframes, the Army in Afghanistan particularly was reasonably free to "do its thing." Nearly 17 years later, it is hard to argue that the wars have been decisive successes, yet this has provoked no major reckoning within the Army, including no shift of culture or ambitions. Much of the Army still considers large-scale, conventional conflict to be the warfare worth preparing for, and it perceives irregular warfare to be a mere "lesser included case."[37] One respondent, indicating how great the Army's preference for conventional combat remained, said that in 2006 he walked out of a precommand course in which the role-playing exercise was still played out with massive tank battles.[38]

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates was ultimately the one to accuse the services of "next-war-itis," writing,

> Support for conventional modernization programs is deeply embedded in the Defense Department's budget, in its bureaucracy, in the defense industry, and in Congress. My fundamental concern is that there is not commensurate institutional support—including in the Pentagon—for the capabilities needed to win today's wars and some of their likely successors.[39]

Gates forced the services to abandon investments in the future for a better shot at victory today. While this applied to all of the services, it was particularly true for the institutional Army, though the operational forces hailed the focus on the current fight. As the years since passed, the institutional Army's fear of shortchanging future war has only increased.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act deepened a division between the institutional Army and the reality of combat. By strengthening the CCMDs, it created an institutional Army that was very future focused and focused on strategic concept development, and an operational force that was focused on the present, and often too greatly on

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[36] Builder, 1989, pp. 202–203.

[37] Harvey M. Sapolsky, Brendan Rittenhouse Green, and Benjamin H. Friedman, "The RMA and the Second Interwar Period," in Sapolsky, Friedman, and Green, 2009, p. 182.

[38] SO21, retired Special Forces (SF) officer, November 15, 2016.

[39] Robert M. Gates, "A Balanced Strategy: Reprogramming the Pentagon for a New Age," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, No. 1, 2009, p. 29; and Julian E. Barnes and Peter Spiegel, "A Pentagon Battle over 'the Next War,'" *Los Angeles Times*, July 21, 2008.

the tactical and operational.[40] With Gates's admonishment that "we should not starve the forces at war today to prepare for a war that may never come," the institutional Army flipped in on itself and became trapped in what one respondent has called "presentism."[41]

As the Army has begun to lift its institutional head back up after the most intense war years, it has returned to a vision of war that better approximates its core competencies. So convinced has the Army been of the importance of preparing for major war in a Russian or Korean Peninsula scenario that it persists in planning for and building toward those contingencies, even when OSD has appeared disinterested.[42] So great is the Army's determination to love the nation, even if it feels the nation does not love it, that it will tell OSD that its definition of the threat is wrong and repeatedly try to litigate the issue of the nature of the threat, even if this means sending the same, lightly adjusted briefing up multiple times.[43] At the time of writing, this approach has at least been partially vindicated: in remarks to the House Armed Services Committee, Secretary of Defense James Mattis called North Korea the "most urgent and dangerous" threat, and in his Senate confirmation testimony he repeatedly stressed the threat of Russia and need for a credible deterrent force.[44]

Preservation and Growth of End Strength and Force Structure

The Army's central measure of health is end strength. This follows naturally from the Army's emphasis on the mass endeavor of ground combat and its ideals of leadership of troops in battle. When there are tough times, "the Army playbook is about people first."[45] The conventional wisdom has been that after World War I, the Army's default position was to trade anything (readiness, modernization) for end strength.[46] While the Army does care deeply about being modern and ready for its next conflict, there is a sense that "modern enough" and "ready enough" are less critical to the force than raw size.[47]

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[40] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.; AR88, Army general officer, November 21, 2016.

[41] Robert Gates, quoted in Barnes and Spiegel, 2008; AR88, Army general officer, November 21, 2016.

[42] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[43] AR99, former senior Army civilian, April 21, 2017.

[44] Jim Mattis, "Written Statement for the Record," House Armed Services Committee, Washington, D.C., 2017; U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, *Stenographic Transcript Before the Committee on Armed Services United States Senate to Conduct a Confirmation Hearing on the Expected Nomination of Mr. James N. Mattis to Be Secretary of Defense*, Washington, D.C., 2017.

[45] AR12, former senior Army officer, November 10, 2016.

[46] AR91, former Army officer and senior expert, November 10, 2016.

[47] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

It would be overly simplistic to suggest that the Army pursues force size alone, however. When the Army is forced to sacrifice numbers, it has ingrained preferences for force structure that emerge. The first is a preference to retain its flagship units. Where once those were arguably at the division level, today hedging against uncertainty means protecting BCTs. Beginning with the Pentagon's Strategic Choices Management Review in 2013 and continuing through the remaining years of sequester, the Army was forced to make tough choices in end strength. At a total of 490,000, the Army could afford 30 BCTs with three battalions in each. But then–chief of staff of the Army General Raymond T. Odierno hoped to preserve a few more BCTs. Rather than reduce the number of battalions to two per BCT in order to obtain the desired number, the decision was made to cut the average number of personnel inside each BCT.[48] This represented a sort of gamble on the Army's part: Retaining BCTs was a way to retain as much control as possible because, once lost, adding a new brigade would have to be Congress's decision rather than the military's or DoD's.[49] But keeping three battalions in each of those brigades instead of two ensured that as soon as the Army was directed to regrow, it could begin placing old battalions as cadre into new BCTs.[50]

Another force structure preference that is revealed during a crisis of end strength is a preference for the combat arms. When the January 2017 National Commission on the Future of the Army suggested in its report that the Army consider cutting two infantry BCTs in order to put that end strength toward critically low levels of enablers, the Army's reaction was swift and somewhat tautological. Said Chief of Staff Milley, "As a matter of principle, when it comes to force structure, to me the very last thing you'd want to give up is your foxhole strength. If you don't have infantry, artillery and armor, attack helicopters, special forces, then you don't have an Army."[51]

Army end-strength arguments are often met with a jaundiced eye by budget watchers who see in its fear of troop loss an unwillingness to do more with less. The Army often has trouble articulating these arguments in ways that do not sound either vague or potentially self-serving. Some of this is a problem of structure. The Air Force and Navy are platform driven, which entails rules about utilization and manning and implies less flexibility. By contrast, Army force structure is largely seen as flexible and fungible. USSOCOM is able to build force structure arguments based on the unique, high-end nature of the services it provides, though it has challenges in other respects. And the Marine Corps faces similar issues regarding the fungibility of its forces, but since its size is so much smaller, its requests are commensurately lean.

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[48] AR58, former Army officer and senior expert, November 4, 2016.

[49] AR58, former Army officer and senior expert, November 4, 2016.

[50] AR99, former senior Army civilian, April 21, 2017.

[51] Quoted in Judson, 2016.

The competition for autonomy and future relevance is the pinnacle of service-based competition. For the Army, the decision to maintain brigade-level flags at all costs is a means to secure autonomy and to regrow the force quickly. And for the Army, whose people are its platforms and whose relevance rests on the ability to rapidly meet any task set before it, end strength buys flexibility, which reduces risk. A senior Army leader may not be able to predict how the nation will employ its forces next, but a force of 490,000 yields significantly greater options to do so than a force of 350,000. For the Army, knowing that, no matter the mission, it can never say no, major cuts to end strength are a crisis to its very organizational identity. A handyman without tools cannot serve the nation.

Importantly, upon assuming his position as chief of staff of the Army, General Milley declared readiness to be his top priority as chief.[52] This apparent step away from end strength as a measure of service health must be seen in the larger context of debates over the future Army. In this case, Milley's predecessor had fought a lengthy battle over force size, resisting dramatic cuts to end strength. As a force simultaneously conducting a prolonged war and preparing to fight the next war, all with a reduced force size, General Milley's readiness drive has been a logical response to externally imposed conditions.

Participation in All Contingencies

Finally, while the Army prefers above all else to argue for the vitality of conventional state-based war, its fallback position is to participate in some way in all contingencies for which the military is used. While this may mean serving as the headquarters element for a task force, it may also mean theater support roles in logistics, transport, communications, or other areas. If the Army is the expert at "war" writ large, and it is also America's handyman, then it is no surprise that it feels there can be no war in which the Army does not play a role. The foundational nature of the Army is one of its core capabilities and allows the Army to be the linchpin of operations, even when it is not in a starring role. An additional cultural motivation may underlie this goal as well. As we explain in our appendix on historical milestones, the introduction of Air-Sea Battle (ASB) just as the Army was reducing its commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan was perceived by some as creating a "near-existential fight for its very future."[53]

In some ways, the Army actually seems to prefer these support missions to operational missions *other* than combined arms maneuver and wide area security.[54] In a sense, this is logical. The provision of Army support to other services may utilize support personnel rather than combat arms, but it uses them for their intended purpose.

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[52] Michelle Tan, "Milley: Readiness for Ground Combat Is No. 1 Priority," *Army Times*, August 28, 2015.

[53] Mark Perry, "The Pentagon's Fight over Fighting China," *Politico*, July/August 2015.

[54] AR99, former senior Army civilian, April 21, 2017.

Operations such as humanitarian aid, on the other hand, may require combat troops to conduct missions far outside the normal scope of their duties.[55]

Arenas of Competition

As the Army works to pursue its goals of landpower missions, end strength sufficiency, and foundational participation in contingencies, it does so by positioning itself across a range of competitive arenas. As we shall see, there are some where its position is quite strong and others where it is less so.

Future Institutional Security

As the first of the services to be founded and the largest of the services in terms of personnel, it is easy to believe that "without the U.S. Army . . . you don't have a country."[56] The Army's place in America's future battles has rarely been in doubt. But while the Army is relatively secure in this arena, that does not equate to being a perfectly effective competitor—it may be the conversation the Army wants to have, but it is not a conversation it has always been good at having.

Builder argues that the Army is not good at institutional strategy because, as the nation's selfless handyman, the Army ultimately has no control over the ends it must pursue or the means it requires to do so.[57] It must fight to win any battle, with whatever tools the nation sees fit to give it. Knowing this, and having had to rebuild the Army twice in World Wars I and II, the Army developed a "moral compact of readiness," a sense that it is the Army's responsibility to the nation it serves to be ready to meet the next challenge.[58]

But ready for what? The Army seeks to define itself to meet the nation's most existential threats. During the Cold War, the nature of the threat was reasonably well defined, but that has rarely been the case since then. Absent a single, overarching purpose, the Army must be prepared to cover down on a vast range of threats to the nation. This is made both easier and harder by the fundamentally human nature of land warfare. Flexibility makes it hard to articulate a single core value the Army provides. For the Army, its value it so obvious, so core to the fiber of the nation, that it seems inarticulable. According to one workshop participant, when civilians do not get it, the Army thinks, "it must be the messaging, not the argument."[59]

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[55] While this is something the Army has historically done in its handyman role, as Builder writes, its experiences in the European theater have disinclined it to these kinds of roles. Builder, 1989, pp. 185–186.

[56] AR11, defense civilian, March 22, 2017.

[57] Builder, 1989, p. 86.

[58] Workshop notes, December 14, 2016, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[59] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

The Army sees itself at a competitive disadvantage relative to the other services for this exact reason. It is important to note that this is not a simple case of institutional insecurity. One respondent captured the Army's situation well:

> A lot of the challenge of the Army, which is what makes them crazy trying to defend themselves, is that non-Army defense intellectuals have posited with good logic and solid research that the types of ground wars we have historically fought are relics of the past . . . and they've been doing it (and being wrong) ever since Hiroshima. The problem is that, in eras of a desire for a peace dividend, these siren songs are very alluring, and the heroic response to siren songs is to tie yourself to the mast, not to plug your ears. . . . If it is true that just because you are paranoid it doesn't mean someone isn't out to get you, you have painted a vision of a somewhat paranoid Army, without providing for the fact that someone really is out to get them. The whole issue of relative costs (personnel cost more than equipment, so the huge Army is at a comparative disadvantage in talks about marginal budget changes, and even macro budget changes) is probably worth discussing. As is the relative speed of response—a lumbering Army sailing from the states, vs. a steaming/flying service that can "swing" between theaters. All of these "argue" against an Army (effectively) and the Army has to say, "yes, but . . . history is on our side."[60]

In the competition for service relevance, as we will see in the next chapter, the Navy competes well by articulating clear service strategies. These are few in number (only six since the mid-1980s), concise, and used by the Navy equally to articulate its value to outsiders and operating concept to insiders. Each Navy strategy is treated as a landmark document and a bold choice about the utility of naval power. By contrast, the Army's strategic planning process is robust and detailed. The Army's process, called "The Army Plan," consists of the Army Vision, the Army Strategic Plan, Army Planning Guidance, the Army Program Guidance Memorandum, and the Army Campaign Plan.[61] The Army Vision is a high-level document intended to state the Army's objectives to an external audience.[62] But rather than take a strong stand about the use of landpower, the 2015 Army Vision, titled *Strategic Advantage in a Complex World*, flexed to cover all contingencies:

> The Army of 2025 and Beyond will effectively employ lethal and non-lethal overmatch against any adversary to prevent, shape, and win conflicts and achieve national interests. . . . It will consist of a balanced, versatile mix of scalable, expeditionary forces that can rapidly deploy to any place on the globe and conduct sustained operations within the full range of military operations.[63]

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[60] AR58, former Army officer and senior expert, email communication with author, May 16, 2017.

[61] U.S. Army War College, *How the Army Runs: A Senior Leader Reference Handbook*, Carlisle, Pa., 2015, pp. 2-23–2-24.

[62] U.S. Army War College, 2015, p. 2-23.

[63] U.S. Army, *The Army Vision: Strategic Advantage in a Complex World*, Washington, D.C., 2015, p. 1.

This follows directly from the Army's self-image as the loyal servant: because it must be prepared to go anywhere and do its best with whatever the nation gives it, the Army is not free to forgo certain types of contingency.

The remainder of the strategic planning process is internally focused and geared toward fulfilling the military's statutory obligations under Title 10 and toward translating this into a Program Objective Memorandum (POM) for allocation of resources.[64] It focuses on the linkage of all the ends, ways, and means that the Army could be called on to pursue. Beyond that, there is a proliferation of strategies: a cyber strategy, a business strategy, an information technology strategy, etc.

While the Army may not articulate clear institutional strategies, in the realm of operational strategy, it draws on its deep understanding of the nature of war to articulate operational concepts and strategies that can shape the debate over the use of military force. The Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is the architect of the Army's signature operating concepts, while the Headquarters Department of the Army serves as the gatekeeper to ensure these concepts are realistic. Unlike the strategic planning process, the development of operating concepts, such as Air-Land Battle, Strategic Landpower, or Multi-Domain Battle, is not on a fixed schedule. Operating concepts are developed in response to external threats and institutional realities. They answer the question, how can landpower solve the nation's critical problems? Operating concepts, when intellectually fully developed, are codified in various revisions to Army Doctrine Publication 1, *The Army*. These arguments for landpower suffuse Army thinking and may be echoed in the Army Vision, but there is no single capstone document to integrate external and internal voices. We will further discuss how the Army effectively uses the development of operational concepts in our section on competitive tactics.

The picture thus painted is of a force so foundational to America's security and so flexible and versatile that it has difficulty making only a single argument for its relevance to outsiders. Because of this, the Army has trouble winning in any single "head-to-head" argument with a service. Fortunately for the Army, to a large extent, its argument does actually tend to write itself. While the Army may never successfully fulfill its moral compact to be ready for any specific war, it can always be certain that its services will be called on and its relevance restored. Or, as one officer said, in the face of massive cuts that would have gouged the pre-9/11 force, in the end the Army, "as we always are, was rescued by its adversaries."[65]

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[64] The POM is an important document that "displays the resource allocation decisions of the Military Department in response to, and in accordance with, the Guidance for Development of the Force (GDF) and Defense Planning Guidance (DPG)" over a five-year period. See "Program Objective Memorandum (POM)/Budget Formulation," *Defense Acquisition University, ACQuipedia*, updated January 11, 2017; and U.S. Army War College, 2015, pp. 2-23–2-24.

[65] AR88, senior Army officer, November 21, 2016.

Current Roles and Missions

The contest for current operational roles and missions is the Army's preferred arena of competition. Whereas in the arena of institutional security the Army has natural advantage, but does not really compete, in this arena, the Army has both natural advantage and competitive skill. As the foundational force, with forward stationed troops in over 140 locations worldwide, the Army is naturally at the heart of any current operations.[66] Its ability to rapidly deploy and sustain a large headquarters when needed makes it a foundation for both quick response contingencies and the long term.

In most of the other services, officers atop their service hierarchies are technicians of a sort: Air Force officers fly planes, Navy officers guide ships. For Army officers, their technical specialty is leadership. An armor officer does not drive the tank; he leads his men, who drive the tank. This gives the Army a competitive advantage in leading and staffing contingencies of any type because officers at all levels are expected to have a general ability to lead in any crisis or contingency. Whereas in a resource competition the idea of land warfare as a human endeavor complicated the Army's argument, here it acts as a key strength.

As discussed, the Army has a special relationship with war, one that is both visceral and intellectual. Because of this, the Army places significant value on developing operating concepts for war. Among its historical milestones, the Army in the mid-1980s achieved a tremendous institutional and even cultural renewal with the development of the AirLand Battle doctrine.[67] The intellectual debate that brought the Army from its post-Vietnam doctrine of Active Defense to AirLand Battle, from a static defensive strategy to a battlefield that was dynamic in space and time, was a transformational moment in the Army's history.[68]

Likewise, the introduction of Air-Sea Battle (ASB) can be said to be a critical moment in the Army's culture and competitive behavior. With the Army deeply enmeshed in the present fight in Iraq and Afghanistan, ASB threatened to seize the conceptual initiative for the future.[69] It seems clear the Army has learned, from the highs of AirLand Battle to the lows of ASB, that as the nation's foundational force it would rather be the author of joint concepts than risk being left outside them. Since its experience with ASB, the Army has led the way on major concept development initiatives such as Strategic Landpower and Multi-Domain Battle.

The Army's fluency with doctrine, operational concepts, and strategy is not without limits. While the Air Force and Navy are largely platform-based forces, because the

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[66] National Commission on the Future of the Army, 2016.

[67] Dwight E. Phillips, *Reengineering Institutional Culture and the American Way of War in the Post-Vietnam U.S. Army, 1968–1989*, doctoral dissertation, Chicago: University of Chicago, 2014.

[68] John L. Romjue, *From Active Defense to Airland Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine, 1973–1982*, Fort Monroe, Va.: Historical Office, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1984.

[69] Perry, 2015.

nature of their domains is to require ships and planes for maneuver, the Army's "platform" is its people. This provides an extraordinary amount of flexibility for the Army, because people can be redirected and remissioned in a way that is easily adaptable to different campaigns and environments.

But that flexibility can also be an impediment, as one officer said: "Other services are trapped by their domains. They are protected by them as well."[70] Leaning into its flexibility as a strength, the Army in the early 2000s shifted to a modular structure, moving from a division-driven force to one with a brigade focus, creating BCTs as brigades with additional organic assets. The result was that

> the move to modularity provided the Army with a greater number of smaller, very capable force packages, making it easier to sustain the protracted operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Combat support and combat service support units and force structure were also redesigned to make the entire force more modular.[71]

This dramatically increased the agility of the Army, but this flexibility was not without limits. Whereas platforms have physical laws that may govern their use—metal fatigues, and even nuclear submarine reactors will eventually go cold—the rules that governed the use of the BCT were unclear, and in the environment of the war on terror, the Army was especially motivated to break rules to meet the fullest needs of the mission.

In November 2009, a relatively new President Barack Obama reviewed troop movements for the war in Afghanistan. Frustrated by the lengthy commitment these rotations would entail, he sought another option:

> By moving the bell curve to the left, Mr. Obama decided to send 30,000 troops mostly in the next six months and then begin pulling them out a year after that, betting that a quick jolt of extra forces could knock the enemy back on its heels enough for the Afghans to take over the fight.[72]

The Army agreed to this rapid surge, but it did not make clear to the Obama administration the physical limitations of getting troops from Iraq to Afghanistan.[73] This delay may have contributed to diminished results on the battlefield, with the Afghan government, and relative to the stress on the force.[74]

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[70] AR88, senior Army officer, November 21, 2016.

[71] Stuart E. Johnson et al., *A Review of the Army's Modular Force Structure*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, TR-927-1-OSD, 2011, p. iii.

[72] Peter Baker, "How Obama Came to Plan for 'Surge' in Afghanistan," *New York Times*, December 5, 2009.

[73] AR88, senior Army officer, November 21, 2016.

[74] Steve Bowman and Catherine Dale, *War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, R40156, June 8, 2010, p. 62.

The Army competes well in the arena of current roles and missions, with a natural advantage arising from its size and core competencies and a learned advantage in the form of its leadership in the area of joint concept development. But the Army continues to be hamstrung by the challenge of articulating the structural limitations of its flexible, adaptable force.

Personnel

There are two ways in which the Army might compete in the arena of personnel policies. The first would be to build the officers who are savvy advocates from inside the institutional service, and the second would be to develop and place the best joint leaders. Of the two competitive strategies, we find that the Army favors operational positions over institutional or strategic leadership, and joint operational assignments such as CCMD and joint task force command, more so than other types of joint positions. While it does seek CCMD leadership generally, the Army has the greatest visceral attachment to USCENTCOM, because of the ongoing conflicts there, and U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), because of the Army's persistent focus on the European theater of operations.

To understand the Army's attitude to personnel, it is essential to see it through the lens of one of the military's iconic intellectual battles and cultural turning points. In the wake of the Vietnam War, General William DePuy became the first commander of the newly formed TRADOC, with the task of reviving an Army that had been beaten down both operationally and emotionally after the unpopular war. Subordinate to DePuy was Lieutenant General John Cushman, commanding general of the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. The two generals clashed over the education of the next generation of soldiers. DePuy, largely a product of his experiences in World War II, saw the Army's fundamental problem as a lack of tactical training for commanders.[75] The intellectual Cushman, shaped by the failures of a confounding and ambiguous Vietnam battlefield, saw the problem differently: "General DePuy was determined to teach the Army in the field, and Leavenworth students, 'how to fight.' I wanted to teach the students, 'how to think about how to fight.' We never quite connected."[76] This debate over training versus education had another dimension: Cushman's methods were designed to help field-grade officers to think not just about the battle but also strategically about the campaign. DePuy, on the other hand, valued tactics above all else.[77] Cushman rather famously quotes DePuy as telling students at the college, "All I want from this class is ten battalion

[75] Paul H. Herbert, *Deciding What Has to Be Done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5, Operations*, Leavenworth Paper 16, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, July 1988, pp. 51–58.

[76] John H. Cushman, *Fort Leavenworth—A Memoir*, Vol. I, No. 47, Washington, D.C., September 2001, p. 47.

[77] William E. DePuy, "Modern Battle Tactics," in Richard M. Swain, comp., Donald L. Gilmore and Carolyn D. Conway, eds., *Selected Papers of General William E. DePuy*, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Combat Studies Institute Press, 1994b.

commanders."[78] DePuy wrote in 1978, "We cannot have the best man on a $200 type-writer while a less qualified soldier operates a million-dollar tank."[79]

In the end, DePuy's vision largely held sway, and the Army firmly committed to the tactical, training-based vision of command, rather than a focus on strategy.[80] The Army's personnel system has followed suit, placing nearly all of its emphasis on the experience of command, with brigade and division leadership seen as the pinnacle of the soldiering experience.[81] With a focus on a series of gates for promotion, to secure these positions, a soldier must follow a fairly prescribed route. For example, one officer told us that one's future Army career is determined in roughly the first three months as a battalion S-3 (operations officer), because that is the window during which selection for the next brigade S-3 happens, and that position is essential in order to reach brigade command.[82]

In a 2016 article titled "Are You a Strategic Genius? Not Likely, Given the Army's System for Selecting, Educating Leaders," Major General (Ret.) Robert Scales argues that charging through these gates as rapidly as is required to become a general officer means that soldiers are promoted to general "when their potential strategic genius has yet to be observed or tested."[83] The system promotes based on proven tactical skill, rather than strategic potential. Scales defines four types of strategic genius: combat, political, institutional, and anticipatory.[84] While to some degree the system may produce combat genius as an externality of the existing promotional system, raw combat genius may not be the most relevant type of strategic leadership from a service competition standpoint.[85]

To become a strong advocate for the Army at the institutional level would seem to require a combination of both institutional genius and political genius, with some amount of the "seerlike" qualities of anticipatory genius. To lead in key joint positions, such as CCMD, may require combat genius, but it more often would be served by political and anticipatory genius. In the rush through the gates of command, there is little emphasis on development of these types of skills. Our respondents often contrasted the Army's personnel system with that of the Air Force, where, the Army believes, the pinnacle is the Air Staff, and the Air Force grooms its people from the

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[78] Cushman, 2001, p. 47.

[79] William E. DePuy, "Are We Ready for the Future?," in Richard M. Swain, comp., Donald L. Gilmore and Carolyn D. Conway, eds., *Selected Papers of General William E. DePuy*, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Combat Studies Institute Press, 1994a, p. 270.

[80] DePuy, 1994a.

[81] SO21, former Army officer with special operations experience, November 15, 2016.

[82] AR09, Army officer with OSD experience, March 22, 2017.

[83] Robert H. Scales, Jr., "Are You a Strategic Genius? Not Likely, Given Army's System for Selecting, Educating Leaders," *Association of the United States Army*, October 13, 2016.

[84] Scales, 2016.

[85] AR58, former Army officer and senior expert, November 4, 2016.

beginning to rotate through those institutional positions.[86] By contrast, "in the Army, it's better to stay on the force, keep muddy boots."[87] Particularly in an Army at war for the past 17 years, keeping one's boots muddy has not been difficult. Great institutional leaders in the Army's past—Generals Creighton Abrams and Gordon Sullivan, for example—had multiple tours in positions on the Army staff and at TRADOC. Today's senior leaders, by contrast, are more apt to have senior joint tours in the Pentagon, in addition to senior operational commands.

An active suspicion of the Pentagon and service or joint nonoperational positions has arisen. In part this is structural, abetted by the division of the institutional from the operational as a result of Goldwater-Nichols. But much of it is cultural. One of the Army's most beloved books, *Once an Eagle*, told the fictional story of two archetypal officers, a "muddy boots" soldier who represented good, and a staff officer who represented evil.[88] The result of this bias toward the field is that soldiers sometimes feel the "need to wash your mouth out" after saying the word *Pentagon*.[89] One former officer told us that he came to the Pentagon first as a brigadier general and was behind the power curve, relative to the other services. Two years later, when he requested another tour in the Pentagon, he advertised it as being told he "had" to come back, even though that was not the reality.[90]

An exception to this is general officer-level tours on the Joint Staff, which are seen as prestigious in their own right, and as a stepping stone to CCMD leadership.[91] On the Joint Staff, and as a general rule, the Army prefers the J3 (Operations) and J5 (Plans) positions because these hew most closely to the Army's preferred warfighting tasks.[92]

For midcareer soldiers, though, a joint tour is a "career killer" because unless a soldier is being actively groomed for a specific position, it is hard to get the kind of career evaluation one needs to move ahead.[93] This has an implicit impact on the Army's ability to compete with the other services inside the Pentagon. For example, for midcareer positions that would assist with the development of military scenarios for the DoD Analytic Agenda, the Army

> from an assignment perspective discounts the utility of those positions. . . . The same is true in OSD Policy and CAPE [Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation]. The Army doesn't look at it as a place to put quality Army guys to fight for Army equities so the kind of expertise available to leaders isn't Army-centric.[94]

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[86] AR09, Army officer with OSD experience, March 22, 2017.

[87] AR09, Army officer with OSD experience, March 22, 2017.

[88] Anton Myrer, *Once an Eagle*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

[89] AR12, former senior Army officer, November 10, 2016.

[90] AR12, former senior Army officer, November 10, 2016.

[91] AR09, Army officer with OSD experience, March 22, 2017.

[92] AR12, former senior Army officer, November 10, 2016.

[93] AR09, Army officer with OSD experience, March 22, 2017.

[94] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

Resources

The fight for resources is among the biggest competitions in the military services. The preparation of the POM, the President's budget request, and the congressional appropriations process all represent opportunities for institutional strategy and competition. For the Army, the competition for resources is where it makes its case for the Army's value to the nation, now and in the future. Yet the Army sees itself as so fundamentally tied to the nation that sometimes it can have difficulty articulating a single, strong argument for resources.

The Army does not have the strongest rapport with Congress, compared to other services, but this appears to be changing. In part its history is because the Army, as the devoted servant, is uncomfortable with anything that smacks of the political. In a detailed work from the year 2000, Herbert Scroggs excoriated the Army's relationship with Congress, subtitling his book *Thick Armor, Dull Sword, Slow Horse*.[95] Several of Scroggs's patterns of service behavior still hold true. First, the Army is still regarded as the most honest and credible of the services in responding to requests from Congress and others.[96] As one workshop participant said, Capitol Hill "will watch the Army do the right thing even if it's against their own interests."[97]

Scroggs also argued that the Army was the least represented service on the Hill, and this appears to be changing somewhat.[98] Today, it is common for general officers to engage with Congress daily.[99] However, the Army still struggles to tell its story to Congress, what Scroggs framed as "Why an Army and why this size?"[100] In interviews, one of our respondents said the Army has trouble arguing for something specific, that they have "a bag of bumper stickers and no car."[101]

Until now, we have not discussed the Army National Guard for reasons of scope, but it would be difficult to understand the Army's resource competition without doing so. The active Army and the Army National Guard have a relationship of both partnership and discord, with component parochialisms inside the service.[102] Because the Guard is spread across the country and can be alternately called up for duty to the state and to the nation, the Guard represents a blessing and a curse for total Army resourcing strategy. As an example, when the fiscal year (FY) 2016 budget proposal announced cuts to the force, the National Guard was an asset. It was able to leverage groups like the National Governors Association to speak out

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[95] Scroggs, 2000.

[96] Scroggs, 2000, pp. 57–58; OS01, senior defense civilian, December 2, 2016.

[97] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[98] Scroggs, 2000, p. 64.

[99] AR05, Army officer, March 31, 2017.

[100] Scroggs, 2000, p. 96.

[101] AR91, former Army officer and senior expert, November 10, 2016.

[102] National Commission on the Future of the Army, 2016, p. i.

against the cuts. The state-based structure of the Guard can be an effective tool in Congress. However, when the components are at odds, the Guard's power in Congress can frustrate the Army. That same year, as a cost-cutting measure, the Army proposed the Aviation Restructuring Initiative, which would take all the Apache helicopters out of the Guard and place them in the active component. The Guard understandably fought back against what it perceived to be a raiding of Guard assets to serve the active component's needs.[103] For the Army, the National Guard is both a safety valve for risk and a storage chest for capability and capacity, but the Guard maintains its own relations with Congress and the states, which can at times appear closer than the Army's relations with them.

Another important dimension of the resource competition is the advent of OCO funding for the war on terror as a regularized feature of the budget process. This formalization began in FY 2004 to standardize funding and oversight, and it was designated as OCO in FY 2012.[104] As presented in Figure 2.1, OCO funding increases provided a massive boost to the Army's spending and to the military more gener-

Figure 2.1
Army Base Budget Versus Contingency Funding, Fiscal Years 2001–2017
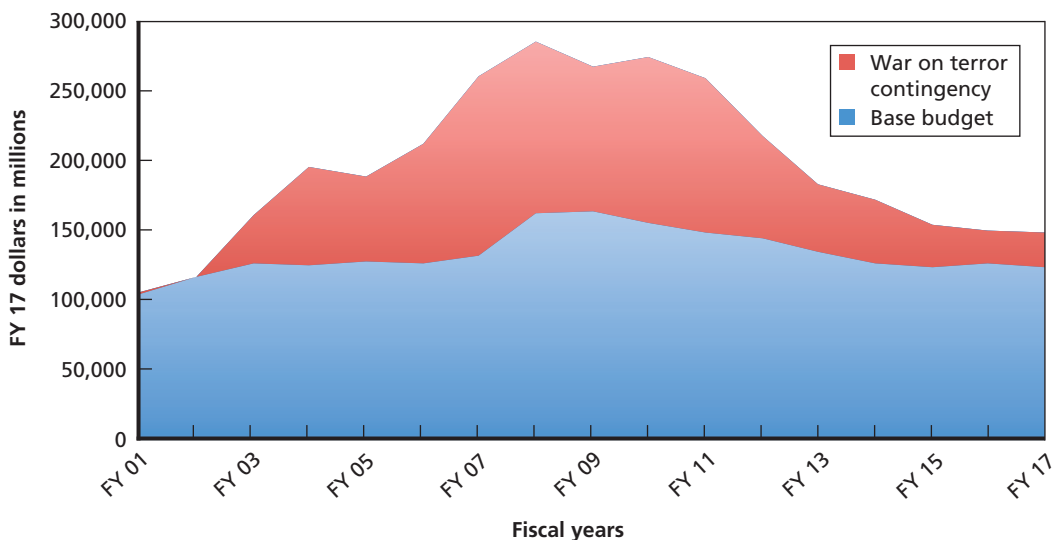
SOURCE: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), *National Defense Budget Estimates for FY 2017*, Washington, D.C.: Department of Defense, March 2016.
RAND *RR2270-OSD-2.1*

[103] "Looming Budget Cuts Pit National Guard Against the Army," *National Public Radio*, April 21, 2015.

[104] Katherine Blakeley, *Analysis of the FY 2017 Defense Budget and Trends In Defense Spending*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2016, p. 11.

ally. However, today they have become "an enduring request for ongoing regional operations rather than closely driven by the needs of a specific contingency."[105] Contingency funding heavily favors the Army, but the operational force as opposed to the institutional force. Base funding, on the other hand, favors the Air Force and Navy, making up for the imbalance of the last many years.[106] This presents a resource dilemma for the Army: OCO money is better than no money, but far worse than base. Contingency funds do not pay for things like research and development, so they end up deepening the Army's "presentism" and encouraging the CCMD's insatiable demand. As one person we spoke with said, "When you get to fighting the war and current operational costs, the services who spend the most in blood will get the most in treasure. When you have the luxury of time, you invest in high-dollar systems."[107]

Preferred Tactics of Competition

The Army has a few key tactics that it employs to make its arguments across each of the competitive arenas. In this section, we discuss several of the most important.

Masters of Leadership and Command

The Army's greatest tactical advantage in the interservice space is its proficiency in military strategy and command writ large. When the requirement is for raw leadership, pure and simple, the Army can supply it in seemingly limitless amounts. The Air Force and Navy tend to value technical proficiency in a relevant domain over the general problem-solving ability of the Army. The Marine Corps and USSOCOM do provide leadership and command of a similar type, but they are much more limited in scale. For large, lengthy operations, either executed in the field or planned from the Pentagon, the Army will always be at the fore.

Ubiquity and Mass

For most Americans, when they hear "military," they think "soldier." Not only does it dwarf the other services in manpower, its National Guard and Reserve forces ensure that the Army has a visible place in American public life across the country.[108] Having forces inside the Pentagon that are able to develop future concepts and forces around the world, ready to provide command and control, allows the Army to provide seamless service across a range of national needs, from warfighting to logistics to humanitarian aid. The Army is the nation's foundational force, and when it is operationally engaged,

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[105] Blakeley, 2016, p. 12.

[106] OS02, defense civilian, March 7, 2017.

[107] AR27, former Army officer, December 28, 2016.

[108] U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center, 2017a.

as it has been for the past 17 years, it utilizes that national support and ubiquity to recruit, resource, and provide for the nation's security needs.

Persistence

A key competitive tactic of the Army is its ability to stay focused on its vision of the threats to the American people. While in the end the Army will execute what it is told by OSD and the rest of the Executive Branch, it will continue to litigate the issue with OSD and civilian policymakers.[109] For this Army, this is an aspect of its faithful service. Knowing the consequences if it allows the nation to grow complacent about security, it will develop a POM around what it considers to be the most consequential threat so that it is prepared when the nation needs it.[110]

If civilian policymakers do not agree with the underlying argument, the Army may change its message, but it will not change the underlying argument. Sometimes, this can come off as truculent, as one workshop participant observed:

> More than any other service, an OSD perspective has always been that the Army will show up at meetings with OSD, Congress, and say "this is what we need and you need to believe me because I am the professional." The other services will come with evidence of what they say being true. The Army is learning now that it has to show its work and it is not good at it yet.[111]

Risk-Based Arguments

As we discuss in our appendix on historical milestones, the rise of discretionary operations coincided with a reduced risk tolerance for the United States, and eventually for the Army itself. From a force whose success in World Wars I and II and in the Korean War were based on the ability to continue to fight, despite high casualties,

> the Army became very insular and hyper-professionalized—that was reasonable to expect in an all-volunteer force that was big enough to do the job, but not without strain. Therefore it became risk averse. The source of today's risk aversion is that it was involved in a thing for 15 years with no way to win, but to not lose. So it's become about bringing everyone home.[112]

M. Wade Markel argues that the roots of this risk aversion go deeper, to a shift in promotion systems from an entrepreneurial system to a more heavily managed, formulaic one.[113]

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[109] AR99, former senior Army civilian, April 21, 2017.

[110] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[111] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[112] AR91, former Army officer and senior expert, November 10, 2016.

[113] M. Wade Markel, *The Organization Man at War: Promotion Policies and Military Leadership, 1929–1992*, doctoral dissertation, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 2000.

With an aversion to risk now built into both Army and civilian thinking, the Army is apt to make risk-based arguments for its preferred solutions in the interservice environment. When arguing for end strength and readiness in particular, the Army is apt to use professional military judgments of risk to push for its goals. A case in point is the Army's fight to preserve end strength in 2013, when then–chief of staff of the Army Raymond Odierno said it would be a "grave mistake" and "irresponsible" for Congress to cut the Army to 420,000 active troops because of the "extremely high risk" of not being able to execute Defense Strategic Guidance.[114] The following year he warned similarly that "the risk has actually increased. The potential to have ground forces operating on multiple continents simultaneously causes me grave concern about the size of the military, and I think we have to review it."[115]

While the Army is apt to continue to make its arguments in terms of risk, it is not clear that this argument is understood or valued by civilian decisionmakers. As one defense civilian opined, "The Army questions the patriotism of those who don't support their initiatives on the basis of not doing right by the soldier."[116]

How Others View the Army

Ask an American to envision a member of the military, and most will think of a soldier. The U.S. Army is its default service, in part because its more than 466,000-person size overwhelms the other services. But it is also seen as close to the people, with National Guard and Reserve soldiers in communities across the country.[117] Perhaps more than the other services, the Army is a big tent, which largely reflects the society it comes from. And because the Army has largely borne the burden of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, it is probably the service most closely associated with sacrifices over the last 17 years.

It is in the Army's nature to be honest about its shortcomings and travails, so it should not be surprising that those in defense policymaking circles (facetiously) label the Army as bureaucratically "dumb" in the context of the "dumb, devious, and defiant" construct of the services mentioned earlier.[118] Defense policymakers are prone

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[114] Quoted in Tom Vanden Brook, "Danger: Don't Cut Too Deep, Odierno Warns," *USA Today*, October 21, 2013.

[115] Quoted in Philip Ewing, "Odierno to Hill: Don't Blame Me," *Politico*, September 19, 2014.

[116] OS01, senior defense civilian, December 2, 2016.

[117] While the Army is not the only service with Guard and Reserve components, it is far larger than the other services, more than three times the Air Force Guard and Reserves, which is the next largest. U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Manpower Data Center, 2017b.

[118] For example, this can be seen in the primary finding from Scroggs: "The Army is seen as the most honest, straightforward, and credible of the four services in reacting and responding to congressional requests." Scroggs, 2000, p. 57.

to complain that the Army cannot effectively tell them who it is and what priorities should be funded.

Last, the other services generally appear to see the Army as a partner in the joint fight, the source of service support and theater logistics. The Army is also seen as the largest player, and it can force the sister services, particularly the Air Force, into troop transport roles they regard as less preferred. In general, though, the military knows it is difficult to go to war without the Army, and the Army will not go to war without them. When push comes to shove, the Army is the foundation of the joint force and America's foundational service.

The Navy

Colin Roberts

Carl Builder's characterization of the Navy in *Masks of War* is as an organization marked most strongly by its reverence of independence and tradition:

> The Navy, more than any of the other services and over anything else, is an institution. That institution is marked by two strong senses of itself: its independence and stature. . . . It is the supranational institution that has inherited the British Navy's throne to naval supremacy. . . . It is about preserving and wielding sea power as the most important and flexible kind of military power for America as a maritime nation. The means to those ends are the institution and its traditions, both of which provide for a sense of permanence beyond the people who serve them.[1]

In some aspects Builder's portrayal is very astute and accurately captures the Navy's unique institutional personality, while in others his assessment falls short.

This chapter will discuss the Navy, both in terms of institutional culture and in terms of competition. It will first examine major defining characteristics and guiding ideals, including the accuracy of Builder's portrayal of the Navy's service personality. The chapter will then examine the Navy's competitive styles, to include the arenas in which the Navy competes today, the methods through which the Navy competes, and arenas in which the Navy is largely not inclined to compete. Lastly, this chapter will assess how others view the Navy from outside the institution and what conclusions might be drawn in terms of implications for the Navy's future competitive posture.

Major Defining Characteristics of the Navy

The Navy's most obvious distinguishing characteristic is simply the maritime domain in which it operates. However, centuries of operating ships at sea have led to several less apparent characteristics. One of the most striking of these is the degree of structured

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[1] Builder, 1989, p. 32.

separation built into the Navy personnel hierarchy. Other services certainly distinguish officer from enlisted, and even distinguish noncommissioned officers and staff non-commissioned officers among the enlisted hierarchy, but the distinction among the groups is arguably more pronounced in the Navy. For instance, aboard Navy ships, there are three separate sets of sleeping and living quarters—one for officers, one for chief petty officers (paygrades E-7 through E-9), and another for seamen (E-1 through E-3) and petty officers (paygrades E-4 through E-6). The same is true for dining areas, and their exclusivity is adhered to nearly without exception. Officers and chiefs even wear completely different uniforms from those of seamen and petty officers, beyond just different rank insignia.

The Navy also retains a high degree of distinction between officer occupational specialties within the Navy. Known colloquially within the service as "warfare communities," these are grouped broadly into three categories: unrestricted line officers, restricted line officers, and staff corps officers. Unrestricted line communities consist of surface warfare officers (SWOs), submariners, aviators (further subdivided into pilots and naval flight officers), explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) officers, and special warfare officers (known by the "sea, air, land" acronym, SEALs). Restricted line communities include intelligence officers, foreign area officers, information professional (IP) officers, and engineering duty officers, while the staff corps is composed of active-duty professionals such as doctors, nurses, dentists, lawyers, chaplains, and supply officers.

There are hierarchical distinctions among these groups. On top are the unrestricted line communities, followed by the restricted line communities, then the staff corps communities. The primary defining characteristic of unrestricted line officers is that theirs are the only career paths that offer the opportunity for the much-revered command at sea. Their principal purpose is to directly operate the machines that wage war at sea or in the littorals, in the case of SEALs and EOD officers.

In *Masks of War*, Builder claims there is a hierarchy among the warfare communities, consisting of aviators (fighter pilots in particular) at the top, followed by submariners and then SWOs.[2] However, there is little evidence to suggest any such hierarchy actually exists in terms of institutional power or influence. Since December 1945, the breakdown of chiefs of naval operations (CNOs) by warfare community shows seven were aviators, eight were SWOs, and seven were submariners (if one considers Admirals Chester W. Nimitz and Louis E. Denfeld submariners rather than surface warriors).[3] Even if one were to take a strict interpretation, equating these numbers to communities' relative power and influence within the service, it would show that, rather than falling on the bottom of the hierarchy, SWOs are on top. However, while there may have been one more SWO CNO than there were either submariners or aviators, the relative equity among the three branches indicates no vast disparity in

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[2]   Builder, 1989, p. 25.

[3]   Naval History and Heritage Command, "Chiefs of Naval Operations," undated.

power and influence among the service. This was also the theme that emerged over the course of interviews: Among the primary unrestricted line communities today, there is no enduring hierarchy.

The closest thing to a hierarchical distinction among unrestricted line communities today lies in the difference between the three mainstream warfare communities—SWOs, submariners, and aviators—and their SEAL and EOD counterparts. SEALs and EOD officers are typically very highly respected by their peers in the other communities due to the rigorous training they must undergo to master their respective areas of expertise and the extremely arduous nature of the missions they undertake and the conditions under which they are performed. However, because their operations represent such a small fraction of the overall operations in the Navy's traditional maritime domain, they are also often considered outside the bounds of practical relevant experience as perceived in common by SWOs, submariners, and aviators.

This is perhaps unique to the Navy, compared to the other services. According to one retired Navy SEAL, "There's an inherent relatability between Army Rangers and typical non-SOF Army soldiers, because they both deal primarily with ground combat. With Navy SEALs and the Navy it's much different."[4] A senior SWO captain agreed, suggesting that

> unlike [special operators in] the other services, SEALs are inherently different than the rest of the Navy. In the other services, there could be the perception that Army Rangers or Green Berets are like elite versions of regular infantry. No one would ever say that a SEAL is an elite SWO. The job sets are totally different. As a result, I think the other services' special operators tend to get more of a chip on their shoulder because of their elite status. I never felt that way working with SEALs in the past.[5]

Manpower requirements are considered very differently by the Navy than, for instance, either the Army or the Marine Corps. This is reflected in the oft-heard adage that "the Army equips the man, while the Navy mans the equipment." Fundamentally, this is representative of the truth. For the Army and Marine Corps, the essential element of combat power is people. The weapons and equipment that those people will use are thought of only secondarily to the numbers and composition of people needed to fill the ranks. For the Navy, ships and aircraft are the essential elements of fighting force. These are the instruments of combat power at sea. Navy force structure is considered in terms of the numbers and types of ships and aircraft that the Navy predicts will be needed in the future; the associated numbers and skillsets of people are considered secondarily, as a factor of the former. However, it tends to resonate pejoratively with some, suggesting differences in the services' level of appreciation for their people, rather than simply the differences in how each service thinks about force structure.

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[4]   SO11, retired Navy special warfare officer, November 3, 2016.

[5]   NA12, active-duty Navy SWO with over 25 years of service, November 8, 2016.

Another unique feature of the Navy is the multiple domains in which it is familiar operating. While the maritime environment writ large binds them, there are of course subcategories within that environment. Distinguishing ships operating on the surface from submarines below the surface might seem trivial, but coordination across these two types of platforms is exceedingly complex. The submarine's imperative for stealth tends to make it impossible for even a friendly ship to know precisely where the sub is located and also precludes real-time radio communication that would be useful in overcoming that challenge. Similar, if perhaps less complex, challenges exist in coordinating between Navy ships and Navy aircraft, as well as in the Navy's unique and close relationship with the Marine Corps, where amphibious operations require synchronized surface, air, and ground warfare operations. Of course, the Navy has effective procedures to integrate operations in all of these domains, honed over decades of experience. This gives the Navy inherently more "joint" or at least multidomain familiarity than either the Army or the Air Force. One retired Navy flag officer states that "to some extent naval officers approach joint thinking with at least a little bit of background already there. We have more propensity to look around us and consider it relevant what other units (regardless of service) are doing because it might affect our own operations."[6]

Another unique characteristic is the way in which the Navy values operational experience in the fleet and command at sea over all other attributes among its officers.[7] Command of an operational unit, or "command at sea," as it is commonly called—regardless of whether referring to a ship or submarine, or some other type of operational unit, such as an aircraft squadron or SEAL team—is regarded by many to be the pinnacle of Navy career achievement. It is often spoken of more reverentially even than promotion to flag rank, except perhaps in the context of flag rank simply being the path to commanding even more operational units at sea.

This may be due in large part to the relatively long amount of time it takes to master the technical aspects of maneuvering and fighting Navy platforms, whether it is a ship, submarine, airplane, or helicopter. However, this emphasis on operational experience at sea seems to take priority over other forms of professional development, such as postgraduate education and strategic thinking, despite the academically rigorous reputations of the Naval Postgraduate School and Naval War College.[8]

The Navy is . . . disadvantaged ashore when it comes to an abundance of strategists. We don't have an abundance of guys like [Admiral James] Stavridis, who taught himself three languages. There may still be an anti-intellectual feeling in the Navy. The other services have more tolerance for grooming strategists while

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6   NA19, retired Navy flag officer, December 1, 2016.

7   Navy Personnel Command, "FY-18 Active Duty Line Officer Community," brief, undated, pp. 5, 7, 13.

8   Peter Swartz, director, Strategic Initiatives Group, Center for Naval Analyses, interview with the authors, Arlington, Va., November 9, 2016.

the Navy sees it as simply time away from the real work of operating in the fleet. We also see it in our over-emphasis of STEM [science, technology, engineering, and math] degrees. We need guys who can think critically and are rewarded for it. The other services are doing a much better job of that. We have guys to do it, but they tend to do it on their own. The Navy could do better at developing that in a formal way.[9]

Now today in the post-Rickover Navy we've got this emphasis on technology. At least 80% of academy and ROTC grads are supposed to be STEM majors. This has created a real deficiency in humanities and has led to a decline in how the Navy approaches formulation of strategy. To me the 1986 Maritime Strategy was the last real strategy the Navy had. Today, too many officers tend to approach strategy like a hard science or math problem: if you follow this formula, with these inputs, this outcome will certainly result.[10]

Another characteristic that outsiders, including Builder, often attribute to the Navy is its strong adherence to tradition. However, while the Navy certainly retains many traditional customs in the fleet, it is not clear that tradition actually has much influence on Navy institutional decisionmaking. Moreover, many experts interviewed for this report disagreed outright that the Navy values tradition any more than the other services do.[11]

No one can refute that the Navy retains many of the traditions it inherited over two centuries ago from the Royal Navy. For instance, even today onboard Navy ships, every announcement made over the public address system is still preceded by the shrill whistle of a boatswain's pipe; a ship's officer of the deck still notifies the captain each day "of the approaching hour of twelve o'clock" and requests his permission to "strike

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[9] NA19, retired Navy flag officer, December 1, 2016.

[10] NA14, retired Navy captain, November 18, 2016. According to the official Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps website, "Undergraduate academic majors for Navy ROTC Navy option midshipmen are divided into three categories or tiers: Tier 1 - engineering programs of Navy interest, Tier 2 - other engineering, math and science programs, Tier 3 - Foreign language and remaining academic programs. In order to keep pace in this high tech and diverse environment, approximately 85% of Navy Option Navy ROTC scholarships offers will be awarded to students interested in completing a Tier 1 or Tier 2 academic major. . . . The Navy will activate scholarships upon the satisfactory development of a degree plan with the host Navy ROTC unit and university and upon enrollment in the assigned academic major. Navy ROTC midshipmen may lose their scholarship if they request a change from Tier 1 or Tier 2 major to a Tier 3 major." The U.S. Naval Academy website states that "for the Naval Academy Class of 2013 and beyond, at least 65% of those graduates commissioned into the U.S. Navy must complete academic majors in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics disciplines." Naval Service Training Command, "Scholarship Selection Criteria," Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps website, undated; and U.S. Naval Academy, "Majors and Courses," U.S. Naval Academy website, undated.

[11] NA11, retired career civil servant with extensive service in DoN and DoD, November 4, 2016; NA12, active-duty Navy captain, November 8, 2016; NA15, retired Navy captain, November 18, 2016; NA21, active-duty Navy flag officer, December 13, 2016; Peter Swartz, director, Strategic Initiatives Group, Center for Naval Analyses, interview with the authors, Arlington, Va., November 9, 2016.

eight bells" at noon; and the arrival and departure of a ship's captain or senior embarked officers are still announced by bells, with a designated number of strokes corresponding to the rank. Routine messages transmitted electronically are still replete with phrases like, "Commander, [*unit name*] has hauled down his pennant in USS [*ship name*] and breaks his pennant in USS [*ship name*]." In this example, the message indicates that a commander has disembarked one ship and embarked on another. Numerous other examples abound.[12]

Of course, other services have their own version of this type of pageantry, but what makes it stand out in the Navy—and what perhaps informed Builder's thinking—is the extent to which it remains ubiquitous throughout normal, everyday operations and is not limited to infrequent ceremonies.

However, while such traditions may persist in the fleet, it is less evident that tradition influences the Navy's behavior in terms of senior-level institutional decisionmaking—that, as Builder claimed, "if in doubt, or if confronted with a changing environment, the Navy looks to its traditions to keep it safe."[13] Artifacts of seagoing tradition like the preceding examples are relegated primarily to ships and are rarely seen in the Pentagon. Institutional Navy decisions seem to be grounded in analysis and anticipation of future requirements. According to one senior Navy flag officer, "You never hear in flag arguments today, 'That's just not the way we do it.' Dialogue today is much more grounded in the merits of the arguments."[14]

It is also possible that what Builder described as being tradition bound, implying an unwillingness to adapt to changing circumstances, was the same trait that other outside observers have characterized as defiant, or "arrogant . . . and uncooperative."[15] This becomes especially plausible when one remembers the political context in which Builder was conducting the research for the study that ultimately turned into *Masks of War*. At the time, the Navy was voicing its opposition to the defense reorganization proposals that eventually culminated in the Goldwater-Nichols Act. Builder may have assumed this resistance was due to a fundamental cultural resistance to change. Of course, it is also not clear whether Builder's characterization of the Navy as tradition bound was wrong even at the time he was researching and writing, or whether it was correct at the time but has become less accurate since.

Service Ethos and Guiding Ideals

If Builder perhaps got it wrong in his characterization of the Navy's adherence to tradition, he was right on the mark in his notion that the Navy "is about preserving

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[12] USS is the standard abbreviation for *U.S. ship*.

[13] Builder, 1989, p. 18.

[14] NA21, active-duty Navy flag officer, December 13, 2016.

[15] Roger W. Barnett, *Navy Strategic Culture: Why the Navy Thinks Differently*, Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2009, p. 107.

and wielding sea power as the most important and flexible kind of military power for America as a maritime nation."

He was also right in his claim that Navy culture is marked strongly by a sense of independence. In practice, independent action and initiative—whether independent command of a ship or squadron or simply independent initiative on the part of an action officer on a staff—form an important part of Navy ethos. Often referred to as command by negation, or mission command, the idea of taking action until instructed to stop is instilled in naval officers from the onset of their careers. Waiting to be told what to do is anathema to Navy culture. Faced with a situation that might require additional guidance or direction, rather than asking, "What should I do?" the typical Navy officer will instead inform his or her superior of the action he or she intends to take, understanding that the superior officer will either agree or provide alternative direction (or "rudder orders").

This independent initiative ethos undoubtedly evolved from the earliest days of the U.S. Navy and the British Royal Navy from which it was born. Before the advent of wireless radio, when ships went to sea, they were not able to communicate with higher authority. Captains and commodores received broad mission orders and were expected to exercise their best judgment in the specific scenarios they encountered. There was no possible way to ask for further direction and guidance even had they wanted to.

Further, another of the Navy's guiding ideals is its strong penchant for operating forward.[16] In addition to driving the evolution of the inherent independence of naval officers, it also informs the institution's culture in other ways. According to Peter Swartz from the Center for Naval Analyses,

> The real essence of the Navy is forward deployments. That's what makes us unique and sets us apart from the other services—that even during peace time we are always out doing the Navy's mission. We don't stay in garrison like the Army, the Marine Corps, or the Air Force. The Navy has been forward, far from the homeland ever since its creation 241 years ago.[17]

This has led to an interesting relationship with the American public. While the Army's altar of worship may be found in the "depths of its roots in the citizenry," the Navy's roots are nearly opposite.[18] The Navy's historic and preferred role is to operate far from nation's shores, unseen by and largely out of contact with the citizenry whose

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[16] Peter Swartz, director, Strategic Initiatives Group, Center for Naval Analyses, interview with the authors, Arlington, Va., November 9, 2016.

[17] Peter Swartz, director, Strategic Initiatives Group, Center for Naval Analyses, interview with the authors, Arlington, Va., November 9, 2016.

[18] Builder, 1989, p. 19.

interests and security it upholds.[19] "The Navy has been as separated from the public as the Army has been connected to it."[20]

The Navy sailor is starkly different from the "citizen-soldier." Throughout much of its early history, the Navy's ranks were filled by experienced seamen recruited from the merchant shipping trade, thus instilling an innate degree of separation from or unfamiliarity with the majority of Americans from the outset. Even today, "the endeavors of naval officers . . . tend not to resonate with ordinary citizens in the same way as the exploits of soldiers and Marines."[21] This is not meant to imply any lesser degree of patriotism or love of country than that held by their Army counterparts, nor any less gratitude on the part of the American people for the heroic parts Navy sailors have played over the course of the nation's history; it simply helps explain the unfamiliar nature of operating at sea and of warfare in the maritime domain.

Core Competencies

The current revision of Naval Doctrine Publication 1 (NDP-1) lists six core capabilities—forward presence, deterrence, sea control, power projection, maritime security, and humanitarian assistance/disaster relief.[22] One might be tempted to conclude, in light of the declaratory nature of this list, that these are representative of the Navy's enduring preferred competencies. However, it is important to remember that NDP-1 is iterative. It is intended to link naval tactics and operations to higher-level national, defense, and military strategies in an ever-changing geopolitical context. The current (2010) version of NDP-1 was written to operationalize the Navy's 2007 *Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*. The previous (1994) version of NDP-1 was written in the context of an earlier Navy service strategy, *. . . From the Sea*. While the 1994 NDP-1 does not refer to Navy core capabilities, it does offer a parallel description of functions naval forces are expected to carry out, organized by levels of war, ranging from peacetime to major war.[23] Most of the core capabilities listed in the current version of NDP-1 are also listed in the previous version or are accounted for under a different name.

[19] Peter Swartz, director, Strategic Initiatives Group, Center for Naval Analyses, interview with the authors, Arlington, Va., November 9, 2016.

[20] Robert D. Worley, *Shaping U.S. Military Forces: Revolution or Relevance After the Cold War*, Arlington, Va.: Lulu Press, 2005, quoted in Barnett, 2009, p. 121.

[21] James Holmes, "Why Doesn't America Have a Nelson?" *Naval War College Review*, Vol. 58, No. 4, Autumn 2005, pp. 19–20.

[22] Naval Doctrine Publication 1, *Naval Warfare*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Navy, March 2010.

[23] Naval Doctrine Publication 1, 1990, p. 15.

However, the 1994 version specifically states, "Fundamentally, all military forces exist to prepare for and, if necessary, to fight and win wars." Toward that end specifically, it lists only three roles for naval forces:

- Defending the United States and controlling its seaward approaches
- Gaining and maintaining control of the sea and establishing our forward sea lines of communication, and
- [Providing] military power for projection against tactical, operational, and strategic targets.[24]

This "fundamental" characterization can be interpreted as a caveat to the much longer list of capabilities that follows. It fits with a broader theme that emerged over the course of interviews and research. Naval forces are called on to conduct many missions, especially in peacetime. However, the Navy's enduring preferred core competencies are sea control and power projection, as well as the ability to maintain forward presence.

Sea control means ensuring access to specific sea areas for a specific time in order to use them for some military purpose, while simultaneously denying their use to an enemy. *Power projection* refers to a wide range of capabilities the Navy employs to facilitate all aspects of U.S. military operations ashore in areas far forward from the U.S. homeland. These include operations carried out directly by the Navy in the form of cruise missile strikes, strikes from aircraft, and amphibious assaults aimed at gaining initial entry of larger combat forces into some area, often referred to as enabling operations. It also refers to the missions that are conducted to facilitate deployment and sustainment of non-Navy forces operating ashore in a protracted fight, such as sea lift and defending sea lines of communications (SLOCs).

Sea control and power projection are also inherently related in that sea control is a necessary precondition for nearly all applications of power projection. Before naval forces can project offensive force ashore, they must control the sea area in which they are operating. This fact sometimes goes unconsidered since in nearly all recent examples of U.S. naval power projection, sea control could be presumed from the outset without having to fight for it. This is simply a reflection of the fact that following World War II, the United States has not fought an adversary capable of mounting any serious challenge to the U.S. Navy for sea control. In contrast, the island-hopping campaign in World War II was marked strongly by many intense, bloody naval battles fought to gain access to sea areas from which force—marines, air raids, and naval gun fire—could be delivered ashore. A more recent example, though not involving the United States, is the British campaign to retake the Falklands in 1982. In the final

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[24] Naval Doctrine Publication 1, 1990, pp. 15-16.

decade of the Cold War, it began to appear as if the Soviets were building up a large and capable Navy that would include aircraft carriers and a large submarine force. In addition to delaying or even preventing American naval forces from being able to project force directly into a presumed fight in central Europe, a robust Soviet navy would also have posed a serious threat to the transatlantic SLOCs critical for sustaining and reinforcing U.S. ground forces fighting in theater.

It must also be understood that, while sea control, power projection, and forward presence represent the Navy's preferred core competencies, they are not exclusive; the service still retains others. For instance, the Navy has embraced strategic (nuclear) deterrence as a core competency, but probably less as a matter of preference and more out of a sense of de facto reality; there is a need for a submarine-based leg of the nuclear triad, and clearly no service except the Navy is capable of providing it. Current Navy competition for resources to replace the aging Ohio-class nuclear ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) is characterized less by the Navy's love of SSBNs and more by its desire to ensure that the new class of boats does not take resources away from the conventional ships, submarines, and aircraft it feels will be needed to fight for sea control and to project conventional power forward in the next fight.[25]

Conventional deterrence—another capability listed in the current and previous NDP-1—is certainly a preferred Navy role, but this is not so much a separate capability as a resulting one. The Navy's ability to deter regional aggression stems from ships and aircraft maintaining a forward presence and the accompanying credible threat of combat power that they are able to project ashore.

The other roles in which Navy forces are often employed, such as humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, maritime security operations, and counternarcotics interdiction, are often well suited to the Navy's unique capabilities, but they tend to be peripheral and, in many cases, transitory.

Competitive Goals

The continuing ability to carry out its preferred core competencies—forward presence, sea control, and power projection—is, broadly speaking, the crux of the Navy's overarching competitive goals. That ability is manifested in terms of force structure (or fleet architecture) and in terms of conveying an understanding among the joint defense establishment of the continuing imperative for sea control and power projection in modern warfare.

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[25] Ronald O'Rourke, *Navy Columbia Class (Ohio Replacement) Ballistic Missile Submarine (SSBN[X]) Program: Background and Issues for Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, R41129, March 22, 2017, pp. 11–15, 20–21; and Mackenzie Eaglen and Rick Berger, "Navy's Deterrence Fund Is Just Another Washington Budget Gimmick," *RealClearDefense*, January 11, 2017.

Optimal Force Structure

Having the right force structure means having the types of platforms Navy planners expect will be necessary in some future fight for sea control, as well as to most effectively project power ashore wherever it is required. For instance, many think of the aircraft carrier today purely as an instrument of power projection; however, if sea control cannot be presumed at the outset of some future fight, carriers will likely play a prominent role in gaining and maintaining sea control, to include fighting enemy naval forces at sea. Inherent in this concept is the idea that, while end strength may wax and wane, ships take time to build, so design, procurement, and construction must therefore begin well in advance of any particular contingency.

It also means having enough of those platforms to maintain a credible forward combat presence, even during peacetime, while also accounting for the extended periods of maintenance and crew training that each ship and air squadron periodically requires. This ends up requiring an overall fleet size three or four times larger than whatever number of platforms is expected to operate forward at any given time. The Navy must also have sufficient numbers of trained sailors—both officers and enlisted—to operate and maintain all the platforms in the fleet.

In order to broadly understand its character, consider a hypothetical ideal fleet as a manifestation of Navy competition. If the Navy were successful in achieving everything it ever vied for in terms of platforms, it would enjoy a very large fleet—perhaps similar in size to that envisioned by the Reagan-era 600-ship buildup, to include its 15 aircraft carriers—organized around many carrier strike groups or even multiple-carrier battle groups. It would include many surface ships, equipped with advanced air defense sensors and weapons, antisubmarine sensors and weapons (to include embarked helicopters), long-range antiship cruise missiles, and long-range land-attack cruise missiles. It would include a large attack submarine force, and it would include many squadrons of modern, fifth-generation aircraft that provide, through some composition, a robust air-to-air combat (fighter), air-to-surface attack (bomber), electronic warfare, airborne early warning/command and control, and maritime patrol (antisurface and antisubmarine) capability. This ideal fleet would also include SSBNs, but the number in inventory would likely be no higher than the 12 that exist today. More importantly, though, the resources required to build the SSBNs would not in any way detract from those needed for the coveted conventional fleet.

Acceptance of Enduring Relevance of Sea Control

The need to gain sea control before projecting power ashore can be a source of misunderstanding and friction among joint planners. What to naval officers seems like an obvious and straightforward imperative can look to outsiders like simply a Navy preference to fight other naval forces rather than focusing on targets more closely related to the main effort ashore. This may well become even further obfuscated when planners are faced with antiaccess/area denial (A2/AD) networks in which the

challenge to gaining sea control comes more from shore-based weapons and sensors than from naval forces operating at sea. For in that case, sea control and power projection become intermingled; in order to gain the ability to access some sea area from which to send force in direct support of a fight ashore, it might very well first be necessary to project power ashore to destroy an enemy's ability to contest or deny sea control.

As it pertains to the Navy's ability to carry out its core competencies, perhaps just as critical as a robust fleet composition is awareness among the services of the crucial need for sea control as a prerequisite to naval forces supporting the joint fight ashore, or short of that, at least the willingness to leave naval forces alone while they carry out the fight at sea.

In the Navy's ideal situation, this would likely look like the Navy operating independently to fight for sea control, coordinating with the joint force only to the extent necessary to prevent inadvertent fratricide of friendly air forces. However, once sea control is established in this hypothetical future fight, the Navy would probably have no hesitation in coordinating as closely as possible in projecting power ashore, recognizing that doing so adds to the likelihood of success.

Arenas of Competition

The Navy competes with the other services in several arenas, but it exercises a clear inclination for competition in three of these: competition over resources, personnel assignments, and future institutional security.

Resources

Resources may be the arena most commonly associated with interservice competition. However, a striking theme that emerged over the course of the interviews for the Navy section of this report is that there is very little competition among the services over budget share today. Instead, resource competition manifests itself in services advocating for funding in real terms, rather than in terms of their share of the overall defense budget. Common opinions are that "now the budgets are roughly evenly split—one-third, one-third, one-third—across the three [service departments]. There's some fluctuation, but it never strays far from an even divide."[26] As one respondent said, "There's no real competition today. Everyone gets their share [of the budget], so there's no incentive to rock the boat."[27] One senior flag officer described

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[26] Peter Swartz, director, Strategic Initiatives Group, Center for Naval Analyses, interview with the authors, Arlington, Va., November 9, 2016.

[27] NA16, retired career civil servant with extensive service in DoN and DoD, November 21, 2016.

it as "less contentious today. Maybe it's more positive competition, if that's possible."[28] Three other individuals interviewed described it in terms of the services advocating for additional funding for various programs, without attempting to influence where the additional money comes from—in other words, without advocating for a reduction in another service's budget in order to fund an increase in Navy budget.[29] It is possible that this is a recent development and partially a result of elevated funding for overseas contingencies.

Whether truly reflective of a mind-set change regarding resource competition, this more collegial competition may indicate that Navy leaders, as well as their counterparts in the other services, do not view the defense budget as a zero-sum game; an increase in Navy's budget does not necessitate a corresponding decrease in another service's budget. However, there's also a corollary perception that the feeling among senior leaders throughout DoD and in Congress today is that any increase in funding for one service department must be accompanied by a corresponding increase in funding for the other services.[30]

One of the most prominent areas of resource competition for the Navy is in reconciling the Navy's requirements as a force provider to the combatant commanders (CCDRs) today, as well as the requirement to plan and build the future fleet that will be required 10 to 20 years in the future.

CCDRs—both geographic and functional—demand Navy ships, aircraft, and submarines to operationally deploy for missions that include forward presence; air strikes; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); and strategic deterrence. The number of platforms requested by CCDRs in recent years has, at a minimum, remained constant, if not increased, while the size of the overall fleet has decreased.[31] As the amount of time each ship and aircraft squadron must spend deployed increases in order to meet CCDR demands, those platforms are subjected to additional wear and tear and therefore require additional maintenance, which costs more money to conduct. The larger the share of the Navy's budget that must be devoted to current maintenance, the less is left over for the design and acquisition of future platforms.

What makes this challenge particularly unique for Navy future force structure is that for large, complex ships and submarines, as well as sophisticated aircraft, the process of designing and building a new platform class can take well over a decade. This

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[28] NA21, active-duty Navy flag officer, December 13, 2016.

[29] NA11, retired DoD civil servant with extensive service in DoN and DoD, November 4, 2016; NA17, retired Navy captain, November 21, 2016; NA22, two legislative staff members, December 20, 2016.

[30] Bryan McGrath, "Hearing on Revisiting the Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces," prepared statement submitted for testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, November 5, 2015.

[31] William F. Moran, "Statement of Admiral William F. Moran, U.S. Navy, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Readiness, on Current Readiness of U.S. Forces," February 8, 2017.

is especially different when compared to ground combat forces such as the Army and the Marine Corps.

So while the Navy leadership's mandate is to "man, train, and equip" forces, the CCDRs are the ones that ultimately employ those forces:

> CCDRs have one priority and that's resolving problems today; they don't care about what happens down the road, regardless of the implications to fleet readiness. On the other hand, the Navy as a service is looking at the long term investments it needs for the future fleet ten or fifteen years in the future.[32]

To illustrate this tension, one Navy captain described what he witnessed during his major command tour. The theater special operations command (TSOC) had "an insatiable appetite for resources, especially ISR assets."[33] The geographic CCDR preferred to use Firescout, a small, rotary-wing unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), deployed on Oliver Hazard Perry–class frigates to assign to that requirement. However, the Navy decommissioned the last remaining frigates in 2015, which left no platforms available to fill that particular theater requirement.[34]

This is in some ways representative of a struggle between fleet capacity and capability—or between sheer numbers of platforms and how optimized those platforms are to carry out their intended purpose—presumably to ensure some degree of parity or overmatch vis-à-vis some future potential adversary.[35] Maintaining current capacity means devoting scarce resources toward ensuring readiness of the platforms already in the fleet and toward building more of the existing classes of platforms. This means that in addition to competition over building new platforms versus maintaining existing platforms, it also can manifest in competition over what kinds of new platforms to build. While people often view the size of the fleet simply in terms of the number of ships, as the most important measurement of the Navy's ability to carry out its core missions, the reality is that there is a tradeoff between the number of ships and their capability or optimization:

> At some point the Navy started making trade-offs for capability over numbers. Take Aegis as a part of the Second Offset, for example. There was a decision made to forgo numbers of low-end ships in favor of Aegis destroyers. Today we're up to nearly 70 Aegis DDGs, which are really not fulfilling the role of a destroyer, but are actually doing the job of both cruisers and destroyers.[36]

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[32] NA18, active-duty Navy captain, November 30, 2016.

[33] NA18, active-duty Navy captain, November 30, 2016.

[34] NA12, active-duty Navy captain, November 8, 2016.

[35] NA17, retired Navy captain, November 21, 2016.

[36] NA14, retired Navy captain, November 18, 2016.

Personnel

Likely of no surprise to many, the Navy feels a strong sense of importance in maintaining a Navy officer in command of U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM).[37] Every one of USPACOM's commanders since its creation in 1947 has been a Navy admiral, which makes it unique. No other current GCC has been commanded exclusively by officers from a single service.[38] The Navy's keen sense of proprietorship over USPACOM leadership is likely due simply to the fact that most of the geography that composes the Pacific theater is ocean, and thus strategic thinking in the area of responsibility is dominated by the maritime domain.

Beyond USPACOM, however, there seems to be no clear sense of importance attached to any other specific joint leadership positions. One flag officer suggested that the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and USSTRATCOM commander were number one and three, respectively, on either side of USPACOM commander as jobs the Navy feels are most important, but that same officer went on to say, "My sense is that the high-water mark for jointness has passed. Now I get more of an impression that folks are trying to get joint jobs over and done as quickly as possible. That's a change from fairly recently."[39] Admiral James Stavridis is perhaps regarded very highly among Navy officers for having been the first Navy officer to serve as USEUCOM commander and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe. However, that seems to be regarded by many within the Navy as an anomaly, very unlikely to be repeated in the near term or with any regularity. A recently retired Navy captain suggested that the reason for the Navy's lack of interest in joint assignments writ large is that "aside from [USPACOM], I don't think the Navy sees joint senior leadership assignments as important to the institutional health of the service."[40]

Beyond prominent joint assignments at the flag officer level, presumably there is some competition for numbers of action officer assignments at the lieutenant commander (O-4), commander (O-5), and captain (O-6) levels on joint staffs. Since the Goldwater-Nichols Act mandated joint qualification as a prerequisite for promotion to flag rank, and the Navy would presumably want a large pool of joint-qualified candidates from which to select future flag officers, there would exist a natural incentive for the service to compete for as many of those assignments as possible.

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[37] NA15, retired Navy captain, November 18, 2016; NA21, active-duty Navy flag officer, December 13, 2016; Peter Swartz, director, Strategic Initiatives Group, Center for Naval Analyses, interview with the authors, Arlington, Va., November 9, 2016.

[38] Of note, U.S. Africa Command had been commanded exclusively by Army officers until the current commander, Marine Corps general Thomas Waldhauser, took command in July 2016. See U.S. Africa Command, "Former Commanders: Former Commanders of the U.S. Africa Command," undated.

[39] NA21, active-duty Navy flag officer, December 13, 2016.

[40] NA15, retired Navy captain, November 18, 2016.

However, even in terms of action officer assignments, the Navy tends to value them only insofar as they facilitate eligibility for flag promotion and not as a useful means toward officer professional development. Indeed, several people interviewed doubt the contribution of joint commands to thinking about warfighting at sea:

> With jointness, the concept of how we'll fight has got murky. It used to be that the service chiefs were the ones developing the plans and strategy to fight the next war. They would figure out what war in their domain would look like, then build the force they needed to dominate in that kind of fight. Now that's not the case. Now it's the CCMDs who are building the plans on how we'll fight the next war, and the services simply have to figure out how to build a force to meet the numbers and requirements the CCMDs are saying their plans call for. That's not a well-thought out way to be successful.[41]

> Guys now saw the path to promotion through joint jobs rather than service jobs. The problem is that "joint" is not the way to think about strategic problems. . . . Today, the CCMDs have the bully pulpit and there's no one in a position who could do so who's willing to challenge the CCMDs.[42]

We discuss additional service preferences in career progression later in this chapter.

Future Institutional Security

The Navy's primary roles and missions in the maritime domain have rarely been challenged by encroachment from other services. The fledgling Air Force's arguments in the late 1940s that airpower could carry out sea control missions more effectively and efficiently than ships may be a notable exception. However, in recent years such arguments have rarely been made. What has posed a potential challenge for the Navy is the question of how relevant purely naval missions such as sea control and SLOC protection are, given the contemporary geopolitical context.

The Navy faced this challenge with particular acuity following the relatively quick and unforeseen collapse of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War, shortly after Builder wrote *Masks of War* and the Goldwater-Nichols Act was passed. Throughout most of the previous decade, the Navy had been the benefactor of significant budget increases to build toward Navy secretary John F. Lehman's vision of a 600-ship Navy. The rationale behind a large and capable fleet was articulated in evolving iterations of the Maritime Strategy in the early 1980s and became best known to the public in the unclassified form of its 1986 publication in the U.S. Naval Institute's *Proceedings*. The Maritime Strategy envisioned an offensive fight against the Soviet navy at sea in order to gain sea control in areas adjacent to, and launch strikes into, the Soviet rear

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[41] NA19, retired Navy flag officer, December 1, 2016.

[42] NA16, retired career civil servant with extensive service in DoN and DoD, November 21, 2016.

and flanks during a war in central Europe.[43] While the Maritime Strategy specifically pointed out that the naval campaign against the Soviets in the event of World War III was just one possible contingency amid a range of many potential conflicts worldwide, many equated the Maritime Strategy and the 600-ship Navy solely with a fight against the Soviets.

So when the Cold War ended suddenly, many felt the Navy's primary raison d'être had vanished. With the Soviet navy out of the picture, there no longer existed anyone on earth capable of contesting the United States for sea control or posing a significant threat to shipping lanes. In this instance it was not that primacy for the Navy's preferred roles and missions was being challenged by another service but rather that the very relevance of those roles and missions was called into question.

There are certainly missions the Navy performs beyond sea control and SLOC defense. Another part of power projection includes simple presence missions, as well as flexible and mobile access to geography from which to launch air strikes ashore from the littorals, missions for which the Navy is particularly well suited. Other missions, such as maritime interdiction in sea areas far from the U.S. homeland, have no practical alternative to the Navy for fulfillment.

The sudden disappearance of its Cold War foe notwithstanding, the Navy has never doubted its own relevance. After all, it remains the most flexible and expeditionary means of power projection. However, it does compete to ensure that others, outside the Navy, are also convinced of its indispensability to the nation.

Current Roles and Missions

In general, the Navy does not need to compete for primacy in roles and missions, especially those related to its core competencies. Consider sea control and SLOC protection, for instance. The warfare missions in which these roles are performed consist primarily of antisubmarine warfare (ASW), antisurface warfare (ASuW), and maritime antiair warfare (AAW). None of the other services likely has the desire, and in some cases (such as ASW) the capability, to challenge the Navy for primacy in those missions.

Of course, other services have the capability to conduct some of the associated missions necessary in support of ASW, ASuW, and maritime AAW, such as electronic warfare, defense counterair, and ISR. But there is little incentive for the other services to challenge the Navy for primacy of them in the maritime domain. After all, by taking on those missions, they would simply take resources away from the roles they do consider core competencies. The Army, in light of the recent rebalance to the Pacific, is exploring new missions it can take on in order to contribute to a future fight in that

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[43] John B. Hattendorf and Peter M. Swartz, eds., "The Maritime Strategy, 1984," in *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents*, Newport Papers 33, Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 2008a, pp. 45–104; John B. Hattendorf and Peter M. Swartz, eds., "The Maritime Strategy, 1986," in *U.S. Naval Strategy in the 1980s: Selected Documents*, Newport Papers 33, Newport, R.I.: Naval War College Press, 2008b, pp. 203–258.

theater, including coastal artillery (antiship) missions in the maritime domain. One might expect the Navy to view this as an unwanted encroachment into its domain; however, the Navy seems to have no problem with it, and it may even see it as an opportunity to capitalize on contributions to the Navy's mission.[44]

On the other hand, one might argue that the Navy's preference for power projection, especially through carrier-based airpower and Tomahawk land-attack missile (TLAM) strikes, would put it in direct competition with the Air Force for this role. It is certainly true that the Navy contributes to all manner of missions for which air strikes are carried out today—support of ground troops, suppression of enemy air defenses, enforcing no-fly zones, etc. However, what the Navy prides itself most on in regard to these missions is the expeditionary way in which it is able to carry them out. Since the carrier strike group operates forward, is mobile, and is self-reliant, its combat power can be moved into position relatively rapidly without the need for host nation permission and basing access or long logistics trails. These unique attributes provide an inherent degree of flexibility unmatched by the Air Force and therefore posing no serious competition for the Navy's expeditionary power projection capability.

Similarly, it is not necessarily the case that the Air Force feels threatened by the Navy's share of expeditionary power projection missions. Major Peter Lee, U.S. Air Force, concluded in a 1999 Air Command and Staff College paper that while the Navy's carrier-based airpower projection capability gave it an expeditionary nature unlikely to be matched or exceeded by the Air Force's, the two services' capabilities are more complementary than competitive. The former is able to arrive quickly on station and rapidly generate initial combat sorties, but it is limited in the amount it can generate and sustain in a 24-hour period. On the other hand, the Air Force units, though slower to arrive on station and begin generating sorties, have the potential to provide a significantly higher sortie generation rate once fully deployed.[45] Although Major Lee was writing nearly two decades ago and was specifically referring to the Air Force's aerospace expeditionary forces, the general principle is likely applicable today.

There is some evidence to suggest that at times over the previous 15 years of groundcentric counterinsurgency (COIN) wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Navy has competed for roles and missions outside its traditional preferred core competencies. Those missions included infrastructure—specifically oil platform—defense, riverine combat, and maritime interdiction operations. The Navy also began sending sailors, both officer and enlisted, to directly support the fight on the ground. These were known as individual augmentee (IA) assignments and were not limited to personnel

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[44] NA17, retired Navy captain, November 21, 2016.

[45] Peter Lee, *Power Projection: A Comparison of the Aerospace Expeditionary Force and the Carrier Battle Group*, thesis, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air Command and Staff College, Air University, April 1999.

that typically support the fight ashore, such as SEALs, EOD, and naval construction builders (Seabees). They were composed of large numbers of shipboard and aviation ratings, as well as officers from the "big three" unrestricted line communities—surface, submarine, and aviation. A legislative staff member familiar with the Navy posited this as evidence of Navy competition, stating that "during the recent COIN wars, the Navy was doing all it could do to prove its relevance—just look at IAs."[46]

However, it is unlikely that the Navy actually had any strong inclination to take on such roles and missions as long-term capabilities. If anything, it likely wanted to avoid any accusations of not doing enough to support the ongoing ground fights, and it also perhaps took the roles on as a means of competing for continued resources. Regarding the latter, one retired Navy captain pointed out that while the Navy did not grow its personnel numbers to cover vacant billets caused by IA assignments, it did propose to pay for the manpower costs of those IAs with OCO funds.[47]

Preferred Tactics of Competition

Within each of the arenas just discussed, the Navy, like the other services, has certain characteristic methods by which it competes. Some of these methods, while prevalently used for competition in one arena, might also be used in other arenas as well.

Also, it is important to caution against an overly cynical take on these competitive tactics. The following analysis is framed in terms of Navy behavior that is aimed at advancing the service's institutional goals, but it must be remembered that generally such goals are considered by those within the Navy as genuine efforts to ensure the service is best positioned to make the utmost contribution to overall national defense.

Adversarial or Competitive Internal POM Process

In competition over resources, two themes emerged during the course of interviews. The first is that the Navy uses an adversarial internal system or set of processes in order to ensure that by the time a Navy POM goes beyond the CNO, it has already been put through rigorous scrutiny. The practical result of the process is that any weaknesses in arguments are identified and overcome within the Navy before the POM is exposed to outside competitors. The implication is that flaws or weak arguments that are identified by other services, such as the Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, the OSD comptroller, or Congress, become potential fodder for other elements of the defense budget at the expense of Navy programs.[48]

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[46] NA22, two legislative staff members, December 20, 2016.

[47] NA15, retired Navy captain, November 18, 2016.

[48] Peter Swartz, director, Strategic Initiatives Group, Center for Naval Analyses, interview with the authors, Arlington, Va., November 9, 2016.

Analysis

Another method the Navy uses to compete for resources is analysis. Builder discusses the Navy's approach to analysis in *Masks of War* with much cynicism, claiming, "The Navy does not need analysis to define its requirements; it has always known what its requirements were."[49] Regardless of the relative altruism or parochialism behind Navy analysis, the service seems to have embraced it as a means for making its arguments for resources:

> The Navy is . . . really good at analysis. If you look at what N81 [Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Assessment Division] puts together, they come up with some very well-thought-out crisp analytical products that are very effective at describing threats and what Navy capabilities are required.[50]

> The Navy uses analysis better [than the other services]. For instance, campaign analysis done jointly by the Navy and Air Force tends to favor the Navy. Again, it's a way of competing for resources without specifically advocating taking the money from some other service. . . . Every QDR [Quadrennial Defense Review] is a means of competition among the services. The Navy, and I assume the other services, start[s] planning well in advance for the QDR in order to determine what cases they plan to make.[51]

Recent examples of Navy analysis include the Force Structure Assessment, released in December 2016, and the Alternative Future Fleet Platform Architecture Study, released in October 2016. The purpose of both studies was to determine the numbers and composition of forces required in the fleet. Both studies are very much related to the Navy's competition over the right mix of capability, capacity, and readiness. The analysis attempted to determine the forces required in the near term to support simultaneous CCDR force requirements and maintenance time and costs, as well as what type of ships and aircraft will be most optimal to counter future threats and, given resource constraints, what is the best balance between optimization and platform numbers.[52]

Beyond the specific subjects of Navy analyses, also implicit in them in general is the Navy's desire to preserve the understanding among joint planners and strategists of the enduring importance and continued relevance of those core competencies in any future war.

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[49] Builder, 1989, pp. 106–107.

[50] NA21, active-duty Navy flag officer, December 13, 2016.

[51] NA17, retired Navy captain, November 21, 2016.

[52] Chief of Naval Operations Staff, Assessments Division, *2016 Navy Force Structure Assessment*, December 14, 2016; and Navy Project Team, *Report to Congress: Alternative Future Fleet Platform Architecture Study*, Washington, D.C., October 27, 2016.

Office of Legislative Affairs and Congress

Several people interviewed for this project suggested that one of the Navy's preferred methods of competition for resources is to establish relationships and work closely with Capitol Hill. This includes elected members of the House and Senate, especially those serving on defense-related committees, as well as their staff members and professional committee staff members.

> The Navy . . . relies a lot on the Congress to push for ships. [It tries to foster] strong relationships with the Senators and Representatives whose states and districts have stakes in shipbuilding, shipyards, and basing. . . . The Navy also works through the Office of Legislative Affairs and tends to send its best and brightest there— guys who are able to be adaptive.[53]

> One of the biggest [arenas for competition] is on the Hill. . . . It also takes place in drafting key documents, the process of going through budget reviews and the AT&L [Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics] test and evaluation process, but the real arena for the Navy is on Capitol Hill. Both the authorizers and appropriators will write what they want into legislation based at least in part on relationships, especially relationships of the professional staffs.[54]

Developing strong relationships with Capitol Hill in order to ensure the service is able to effectively compete on issues such as resources and senior personnel assignments is likely not unique to the Navy. However, this does not make congressional relationships any less important to the Navy. One of the three stated missions of the Navy's Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) is to

> plan, develop, and coordinate relationships between representatives of the DoN and Members of the United States Congress and their Committee staffs, which are necessary in the transaction of official Government business (except appropriations matters) affecting the DoN.[55]

All services maintain offices to manage relationships with Congress, as well as fellows' programs of various kinds. For the Navy, fellowship applicants are chosen each year through a highly competitive process and are detailed to work as fellows serving in individual senators' and representatives' offices. One of the stated objectives of the program is to provide "an opportunity for Navy officers to broaden their experience and knowledge in the operations and organization of Congress while enhancing the

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[53] NA15, retired Navy captain, November 18, 2016.

[54] NA20, active-duty Navy flag officer, December 2, 2016.

[55] Navy Office of Legislative Affairs, "Responsibilities," undated-b.

Navy's ability to fulfill its role in the national policy development process."[56] OLA is responsible for the selection process among the applicants, and there is an expectation that, subject to other individual career progression requirements, "upon completion of the 12-month fellowship, [Legislative] Fellows will be assigned to an immediate follow on utilization tour in the local [Washington, D.C.,] area" and that tour will be one "in which the education gained by the Fellow will be used."[57]

Given the highly competitive selection process for Navy Legislative Fellows and the clear impetus for program alumni to serve as a candidate pool from which to assign officers to OLA, this demonstrates the sense of importance the Navy feels toward congressional relationships as a preferred method of competition.

Recent examples of specific priorities the Navy has been highlighting on Capitol Hill include the need to build a follow-on class of ballistic missile submarines to replace the aging Ohio-class subs, for which the Navy has advocated the use of a National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund, rather than paying for them directly out of the Navy's base budget.[58] Also, the vice CNO recently testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee about the urgent need to reverse steady decreases in the size of the overall fleet in order to have enough platforms to ensure the Navy can continue meeting CCDR presence requirements, to allow sufficient maintenance time for ships in the fleet, and to ensure a credible naval warfighting force for any future fight.[59]

Rigorous Competition in Advancement and Career Progression

The Navy's characteristic methods of competition regarding personnel can be described as "Darwinian" in nature. Like the other services, the Navy likely feels that the best way to ensure the institution is as competitive as possible for assignment to leadership positions such as USPACOM commander or chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and to ensure the strength and welfare of the institution itself, is to make sure the officers themselves are as capable and effective as possible. There are two basic strategies that could be employed to create effective leaders.

The first is to identify individuals early in their career and then groom them for future roles as senior leaders by guiding them along their career track so as to ensure that the progression of positions in which they serve offers the best combination of

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[56] Navy Office of Legislative Affairs, "Legislative Fellowship," undated-a.

[57] Bureau of Naval Personnel, *Legislative Fellows Program*, Instruction 1560.21E, Washington, D.C.: Department of the Navy, November 12, 2010, pp. 2–4.

[58] Sydney J. Freedberg, Jr., "Forbes Leads House Battle for Ohio Replacement Fund," *Breaking Defense*, June 9, 2015; Megan Eckstein, "Congress Saves Ohio-Replacement Sub Fund for Second Time in 2 Months," *USNI News*, June 11, 2015; and O'Rourke, 2017.

[59] Moran, 2017.

experiences to serve them in their future senior leadership roles. This more clearly resembles the Air Force model for promotion, but it is a near opposite of the Navy's career strategy. The Navy creates a laissez-faire approach to officer development with a series of objective screening boards along the way. As one flag officer put it, "The Navy uses a knock-down drag-out model that says, 'Go. Show us who will emerge as the talented officers.'"[60] While some might consider it a callous method, the underlying thought is that it results in the natural selection of strong and effective senior leaders, or at least senior leaders with the qualities the Navy considers important to the health of the service.

Indicative of this mind-set is the way in which the Navy's unrestricted line officer career milestone jobs are tied to selection for advancement at all levels between lieutenant (O-3) and rear admiral (lower half) (O-7). In order to be competitive for advancement, an officer must have completed some certain milestone tour, such as department head, disassociated sea tour, O-5-level command at sea, and major command (O-6 level). Each community's timing and career pipeline is slightly different— for example, SWOs must realistically have completed or at least been evaluated at least once in a department head tour to be competitive for advancement to lieutenant commander, while aviators do not typically start their department head tour until after they have already been promoted to lieutenant commander, completing a disassociated sea tour beforehand.

Assignment to the milestone tours are also nominally competitive. The Navy screens officers for assignment to these tours and at each level, and the number of eligible candidates is always greater than the number of officers the board intends to screen. So not only is the promotion process competitive but there is a double layer of competition built into it in the form of milestone screening boards. For example, to be competitive for promotion to captain, an aviator must have had at least nominal success as a division officer, then in a disassociated sea tour—for example, as catapult and arresting gear officer ("shooter") or tactical action officer on an aircraft carrier—and then he must be selected for advancement to lieutenant commander and screen for department head. He must again have at least moderate success as a department head, then be selected for advancement to commander (O-5) and screen for command at sea (in this case, command of an aircraft squadron), where once again he must have had at least a relatively successful command tour to be competitive for promotion to captain.[61]

To get a sense of the percentage of officers who screen for successive milestones, here is the most recent information from each of the big three unrestricted line communities,

[60] NA20, active-duty Navy flag officer, December 2, 2016.

[61] Navy Personnel Command, undated, pp. 5, 7, 13.

as published in the Naval Personnel Command's FY-18 Active Duty Line Officer Community Brief.[62]

1. Surface Warfare:
   a. Department head: 58%[63]
   b. Commander command afloat: 42%
   c. Major command: 60–67%
2. Submarine:
   a. Department head: 84%
   b. Executive Officer afloat: 60%[64]
   c. Commander command afloat: 62%[65]
   d. Major command: 77%
3. Aviation:
   a. Department head: 60–70%
   b. Commander command: 40–45%
   c. Major command: 40–45%

The Navy likely feels that the best way to ensure the health of the service as an institution—and incidentally ensure it remains competitive for those joint billets, such as USPACOM commander and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that it considers important—is to grow the strongest cadre of Navy flag officers possible. As with its POM process, it may well believe that the most effective method for growing strong Navy leaders is through a rigorous process of scrutiny at multiple levels.

The Navy Service Strategies

The Navy tries to influence the characterization of security threats facing the United States in such a way as to highlight the need for capability in the maritime domain. The Navy service strategies are one of the Navy's most characteristic methods of articulating—and influencing how others articulate—the current or future security threats, as well as the way in which the Navy will contribute to defending the nation against them.

When the Soviet Union collapsed and the U.S. Navy no longer faced any serious contenders who could possibly challenge it for sea control or put U.S. SLOCs at serious risk, the Navy realized that it would face questions about its relevance. While

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[62] Navy Personnel Command, undated, pp. 5, 7, 13.

[63] Represents only those who screened on first opportunity out of three successive screening opportunities. This was the first board conducted under this new three-look process, so no data is yet available to show total screened. This is based on one author's personal knowledge of Navy surface warfare community screening policies.

[64] The brief notes, "Combined XO/CO [executive officer/commanding officer] selection rates result in 37% opportunity for DHs [department heads] to serve as CO." Navy Personnel Command, undated, p. 6.

[65] Navy Personnel Command, undated, pp. 5, 7, 13.

Navy leaders understood quite well that its usefulness did not vanish along with the Russian threat, it needed to be able to articulate that utility to policymakers in DoD and Congress. It did so by pointing out that the Soviet threat might have vanished, but the world did not become inherently stable overnight. In fact, the Navy foretold, the coming years would be marked by regional instability and minor conflicts in many areas of the globe. What that meant for the United States' ability to respond to such geopolitical issues was that, rather than knowing exactly where the next war would be (central Europe) and who the enemy would be (the Soviet Union), the unpredictable nature of the new world order necessitated a highly mobile, self-sustaining, flexible force able to deploy quickly to hotspots and respond to crises. In other words, it needed the expeditionary nature of the U.S. Navy. The Navy's first post–Cold War service strategy, . . . *From the Sea*, articulated the Navy's new role as just that—a means of responding quickly as part of a joint force in regional crises. That the potential for a major campaign-level naval war had ceased to exist for the foreseeable future did not matter. The type of challenges that the United States would now face were still well suited to the Navy's expeditionary nature.[66]

This type of contextual framing of a threat can be seen again more recently when, following several years of COIN war on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Navy began to shift its attention away from the minor support roles it was playing in the Middle East in order to focus on the new challenge arising in the western Pacific. The Navy's most recent strategy document, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Sea Power* (2015 revision), highlighted, among other things, the rapid modernization of the Chinese military, and in particular the Chinese navy and its systems designed to influence warfare in the maritime domain.[67] The Navy's preferred way of framing discourse on the nature of the global security environment today is that a rising China and a revanchist Russia represent a return to great-power competition, which carries with it the corresponding threat of real naval warfare and the fight for sea control.

Since the mid-1980s, the Navy has published six strategy documents, plus one CNO's design. In chronological order, they were the Maritime Strategy, . . . *From the Sea*, *Forward . . . from the Sea*, "Sea Power 21," *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Sea Power* (*CS21*), and a revised version of *CS21* (referred to as *CS21R*). Additionally, in 2016 the CNO released *A Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority*.[68]

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[66] Sean O'Keefe, . . . *From the Sea: Preparing the Naval Service for the 21st Century*, Article Number NNS130, Secretary of the Navy, October 6, 1992.

[67] U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Marine Corps, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, rev. ed., March 2015.

[68] Hattendorf and Swartz, 2008a, pp. 45–104; Hattendorf and Swartz, 2008b, 203–258; O'Keefe, 1992; Vern Clark, "Sea Power 21: Projecting Decisive Joint Capabilities," *Proceedings*, Vol. 128, No. 10, October 2002; U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Marine Corps, *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, October 2007; U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Marine Corps, 2015.

These documents tended to coincide with changes in global security contexts and reflect how the Navy saw its continued relevance in the new order. In *Masks of War*, Builder expresses a skeptical view of the Maritime Strategy, and of service strategies in general, suggesting that "to the extent they promote myopia about war and are used as springboards for institutional independence and dominance, they are at least contentious, if not counterproductive, to national security."[69] However, he does give some room for service strategies as useful contributions to military thinking, so long as their principle purpose is "as a conceptual focus to bring coherence to the internal decision-making of the service."[70]

Whether the Navy's motivation behind the development of its service strategies is more parochial than altruistic can be debated endlessly to no resolution. Regardless of the motivation, however, the Navy's service strategies probably effectively fulfill both purposes—advancing the Navy's arguments for resources, personnel assignments, and continued indispensability, as well as aligning and refocusing the institutional decisionmaking to shape the force such that it can most effectively contribute to overall national defense in some new global security environment.

Take the following examples in *. . . From the Sea*, for instance:

> This strategic direction, derived from the National Security Strategy, represents a fundamental shift away from open-ocean warfighting on the sea toward joint operations conducted from the sea. The Navy and Marine Corps will now respond to crises and can provide the initial, "enabling: capability for joint operations in conflict—as well as continued participation in any sustained effort.[71]

The passage describes the way the Navy will shift thinking in the post–Cold War world, but it also describes how the Navy will retain relevance in that world, following the emphasis on major combat operations to achieve sea control as described in the previous Maritime Strategy. Similarly with this excerpt:

> In addition to our new direction, the Navy has a continuing obligation to maintain a robust strategic deterrent by sending nuclear ballistic submarines to sea. As long as the United States maintains a policy of nuclear deterrence, our highly survivable nuclear powered ballistic missile submarines will remain critical to national security. We also need to turn our attention and explore potential naval contributions to other forms of conventional strategic defense. In particular, we are carefully examining the naval capabilities which could contribute to theater missile defenses.[72]

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[69] Builder, 1989, p. 60.

[70] Builder, 1989, p. 60.

[71] O'Keefe, 1992.

[72] O'Keefe, 1992.

This is certainly an argument for relevance, but could also simply be intended to remind readers within the Navy that, while the new strategic direction might be dramatically shifting, Navy leadership cannot forget about this important mission. The same applies to a reminder about the importance of sealift described later in the document.[73]

Early in the new millennium the Navy released "Sea Power 21." It describes how the Navy will integrate with interagency law enforcement community, "taking advantage of the time and space afforded by naval forces to shield our nation from impending threats."[74] Considered in the context of the recent 9/11 terrorist attacks, ten months into the war in Afghanistan, and the very likely prospects for a markedly increased defense budget, this strategy seems to represent the Navy's method of ensuring it is seen as relevant in a new environment characterized by terrorist threats to the homeland. However, at the same time, it also likely functioned to focus and align internal thinking, planning, and decisionmaking in order to best contribute to joint efforts in this new security context, efforts that are far removed from the Navy's traditional preferred core competencies.

The most recent Navy strategy document, *CS21R*, released in 2015, seeks to frame the emerging security environment in terms of a return to great-power competition. While there are still several mentions of cooperation among the sea services (the U.S. Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Navy) and cooperation with allies and partner states—a strong theme of its predecessor, the first *CS21*—the document places a much greater emphasis on interstate conflict.

How Others View the Navy

As was pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the Navy as an institution, as well as the maritime environment in which it operates, is largely unfamiliar to the majority of Americans. Even many inside the defense establishment are of no exception. In the words of Naval War College professor Roger Barnett, "Embarking in a ship and putting to sea is to enter another world. It engenders a unique, rather peculiar language, which establishes a certain psychological distance from those who are land-bound. It enjoys its own special vistas; and, indeed, operates largely under its own rules."[75]

Whether deserved or not, that unfamiliarity often results in those outside the Navy attributing the service's behavior to institutional preferences rather than to operational necessity, perhaps implying that the Navy is more concerned with advancing its service interests, even at the expense of broader national defense interests. Builder, for one, seemed to adhere to this line of thinking. In *Masks of War*, he portrays the

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[73] O'Keefe, 1992.

[74] Clark, 2002.

[75] Barnett, 2009, p. 15.

Maritime Strategy as nothing more than a parochial means of advocating for Navy service interests:

> It is not the Soviet threat that drives [the Navy's] concept of war and, hence, the required naval forces. It is the other way around. It is the desired forces that drive [the Navy's] concept of war and, hence, the interpretation of the threat.[76]

The gap in how the Navy and others consider the imperative for sea control, as described earlier in this chapter, provides a useful example for demonstrating the seemingly irreconcilable differences in the ways that Navy and non-Navy planners view Navy behavior. To one side, it looks like nothing more than a Navy service preference, while to the other it is an unambiguous operational prerequisite for projecting power ashore from the sea in support of some main effort.

Relatedly, there also seems to be a perception of the Navy as "arrogant, independent, and uncooperative."[77] No doubt this is the source of the Navy's mantle of "defiant" in the "dumb, devious, and defiant" caricature. This characterization is undeservedly cynical. However, there is some underlying truth to it, especially in the context of Navy concerns about furthering a perpetually more integrated joint force. Leading to the undeserved cynicism is a fundamental misunderstanding of the disparity between how the Navy and the other services—in particular the Army and the Air Force—view joint interoperability. Unlike those other services, the Navy tends to see jointness as "a one-way street."[78] To the Navy, "joint" means the Navy provides support to the other services fighting in other domains but is left on its own for warfare in the maritime domain.[79]

In addition to bolstering the Navy's uncooperative ("defiant") image, this reluctance toward jointness also engendered perceptions of the Navy as tradition bound and overly unresponsive to change. During the late 1940s and the mid-1980s—when major defense reorganizations were being debated—the Navy was vocally opposed to the initiatives, both of which were intended to make the services more joint. Far from parochial or tradition-bound motivations, Navy leadership likely saw serious risks to national defense inherent in such initiatives. Builder was absolutely correct when he wrote, "The Navy is about preserving and wielding sea power as the most important and flexible kind of military power for America as a maritime nation."[80] Taking away the Navy's ability to operate independently under its own principles of warfare in a domain quite unfamiliar to the other two service departments would naturally present

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[76] Builder, 1989, p. 135.

[77] Barnett, 2009, p. 107.

[78] Barnett, 2009, p. 107.

[79] Barnett, 2009, p. 107.

[80] Builder, 1989, p. 32.

significant risks to the Navy's—and therefore the country's—ability to preserve and wield that sea power. However, those outside the Navy, for whom the concept of sea power itself was vague at best, likely saw things quite differently. To them, the Navy's resistance to becoming more joint was motivated simply by a long-standing resistance to change—the Navy wanted to be left on its own, free of imposed joint integration, simply because that is the way it had always done things.

While the Navy is likely still the most independent-minded relative to the other services today, it seems to have become more comfortable relinquishing some of its independence and has certainly embraced joint cooperation more.[81] This may be a result of the institutional changes mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act and may also have to do with advancements in satellite communications and an ever-increasing connectedness between commanders ashore and ships and aircraft at sea over the last 30 years.[82]

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[81] NA12, active-duty Navy captain, November 8, 2016.

[82] NA21, active-duty navy flag officer, December 13, 2016.

The Air Force

Natasha Lander

In *Masks of War*, Carl Builder described the Air Force's preference for technology, strategic analysis, and innovation as defining characteristics of the service. Today's Air Force continues to espouse the same themes, though changing conflicts, adversary capabilities, and vast growth in new technology have forced the Air Force to innovate in ways that have sometimes proved challenging. Nevertheless, the Air Force continually strives to attract and retain highly skilled personnel to carry out its core missions, with the fighter pilot force at the top of its internal hierarchy. The prevalence of fighter culture in the Air Force is a point of contention among the service's other specializations, such as nuclear, space, and cyber, which have sought to increase their footprint within the service and the broader national security apparatus by proving their indispensability. Internal struggles within the Air Force, caused by having many different mission sets housed within one service, create an impression to outside observers that the Air Force lacks a unified culture. Yet the service manages to craft outward messaging that links the fighter and bomber cultures of its storied past to the highly technical missions sets of the future, creating a compelling narrative about the Air Force's place of prominence in the U.S. military that drives its competitive behaviors.

Major Defining Characteristics of the Air Force

The Air Force's chief defining characteristics are its focus on technology, innovation, strategic analysis, and developing its people. Many authors have addressed the importance of technology to the Air Force, but perhaps the most apt description comes from Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Donnithorne in *Culture Wars: Air Force Culture and Civil-Military Relations*:

> The service's love for technology, however, is not a disembodied one; rather, the Air Force prizes the human connection to technology as manifest in the airplane. An observer's first impression of the Air Force, rendered through its visible artifacts,

illuminates an organizational passion for the airplane. Nearly every Air Force base showcases airplane monuments, often right at the entrance to the base.[1]

As Donnithorne explains, the role of airmen in support of their aircraft explains the predominance of the fighter and bomber cultures within the service, and the Air Force's attitude toward manned aircraft over unmanned.[2] Though it can appear to outside observers that the Air Force harbors a preference for technology over people, for the Air Force, technology is only as strong as the personnel trained to operate it—whether that technology relates to airplanes, bombs, missiles, cyberspace, space, or the nuclear enterprise. While a preference for manned aircraft is rooted in the Air Force's legacy as the Army Air Corps before 1947, the service's emphasis on innovation has allowed it to adapt to shifts in technology beyond manned flight, even when embracing such changes has not been easy. Advanced technology is a critical component of what it means to be an airman, regardless of specialty. Indeed, dedication to innovation, or using advanced technologies to address national security problems, has been described as a unifying element of Air Force culture.[3]

When describing institutional personalities of military organizations in *Masks of War*, Builder notes that how the services began plays a role in shaping their culture and their personalities. These formative experiences dictate service approaches to decision-making but are shaped and refined by additional experiences over time. In Builder's view, the inherent culture of a service is also flexible enough to impart core tenets of service personality in the sometimes disparate specialties soldiers, airmen, and sailors have within one service.[4] Builder consistently describes the Air Force as having been founded on the premise of airpower as the "decisive instrument of war."[5] Those who seek to uphold that premise prize modern technology as a way of maintaining the edge over adversaries. According to Builder,

> The Air Force is not about growth, power, or prestige in the abstract; it is about flying and flying machines. For the Air Force, there cannot be too much of flying and anything less than the very best flying machines that technology can provide. Other things, such as institutional growth, power, or prestige are then of interest

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[1]   Jeffrey Donnithorne, *Culture Wars: Air Force Culture and Civil-Military Relations*, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University Press, 2013, p. 28. Also see Paula Thornhill, *Over Not Through: The Search for a Strong, Unified Culture for America's Airmen*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, OP-386-AF, 2012; Carl Builder, *The Icarus Syndrome*, New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 1994; and Alan J. Vick, *Proclaiming Airpower: Air Force Narratives and American Public Opinion from 1917–2014*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1044-AF, 2015.

[2]   Donnithorne, 2013, pp. 28–30.

[3]   Thornhill, 2012, p. 9.

[4]   Builder, 1989, pp. 8–9.

[5]   Builder, 1989, p. 32.

primarily as means or adjusts to the ends of flight. If they adversely affect flying or flying machines, they are impediments to the Air Force's vision of who it is and what it wants to be.[6]

Builder's view of the Air Force in *Masks of War* is of a service defined almost entirely by technology. While this view remains true to some extent, the technologies have changed, and the Air Force's approach to modernizing its force has shifted accordingly. The Air Force's ability to adapt to advanced technology and a wider range of adversaries while retaining the core missions it has held dear since its inception is a testament to the service's ability to innovate, even when change has come from outside rather than within.[7] As summarized by a member of the Air Force's career Senior Executive Service (SES),

> To be an innovating force, we need to think about high-end challenges we will face. We're always looking for the next threat. What training do we need for the high-end fight? We're the most technological, most advanced [service]. We're trying to think through contributions to the joint fight but that's our enduring legacy.[8]

Multiple interview respondents offered the Air Force's signature training event, Red Flag, as an example of how the Air Force blends high technology with a focus on developing highly qualified pilots. Red Flag began after the Air Force took a critical look at why it lost so many young pilots during the Vietnam War, and it found that pilot training deficiencies were a primary factor. Red Flag provides more-realistic training simulations than were previously available, and it is still one of the service's most highly regarded training events.[9] One interviewee, an active-duty field-grade officer with multiple joint tours, described Red Flag as a "hugely successful" way of simulating the first ten missions of a pilot's career, when the majority of casualties can occur.[10] Red Flag, as the Air Force's signature training event, is also indicative of the prominence fighter pilots have in Air Force culture. This theme will be discussed later in the chapter, but the dominance of fighter culture drives resource decisions, leadership positions, and the impression that outside entities have of the Air Force.

The Air Force has been considered a "support" service by other services given their role in Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. This designation comes mostly from the impression that the Air Force's chief contribution has been air

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[6] Builder, 1989, p. 199.

[7] Mark A. Welsh III, *Global Vigilance, Global Reach, Global Power for America*, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University Press, 2014, p. 4.

[8] AF48, Air Force SES member, November 7, 2016.

[9] U.S. Air Force, "414th Combat Training Squadron 'Red Flag,'" last updated July 6, 2012.

[10] AF22, field-grade officer with joint duty tour experience, November 15, 2016; AF12, flag-level officer, October 19, 2016.

superiority, but it also extends to the ISR, command and control, and targeting functions the Air Force enables. While the Air Force may not have had a direct role in ground combat, airmen dispute the claim that they are merely in support, because these operations would not be possible without air superiority, thus putting their contributions on par with those of the Army and Marine Corps. Nevertheless, this perceived inferiority drives the Air Force to continually reinforce its multiple, unique, and complex mission areas when competing for resources with the other services.

Service Ethos and Guiding Ideals

The Air Force's stated ethos is "Fly, fight, and win," while their core values are "Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in All We Do." Each of these principles has guided the service since its inception. The modern Air Force embodies these ideals through the concept of "global strike, global reach, global vision," a mantra that shapes their approach to warfare by incorporating modern challenges into the Air Force's core missions to account for the many domains in which the service now operates.[11] In fact, when asked about principals that guide airmen, interviewees consistently responded that "global strike, global reach, global vision" served as their ethos as airmen.[12]

However, the Air Force's stated ethos does not necessarily comport with its ethos in practice, despite attempts to invest in cyber and space missions while advocating for modernization in its fighter, bomber, and nuclear capabilities. While respondents across all five of the Air Force's mission areas could point to these guiding principles as the driver behind their work in diverse mission areas, aggregating their experience as a whole service up to the joint level exposes cracks in what, on paper, might appear to be a unified culture:

> It's not in our nature to push back on a requirement. We generally see ourselves as joint. Only a small part of our actions are *not* in direct support to territorial or maritime environment. Air superiority is there to provide force or allow others to provide force. [It is] not a crisis of identity; much of what we do is assumed to occur so it is not viewed in the same way (i.e., air superiority, space systems). There is a need for the Air Force to continually explain their value.[13]

> The Air Force prides itself on innovation and flexibility. A lot of people call this air-mindedness: given how we operate, we think we see problems differently than other services do. We're problem solvers by nature and able to be flexible, possibly because we're a younger service. Other services are maybe too steeped in tradition.[14]

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[11] Headquarters, U.S. Air Force, *A Vision for the United States Air Force*, Washington, D.C., January 10, 2013.

[12] AF22, field-grade officer with joint duty tour experience, November 15, 2016.

[13] AF73, Air Force career SES member, November 1, 2016.

[14] AF16, field-grade Air Force officer with joint duty experience, November 9, 2016.

As a Marine, people have a sense of who you are, but in the Air Force, people know you by your mission—if your mission isn't publicized, it's harder to have a unified identity.[15]

Given the broad swath of missions assigned to the Air Force in space, cyber, nuclear, and conventional war, previous RAND research suggested the Air Force might not have one cultural narrative that guides the entire service.[16] In *The Icarus Syndrome*, Builder also argued that a sense of "occupationalism" among members of the Air Force working in distinct mission areas contributed to difficulty formalizing a holistic mission statement for the service.[17] Particularly for those in the fighter pilot community, there is some recognition for how the other missions of the service affect their daily operations, but fighters arguably believe they deserve the preponderance of resources because of their place at the tip of the service's spear.

Another central tenet of the Air Force's ethos is its ability to integrate into, and lead portions of, the joint fights of the post–September 11, 2001 military. As discussed in our historical milestones appendix, the Air Force achieved great success in air superiority during Operation Desert Storm, which it has parlayed into successful combat missions over the past 25 years. Faced with changing technologies and concerns that U.S. adversaries could achieve parity, the Air Force remains steadfast in its commitment to enhancing the joint fight. Further, given its proclivity for innovation and harnessing new technologies, it can provide agile support to the wars the nation is fighting. However, the concept of "jointness" has exposed tensions between fulfilling missions that are part of the joint force and preserving its own identity. This topic will be explored further throughout this chapter.

Core Competencies

The Air Force's core missions are air and space superiority; ISR; rapid global mobility; global strike; and command and control. These missions have not fundamentally changed since the Air Force became its own service in 1947.

Air superiority, the first of the Air Force's five core missions, is the service's utmost competency. As articulated by a field-grade Air Force officer with multiple joint duty assignments, "Air power's ubiquity, reach, flexibility and mobility allows it to be poured into any mold,"[18] while a career Air Force SES member described air superiority as a way of "setting the conditions" for the rest of the core missions.[19] "The strategic application of airpower to support the advancement of mission and goals" has

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[15] AF48, Air Force SES member, November 7, 2016.

[16] Thornhill, 2012, p. 2.

[17] Builder, 1994, p. 283.

[18] AF22, field-grade officer with joint duty tour experience, November 15, 2016.

[19] AF73, Air Force career SES member, November 1, 2016.

also been a way the Air Force has measured success since the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq began.[20]

The Air Force's four other core missions, global precision attack, rapid global mobility, global ISR, and command and control, are seen as operating in service to air superiority and to the joint fight. As summarized by one respondent, global precision attack can enable an attack from anywhere on earth with everything from a small warhead to a nuclear weapon. Rapid global mobility provides for airlift and air refueling, an extraordinary capability that has enabled the joint coalition force to move throughout the world, including in air refueling sorties in Libya, Syria, and Iraq. *Global ISR* not only refers to the satellites the Air Force uses and operates but also accounts for remotely piloted aircraft. Finally, while command and control is arguably a capability more internal to Air Force operations, the service also operates a constellation of satellites that enable communication and global positioning for the joint force. Thus, all five of the Air Force's core competencies are critical enablers to the joint force and the coalition forces that work alongside the U.S. military in operations around the world.[21]

Competitive Goals

Overall, the Air Force's competitive goals center on defining its centrality to achieving national objectives by convincing and reminding the other services, OSD, and Congress that the domains the Air Force controls—namely, air, space, and to some extent cyber—are influential in winning wars.

Make Air Superiority a Central Tenet of U.S. Strategy

What Builder highlights in *Masks of War* as a basic premise of air strategy since the Air Force's inception still holds today: Air Force leaders and their doctrine espouse the idea that airpower can dominate any arena and, thereby, be the decisive factor that wins wars.[22] Builder argues that the Air Force's concept of war is based on the notion of retaining independent control of airpower. Even if missions like close air support are deemed not to be the primary mission of the Air Force, the service would not cede them for fear of creating a rival part of another service.[23]

Today, it is still true that the Air Force's primary competitive goal is to advance the notion that the United States cannot win wars without air superiority. This capability provides the freedom for any air asset to operate in an area of operations, according to a flag-level Air Force officer. The same respondent pointed out that air superiority also enables ground forces to maneuver without fear of attack.[24] In fact, many

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[20] AF22, field-grade officer with joint duty tour experience, November 15, 2016.

[21] AF12, flag-level officer, October 19, 2016; Headquarters, U.S. Air Force, 2013.

[22] Builder, 1989, p. 73.

[23] Builder, 1989, p. 137. Also see Appendix A for additional detail.

[24] AF12, flag-level officer, October 19, 2016.

respondents noted that today's military has never fought without air superiority. This competency has become so deeply embedded in how the joint force operates, some believe today's warfighter may take it for granted, making it harder to articulate the service's individual value.[25]

Reinforce an Identity That Does More Than Enable

As previously mentioned, the Air Force was viewed by some as an enabler to the ground fights that largely characterized major combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq after 2002. However, their provision of air superiority and ISR ensured the protection of U.S. forces and preserved the ability of the U.S. military to advance overall missions. For these reasons, airmen interviewed for this study expressed great pride in the Air Force's contributions to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, despite tension that arises from being seen as "overly service-focused in lieu of the joint fight."[26] A field-grade officer with multiple joint duty tours offered the following observation about the duality posed by airpower as a predicate for the success other services experienced on the ground:

> We are doing air superiority to what end? In support of other missions. The characterization of the Air Force as an enabler is true but with strategic attack, it's a history that grew into doctrine, created a core business to apply to unrestricted use of air. The Army thinks similarly: "win, but if the Air Force shows up, win big." The overall Air Force narrative tries to balance [tensions between enabling jointness and preserving our own missions]. This supporting service role creates the perception of almost two Air Forces.[27]

It behooves the Air Force to be viewed by Congress and OSD as a premier warfighting entity in its own right in order to help win resourcing battles. It is also important for the Air Force to be viewed as an equal service by the services that have had a more direct role in fighting on the ground since 2002, as it serves as a way of demonstrating and validating the Air Force's contributions. Part of the Air Force's strategy to establish itself as a warfighting service rather than a support service is its cultural emphasis on its fighter pilots. The predominance of fighter pilots in high-level leadership roles creates a hierarchy within the service that places fighter pilots first, bombers second, and other specializations after. According to a RAND analyst with a research specialization in Air Force culture, "There is a school of thought in the Air Force that pilots are in the best position to run the service because their situational awareness and multitasking skills translate to leadership, but it's not clear if they do."[28]

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[25] AF65, RAND analyst, November 18, 2016; AF99, senior RAND analyst, October 31, 2016; AF73, Air Force career SES member, November 1, 2016.

[26] AF22, field-grade officer with joint duty tour experience, November 15, 2016.

[27] AF22, field-grade officer with joint duty tour experience, November 15, 2016.

[28] AF65, RAND analyst, November 18, 2016.

Colonel Mike Worden charted the history of this phenomenon in his 1998 book, *Rise of the Fighter Generals.* Shifts in Air Force doctrine and procurement toward tactical airpower in the 1970s meant fighter wings and pilots were growing at numbers disproportionate to other mission areas. Fighter pilots began to outnumber bomber pilots as early as 1968; from 1971 to 1982, fighter pilots outnumbered their bomber counterparts by four to one, due to a tendency to promote fighters to the general officer ranks earlier than their service counterparts.[29] The more modern Air Force still demonstrates a preference for promoting fighter generals to the most-senior ranks of leadership, despite having a greater number of nonfighter officers and a more technologically diverse set of missions. A survey conducted for Jeffrey J. Smith's 2014 book, *Tomorrow's Air Force*, perhaps unsurprisingly found fighter pilots advocating for their preeminence in the service, despite the emergence of unmanned aircraft, while non–fighter pilot officers believed the Air Force should look toward procuring technologies outside the fighter realm and observed that UAVs may eventually replace fighters.[30]

Reinforce Dominance in Space and Cyber Realms

The Air Force also seeks to retain what it believes is its competitive edge in the space and cyber realms. While space is a mission area more familiar to the Air Force, the service has sought to enhance its cyber capabilities, which one career SES member admitted the Navy and Marine Corps had recognized a need to do earlier than the Air Force.[31] However, the Air Force prides itself on being the go-to service for the ISR capabilities CCDRs rely on for mission success, and solidifying that reputation is part of enhancing their cultural narrative of a service rooted in technology.

Arenas of Competition

The Air Force competes for dominance and relevance in two primary arenas: resources and institutional security. However, these arenas can blend together when the resource fight masks deeper insecurities about service relevance.

Resources

The Air Force demonstrates a preference for competition in the resource arena because of its need to invest in improved technology that will enable its core missions. Service personnel exhibit confidence competing in this realm when they believe they do not have what they need to maintain a decisive advantage over near-peer adversaries. Before

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[29] Mike Worden, *Rise of the Fighter Generals: The Problem of Air Force Leadership 1945–1982*, Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University Press, 1998, p. 223–224.

[30] Jeffrey J. Smith, *Tomorrow's Air Force: Tracing the Past, Shaping the Future*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014, pp. 185–186.

[31] AF48, Air Force SES member, November 7, 2016.

Operation Desert Storm, the Air Force was procuring 200 fighter aircraft per year; decreased modernization efforts curtailed that rate to an average of 25 per year since 1992.[32]

Competition for resources in the Air Force mainly pertains to money, though some view the service's ability to retain and grow current funding levels as a measure of success as well:[33]

> Money . . . means flying hours, amount of qualified personnel to do our core business. Money allows you to do everything you need to do to fulfill your duty.[34]

> We are dramatically under-resourced for what the nation requires, but we don't want to take from the other services. The Air Force would measure PBR [the President's Budget Request] success by greater TOA [Total Obligation Authority], which has gone up. The Air Force is always involved in areas where more investment is requested.[35]

The Air Force's comfort with and reliance on strategic analysis also give it confidence that the investments it seeks can be easily articulated as necessary for the nation's security. Its preference for strategic analysis can provide a competitive edge when engaging in resource battles, but internal struggles make successes harder to identify. Fighter pilots may consistently call for modernization of their aircraft, while those in the nuclear, space, and cyber communities still perceive their fighter brethren as the service's prize jewel that gets the lion's share of resources. These institutional insecurities present a challenge when attempting to quantify how successful the Air Force is at competing for the most-critical resources the service needs.

Future Institutional Security

The Air Force also competes to preserve its relevance, focusing more on preparing for future wars. For example, the Air Force is comfortable fighting for a system such as the F-22, which airmen believe to be a critical component of the Air Force's identity that not only enables the Air Force's core mission areas but also serves as a strategic reminder of the importance of air dominance—which is what the Air Force brings to the fight. Losing the F-22, according to one respondent, would cause the Air Force to "lose its mind" because, "fundamentally, what the services protect is their value, not money. It's their culture, who they are and what they do."[36]

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[32] Deborah Lee James and Mark A. Welsh III, "USAF Posture Statement 2016," presentation to the Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, February 10, 2016, p. 1.

[33] AF91, RAND researcher and former flag-level Air Force officer, November 9, 2016.

[34] AF22, field-grade officer with joint duty tour experience, November 15, 2016.

[35] AF73, Air Force career SES member, November 1, 2016.

[36] AF65, RAND analyst, November 18, 2016.

To preserve its institutional security, the Air Force both emphasizes planning for near-peer conflicts that could pose a threat to its air dominance and deepens its foothold in command and control, cyber, ISR, and other missions areas it views as critical to achieving "global vigilance, global reach and global power."[37] The Air Force often emphasizes its indispensability to the nation's current wars and its preparations for potential future conflict in its public communications and congressional testimony. This tactic serves to remind appropriators and other services of the critical functions provided by the Air Force:

> Stitched together, the fabric of our Air Force weaves multi-domain effects and provides U.S. servicemen and women the blanket of protection and the ability to power project America's full range of combat capabilities. Make no mistake, your Air Force is always there.[38]

During the January 2017 workshop conducted for the study, one participant observed that the services that compete with the most "Machiavellian" style within the Pentagon are the Air Force and Navy. In the participant's view, these two services see each other as direct rivals, whereas the Army and Marine Corps fight more directly with each other for personnel. These sentiments were echoed by a participant from OSD, who said that in the strategic planning realm, there is a feeling on the ground force side that because there was an emphasis on modernizing forces for potential conflict with China or Russia, the Air Force and Navy got undue emphasis in the past few budget cycles, which the Army interpreted as a tradeoff in their capabilities.[39] This perception works in the Air Force's favor, as modernizations to Air Force assets that conform to the U.S. military's planning for potential future conflict provide the service with inherent relevance to these challenges, which preserves its institutional security.

Personnel

The Air Force also demonstrates a preference for competition in the personnel arena, particularly as it pertains to recruiting and retaining airmen who may have similar skills as those who might consider joining the Navy instead.[40] The Air Force's ability to ensure its relevance and even superiority is directly related to its ability to attract talent. One respondent remarked that the skills required by pilots—namely, the abil-

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[37] Jerry Harris, Jr., Arnold W. Bunch, Jr., and Mark C. Nowland, "Presentation to the Senate Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Airland Forces: Air Force, Force Structure and Modernization Programs," March 29, 2017, p. 2.

[38] Harris, Bunch, and Nowland, 2017, p. 4.

[39] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[40] AF91, RAND researcher and former flag-level Air Force officer, November 9, 2016.

ity to think in unconstrained ways—are essential to growing a modern, competitive Air Force: "We'll always harness new technology but it never becomes more important than people."[41] The same respondent indicated that the Air Force thus competes mostly with the Navy for candidates with technical backgrounds and more-specialized analytic skills than the Army and Marine Corps require for other types of combat missions.[42]

As discussed earlier, the Air Force is characterized by a personnel hierarchy that is led by fighter pilots, whom the Air Force routinely highlights in its competition for talent. Fighter pilots are used to demonstrate the so-called best of the Air Force because they are the warfighters of the service. This distinction is important in that it puts fighter pilots on par with the flagship warfighters of the other services.

Many of the competitive patterns that emerged among those interviewed for this study related to internal competition within the service's specializations rather than external competition. It is a commonly held notion among airmen that Air Force Specialty Codes "dictate [the service] food chains," which "ironically reflect the animal kingdom":[43]

> A specialty that's not rated means you can't ascend to leading air squadrons. Why the hierarchy? Each service prefers a hierarchy that puts [a particular specialty] at the tip of spear. . . . How do we make room for evolution of importance in the fight?[44]

For this reason, the manned versus unmanned aircraft debate detailed in Appendix A permeates internal service insecurities in a fight for continued relevance. In the words of a RAND expert, "What do UAVs mean for me as a fighter pilot when we've always been the tip of the spear?"[45] Colonel Worden warned in *Rise of the Fighter Generals* against being overly focused on one specialization because it could limit the Air Force's ability to adapt to inevitable changes in warfighting:

> Homogeneity, as defined by shared experience, limits a total view of the institution's legitimate role. This organizational condition leans towards myopia and monistic thinking, often manifesting in a consuming focus on a purpose or mission that favors the dominant culture.[46]

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[41] AF73, Air Force career SES member, November 1, 2016.

[42] AF73, Air Force career SES member, November 1, 2016.

[43] AF22, field-grade officer with joint duty tour experience, November 15, 2016.

[44] AF22, field-grade officer with joint duty tour experience, November 15, 2016.

[45] AF65, RAND analyst, November 18, 2016.

[46] Worden, 1998, p. 238.

Indeed, if Smith's prediction in *Tomorrow's Air Force* about what may drive organizational change in the Air Force should hold, the service will be well served by an approach that provides greater inclusivity for all of its specializations:

> The USAF [U.S. Air Force] will continue down a predictable path away from the 1992 fighter pilot dominated perspective. Furthermore, given the experiences in Afghanistan and Iraq, and assuming that more conventional and unconventional conflicts parallel these actions in the future, then the organizational changes to the USAF will likely center on and encompass a more holistic and synergistic perspective towards war. Rather than a single weapons system or sub-group . . . , focus will shift to a "combined arms" perspective where context will determine the amalgamation of several different sub-groups all coordinating as primary capabilities.[47]

One respondent, a member of the SES, shared a more optimistic view of these internal rivalries and how they could shape the way the Air Force views its specializations:

> People are now coming to an academy and choose ISR and Office of Special Investigation after graduation. People are also choosing public affairs and strategic affairs. These are the types of specialties that could help them post-military transition. There are examples of people doing these other jobs, but there will always be a view that pilot is a ticket to anything you want [from your Air Force career]. How true will that remain? Depends on how leadership views diversity of skills. I would like to think the Chief of Staff and Secretary would reach out to all airmen. The Air Force needs great leaders, irrespective of the specialty.[48]

These internal tensions, though arguably not unique to the Air Force, present further divisions in the service that prevent a truly cohesive culture from forming. The need to acquire top talent to fulfill the highly technical missions inherent in many of the Air Force's specializations will continue to pit them against services like the Navy, particularly as the Air Force continues to establish its dominance in areas such as cyber.

Current Roles and Missions

The Air Force is less comfortable with competing in its current roles and missions because the areas where it could dominate—air, space, and cyber—have been less applicable to day-to-day combat operations since 2002. This is changing somewhat as the service expands its footprint in cyber; 2017 data from the Air Force reports it conducted 4,000 cyber missions against over 100,000 targets, which enabled 200 high-value individual kill or capture missions.[49]

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[47] J. Smith, 2014, p. 207.

[48] AF48, Air Force SES member, November 7, 2016.

[49] Harris, Bunch, and Nowland, 2017, p. 3.

The modern Air Force's emphasis on "jointness" among the services for seamless operation during missions is not necessarily incongruous with the notion of retaining control over the assets provided by the Air Force. For the Air Force, joint operations do not mean losing control over Air Force assets; rather, they mean controlling indispensable Air Force support to the joint force. Missions like close air support are linkages to the Air Force's past, which the service has tried to move away from to ensure continued relevance in new and evolving missions. Still, it does end up embracing them as a key part of what it brings to the fight. As summarized by a retired U.S. Army field-grade officer who served multiple joint duty assignments,

> If you go back to WWII and the Army Air Corps, the view of the air and ground fight was the Air Force was there to support ground fighting and bombing. When established as a separate service, the Air Force was searching for their own identity. They took strategic bombing on as their own separate task, and have continually tried to reduce their role in close air support. An effort in the 1980s to get rid of the A-10 went away because it was [the military's] only close-support aircraft. An effort to trade Patriots for A-10s to do high altitude air defense fell apart in Desert Storm when A-10s were seen as invaluable.[50]

The perception that the Air Force has been more of an enabler in current conflicts has bred a level of discomfort when competing with the Army and Marine Corps over current roles and missions. The Air Force's core competency is airpower, and while innovations like unmanned aircraft can be polarizing among the fighter community, they do boost the Air Force's ability to carry out its core missions and have the added bonus of enhancing the joint fight.[51] While highly specialized, costly stealth technology platforms have strategic benefits in demonstrating U.S. military might to conventional adversaries. However, in the day-to-day combat of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, less costly fighters could have been a better investment. Precision airpower has been useful in targeting insurgents, but advancements in real-time surveillance and smaller bombs for use in tactical fights have also demonstrated combat effectiveness.[52] Further, the Air Force's wide range of capabilities, including fighter squadrons, ISR, mobility, and cyber, makes it more difficult to point to one or two tangible items the service brings to the joint fight, which creates a messaging problem for the service when trying to succinctly explain what it brings to the table.[53]

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[50] AR27, retired Army field-grade officer with multiple joint duty tours, December 28, 2016.

[51] Sanford L. Weiner, "Evolution in the Post-Cold War Air Force: Technology, Doctrine, and Bureaucratic Politics," in Sapolsky, Friedman, and Green, 2009, p. 110.

[52] Weiner, 2009, pp. 114–115.

[53] AF12, flag-level officer, October 19, 2016.

The Air Force's investments in space and cyber have yet to be fully utilized given the scope of current operations. However, the Air Force has demonstrated that it believes its strategic decision to invest in these arenas will pay off by allowing it to consistently advocate for resourcing and personnel enhancements to bolster its cyber and space capabilities. This strategy seeks to keep the service agile and flexible in the face of current and future adversaries by ensuring the Air Force has what it needs to retain its competitive advantage in newer mission areas.

Further, current internal tensions expose cracks in the Air Force that affect its ability to compete as a unified service, especially with other services on current roles and missions. Short of a decision about how to unify the service's culture, the Air Force risks becoming a "conglomerate of activities."[54] However, we observed little desire to refocus from the dominance of fighter culture among those who serve in the Air Force's prized specialization. In the words of one respondent, "Unless your chief gets fired, the likelihood of space or cyber becoming chief are low. They might not even want to. Not everyone can aspire to be Air Force Chief of Staff."[55]

Another respondent observed that fighter preeminence is not unique to the Air Force: "All services combat arms units—the tip of the spear guys, warfighters, feel they have special skills and courage that makes them unique among their peers." However, this notion has been turned around post-9/11 because of technology. For the Air Force fighter pilot, that technological change concerns unmanned aircraft. The same respondent, a specialist in Air Force culture, explained that Predator pilots come from the fighter pilot community, but there is still disagreement about who is the warfighter and who is not, as the fighter community is now challenged by pilots who do not need to be in harm's way to generate similar battlefield effects.[56]

Preferred Tactics of Competition

The Air Force pursues its key goals through a set of tactics that extend across the arenas of competition.

Focus on Innovation

The Air Force has proved adept at innovating to solve complex emerging security challenges. Previous RAND research has found innovation to be a central component of effective Air Force strategies to solve operational problems. While the Air Force may be slower to respond to innovations external to its planning, such as unmanned

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[54] AF91, RAND researcher and former flag-level Air Force officer, November 9, 2016.

[55] AF91, RAND researcher and former flag-level Air Force officer, November 9, 2016.

[56] AF65, RAND analyst, November 18, 2016.

aircraft, it is adept at creating solutions for problems identified from within, such as nuclear survivability or precision strategic attack.[57] For example, the Air Force's FY 2017 budget proposed a $6.5 billion investment in nuclear deterrence, including improvements to command and control and the replacement of outdated intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).[58] The strategic nature of the Air Force's approach to innovation is consistent with Builder's description of the Air Force in *Masks of War* as having been "conceived around a strategic theory and midwifed by strategists."[59] This focus on analysis enables the Air Force to think critically about what it can provide to the joint fight in a manner consistent with its mission and values.

Identify and Invest in Top Performers Early

The Air Force displays a tendency to identify quality officers early in their careers and elevate them to prime assignments to groom them into general officers. This often leads to Air Force general officers who are younger than their counterparts in other services. However, the way the Air Force defines prime assignments illustrates its preference for the fighter community, as many of these opportunities pave the way to becoming a wing commander, a high distinction for an Air Force pilot. As one respondent observed, although high-performing fighter pilots are elevated through the ranks more quickly, these Air Force general officers do not typically become CCDRs of the more prestigious regional commands such as USCENTCOM.[60] One explanation for this phenomenon could be that Air Force officers have fewer opportunities for joint assignments early in their careers than their Army counterparts, for example.[61] The Army tends to place officers in joint duty assignments early in their careers, and then again at the O-6 level, a practice that provides more joint-duty-qualified officers who are eligible to compete for the highest-level commands in the U.S. military. Thus, although the Air Force may promote its high performers more quickly than other services, doing so seems to reinforce the prominence of fighters more than it creates a path for influential joint duty commands.

Develop Resource Management Expertise

Several respondents observed that the Air Force tries to mitigate its lack of leadership roles in the more operationally focused joint duty commands like J3 by investing in resource managers who can assume critical J8 positions. This is arguably one way

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[57] Adam Grissom, Caitlin Lee, and Karl P. Mueller, *Innovation in the United States Air Force: Evidence from Six Cases*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1207-AF, 2016, pp. vii–viii.

[58] James and Welsh, 2016, p. 4.

[59] Builder, 1989, p. 67.

[60] AF05, retired Air Force field-grade officer with joint duty experience, April 12, 2017.

[61] AF05, retired Air Force field-grade officer with joint duty experience, April 12, 2017.

the Air Force postures itself to try to control resourcing decisions and compete more effectively for influential staff jobs in lieu of changing promotion pathways for high-performing officers. This approach seems to better suit the Air Force's organizational structure, since the service, unlike the Army, does not have joint task forces that can rapidly deploy and provide all the functions the commanders and warfighters would need to conduct operations. Seeking out resource-focused commands is one way the Air Force can compete with the other services while playing to its strengths, such as strategic analysis.

Practice Strategic Analysis

Builder's argues in *Masks of War* that "strategy colors almost every action of the Air Force, from defining roles and justifying missions to the development of doctrine and the acquisition of forces."[62] This notion holds today, as the Air Force prepares for near-peer conflict while maintaining its role in current operations. Though the service's leaders argue they are underresourced for their current missions, they continue to keep an eye on the future in anticipation of challenges they may face, and they make resourcing arguments to enhance both current and potential future operations according to their strategic calculus.

Emphasize Battlefield Criticality

One way in which the Air Force emphasizes its function as a critical enabler of the joint fight is by using its public documents as a platform to inform and influence key audiences. The Air Force's 2016 Posture Statement consistently refers to the service as "your Air Force," a subtle but powerful way to emphasize the service's indispensability to the nation. Such language seeks to create a sense of ownership among congressional leaders responsible for allocating funds to the Air Force and among the general population, who can better understand the value of the Air Force in providing security for our nation.[63] The Global Vigilance, Global Reach, Global Power literature available on the Air Force's website contains a message from former chief of staff of the Air Force General Mark A. Welsh III addressed directly to "airpower advocates" that encourages them to get to know Air Force personnel directly to better understand the value they provide to U.S. national security.[64] These targeted communications enable the Air Force to inform others about its criticality to missions across the air, space, and cyber domains, as well as its influential role in enabling successful ground missions. Their choice of words and message seeks to ensure that OSD, Congress, and others cannot consider the service ancillary to other services.

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[62] Builder, 1989, p. 67.

[63] James and Welsh, 2016, pp. 1–6.

[64] Headquarters, U.S. Air Force, 2013.

How Others View the Air Force

Technology First
Outside views of the Air Force tend to highlight the service's focus on technology over all else. Airmen, perhaps unsurprisingly, consistently believe their focus as a service is on the individual over the tool he or she operates. Put another way, a pilot is only as good as the training he or she receives, regardless of the quality of the aircraft the pilot flies. According to a flag-level officer interviewed for this study, "The Air Force views ourselves as warfighters that provide a service. Because of the war we are fighting, OSD views the Air Force as a support force, not a warfighting service like the Army or Marines. This perception leads to budget battles because they view us as support people."[65]

Internal Identity Crisis
Some within OSD see the Air Force as having an identity crisis in terms of its overarching culture.[66] Fighter pilots, bomber pilots, and nuclear, space, and cyber experts all have very different missions that are not always blended under one unifying narrative. Some believe this has hurt the Air Force's ability to be an effective advocate for newer specializations shared by multiple services, such as space and cyber. In front of Congress, however, it is widely believed the Air Force is one of the best services at providing analysis-driven arguments to advocate for its positions.[67] These arguments included ones for job growth in constituencies that support Air Force development.[68]

Dominant in Resource Competition
In the other services, the Air Force is viewed as coming out on top in resource battles, though many respondents interviewed for this study admitted to a tendency for services to believe others win more resources than they do.[69] In the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, respondents described tensions between the Army and Marine Corps and the Air Force: While the Air Force would argue soldiers and marines could not do their jobs without the air support provided by the Air Force, soldiers and marines held that airmen were not the ones fighting on the ground and putting their lives on the line.[70] That tension contributes to divides among the services based on emotional arguments

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[65] AF12, flag-level officer, October 19, 2016.

[66] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[67] OS01, deputy assistant secretary of defense, December 2, 2016.

[68] AR27, retired Army field-grade officer with multiple joint duty tours, December 28, 2016.

[69] AR27, retired Army field-grade officer with multiple joint duty tours, December 28, 2016.

[70] AR27, retired Army field-grade officer with multiple joint duty tours, December 28, 2016.

about what each service contributes to the joint fight. Despite some outside perception that the Air Force is "still trying to figure itself out at the headquarters level,"[71] it is generally viewed as effective in congressional engagements. This contributes to an overall opinion among those outside the service that the Air Force tends to win resource battles more than other services.

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[71] OS01, deputy assistant secretary of defense, December 2, 2016.

The Marine Corps

Dan Madden

The Marine Corps was first established in 1775 to provide the Continental Navy of the American Revolution with ships' guards to maintain discipline and provide infantry for operations at sea and ashore, reflecting the practice of the British Corps of Marines of the era. Over time the Marines evolved from the ships' guards of their early history to colonial infantry and amphibious assault shock troops.[1]

Today the Marine Corps is a "middle-weight," expeditionary force-in-readiness with 184,000 marines in the active component, 39,000 in the Reserve, and forces forward postured globally for crisis response. The Marine Corps accounts for 8 percent of the DoD budget but provides 15 percent of active maneuver brigades and 11 percent of fighter and attack aircraft and artillery batteries.[2] The Marines have participated in every major U.S. conflict and were the primary force in many smaller ones. Marines take intense pride in this heritage, memorializing their history in events ranging from change-of-command ceremonies to the Marine Corps Birthday Ball.

Builder deliberately excluded the Marine Corps from his treatment of service personalities due to its limited role in national strategy and force planning. He thought the Marines' limited role in strategy and force planning derived from a culture that valued identity above all else.[3] In some respects, these are reasonable reasons for Builder's excluding the Marine Corps from his study, but even by 1989 the service's role in planning was changing due to a series of developments that began in the 1940s. Most obviously, the development of amphibious warfare doctrine played a critical role in the

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[1] This transition was triggered by the expansion of American interests, marked by the Spanish-American War and the U.S. seizure of the Philippines. See Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps*, New York: Free Press, 1991.

[2] Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, *Current Operations Brief*, January 22, 2015. It is equally valid to observe that the Marines provide 0 percent of DoD's strategic nuclear forces.

[3] Builder states, "Finally, the service comparisons have been limited to the Army, Navy, and Air Force. What about the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard? They certainly have distinctive, even colorful, institutional personalities." He continues, "The Marines have generally been bystanders in the almost continuous jostling and bumping of the Army, Navy, and Air Force over military strategy and resources." Builder, 1989, pp. 9, 208.

Pacific theater during World War II. The Marine Corps also offered alternatives for conducting the Vietnam War (e.g., COIN and the Combined Action Program) and later Desert Storm (e.g., the role of maritime prepositioning ships and the amphibious assault option).

Since World War II, the Marine Corps had steadily expanded its leadership role in the Department of Defense by gaining a seat on the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the 1970s; by playing a leading role in establishing the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force that ultimately became USCENTCOM; and in 1985 by securing a Marine general (George B. Crist) as commander of a GCC for the first time.[4] Builder's perception may also have been shaped by one of the Marine Corps's great successes: Since the end of the Korean War, its end strength has been relatively stable compared to the Army's, which had been on a steady, long-term decline, interrupted by sporadic and temporary growth only to address specific conflicts.

More recently, the appointment of Marine Corps generals to key positions seems decisive in making the case for the Marine Corps's impact on U.S. national security culture and decisionmaking: General Peter Pace's appointment to chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2005, General James Jones's appointment to USEUCOM commander in 2003 and later national security adviser to President Obama, General John Allen's appointment to command U.S. forces in Afghanistan, and finally the appointment of retired general James Mattis to be Secretary of Defense in 2017.

The remainder of this chapter is divided into four sections. The first section identifies key Marine Corps organizational characteristics. The second provides a characterization of how and for what the Marine Corps competes. Third, we identify tactics the Marine Corps employs in competition. The final section notes how other stakeholders view the Marine Corps.

Major Defining Characteristics of the Marine Corps

To provide context for describing Marine Corps culture and competitive behaviors, it is useful to understand the basic organizational structure of the service (Figure 5.1). First, although the Marine Corps is a military service, it is part of DoN. Both the commandant of the Marine Corps and the CNO, the military heads of their respective services, report to the secretary of the Navy.

The Marine Corps is divided into operating forces, supporting establishment, and the Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. Marine operating forces are organized for employment into combined-arms Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) that

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[4]   By agreement, command of USCENTCOM rotated between Army and Marine generals until Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld broke the service monopolies (or duopoly) on CCMD leadership.

Figure 5.1
Marine Air Ground Task Forces
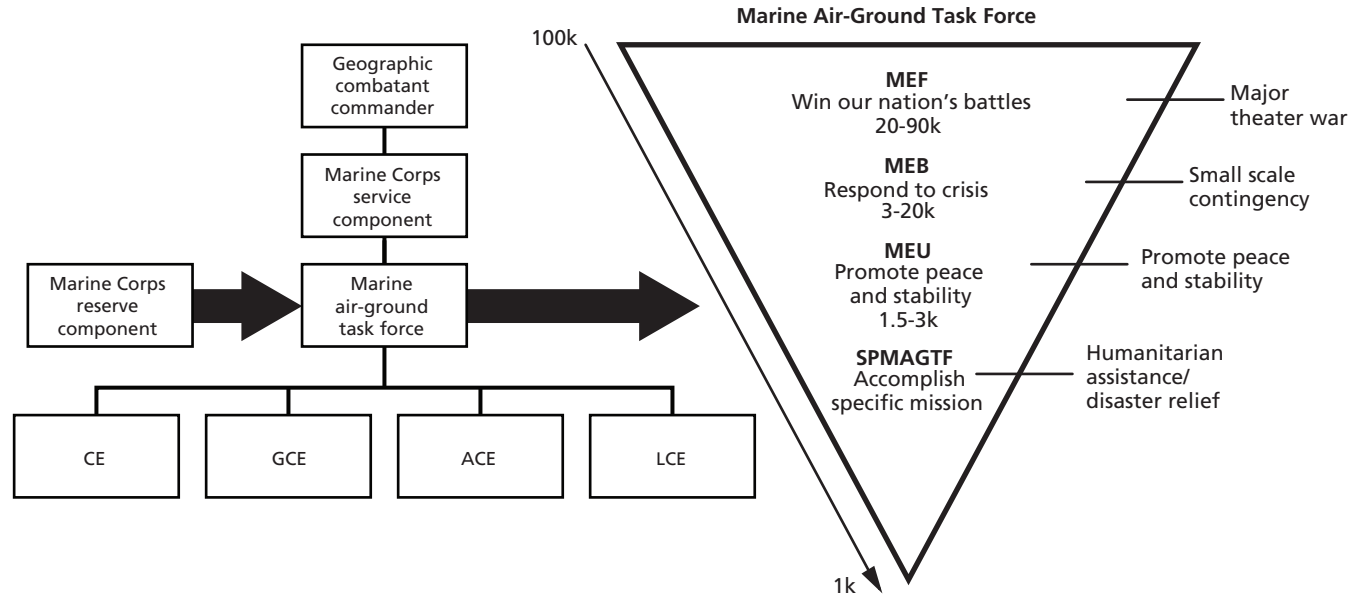
SOURCE: Marine Corps Reference Publication 1-10.1, 2016.
NOTE: CE = command element, GCE = ground combat element, ACE = aviation combat element, LCE = logistics command element, MEB = Marine Expeditionary Brigade, SPMAGTF = Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force.
RAND *RR2270-OSD-5.1*

include command, ground, aviation, and logistics elements. Standard MAGTFs range in size from Marine Expeditionary Forces (MEFs) that include an infantry division and air wing to Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) that include an infantry battalion and air squadron.[5]

There are three standing MEFs; the bulk of Marine operating forces are organized into either I MEF and III MEF, which report to U.S. Marine Forces Pacific, or II MEF, which reports to Marine Forces Command. Each GCC includes a Marine component command.

Naval Expeditionary Force in Readiness

The Marine Corps views itself as a naval "expeditionary force in readiness."[6] This identity underscores four attributes valued by the Marines. Being a "force in readiness" involves both combat effectiveness and timely employability. Being "expeditionary" involves a readiness for rapid deployment and a high level of strategic mobility when teamed with the Navy. The naval character of the Marine Corps is valued because it contributes to the Marine Corps's forward presence, and more instrumentally it underscores its relationship with the Navy and differentiates it from the Army. The Marines' forward naval posture gives it a particular advantage over the Army in the first 30 days of a crisis, the period of time it typically takes for significant Army forces to deploy from the continental United States and arrive at areas of interest.

Middleweight Force

The Marine Corps further seeks to create a comparative advantage relative to the Army by situating itself as a middleweight and flexible force. *Middleweight* is meant to imply a capability for rapid deployment, in contrast to armor-heavy Army formations, but with sufficient combat capability for forcible entry and crisis response operations beyond what SOF can provide. Flexibility is operationalized through doctrine, training, and task organization. The Marine Corps values flexibility because it ensures the service can provide policymakers with immediately employable, tailored forces for ad hoc missions that the Army would be reluctant to undertake due to force management or readiness impacts.

Combined Arms Force

Relative to other services, the variance in prestige and legitimacy associated with different occupational specialties, and the sense of interbranch competition among them, is quite modest in the Marine Corps. In part this might be attributable to the basic Marine Corps ideals that at the individual level, every marine is a rifleman, and at the

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[5] Marine Corps Reference Publication 1-10.1, *Organization of the United States Marine Corps*, Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2016.

[6] Marine Corps Publication, *Marine Corps Operating Concept: How an Expeditionary Force Operates in the 21st Century*, Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2016, p. 10.

organizational level, the Marine Corps is a combined arms organization. This attitude has been reinforced by a more egalitarian distribution of risk in the last two decades of conflict, during which logistics convoys were frequently as likely to encounter an improvised explosive device as a patrolling infantry squad.[7] That said, the Marine Corps has historically been, and in some ways continues to be, infantry-centric.

Further, the vast majority of Marine Corps commandants have come from the infantry community. Newly commissioned Marine lieutenants, even if they are earmarked for the aviation community, go to the Basic School, where they learn skill sets appropriate to a provisional rifle platoon commander—a reflection of both the Marine perception of the chaos of combat and the service's desire to ensure all elements of the Marine Corps team understand the challenges faced by infantry in combat in order to create a more smoothly functioning combined arms team—through an infantry lens. During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Marine concept of operations focused on supporting the activities of mechanized infantry, with armor, aviation, and artillery playing a supporting role in the combined arms team.[8] This level of organizational focus has produced tangible advantages in the efficacy of combined arms operations.[9]

Emergent Marine Corps concepts and capabilities may be shifting the center of gravity for Marine combat power away from infantry toward aviation and artillery for certain scenarios, marking a significant break from the historical practice just described. The current expeditionary advanced base concepts suggest that in a conflict with an adversary with extensive A2/AD (e.g., China), infantry forces would largely serve as an enabler to power projection operations conducted by aviation, or sea control operations conducted by rocket artillery. Though this concept appears to be in tension with Marine culture, since Marine Corps culture includes a focus on mission accomplishment, adaptability, and the combined-arms MAGTF, these concepts may still find cultural purchase. The shifting locus of combat power and operating concepts may trigger a subtle shift in emphasis within Marine Corps culture from supporting infantry to supporting the MAGTF. If this were to occur, we would expect to see increasingly diverse professional backgrounds among the Marine Corps's institutional leadership.

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[7] MC49, senior marine with experience in strategic planning, December 1, 2016.

[8] When the combined force air component commander controls Marine aviation assets, a different set of priorities comes into play. See, for example, John Gordon IV and Bruce R. Pirnie, "'Everybody Wanted Tanks': Heavy Forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom," *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 39, 4th Quarter 2005, pp. 84–90.

[9] During Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Marines were more adapt at dynamically integrating strike aviation assets into operations than Army units. Marine fire support coordination lines allowed the combined force air component commander more flexibility than those established by the Army. Air Force pilots revealed and reported a preference for operating with the Marine Direct Air Support Center rather than operating with the U.S. Army's Air Support Operations Center. Walter L. Perry, Richard E. Darilek, Laurinda L. Rohn, and Jerry M. Sollinger, eds., *Operation IRAQI FREEDOM: Decisive War, Elusive Peace*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-1214-A, 2015.

Service Ethos and Guiding Ideals

> The Air Force has its planes, the Navy its ships, the Army its obsessively written and obeyed "doctrine" that dictates how to act. Culture—that is, the values and assumptions that shape its members—is all the Marines have. It is what holds them together. . . . Theirs is the richest culture: formalistic, insular, elitist, with a deep anchor in their own history and mythology.[10]

The Marine Corps has perhaps the most distinctive culture of any of the services. Indeed, Marine pride in its unique characteristics is a marker of Marine culture itself. While the other services have strong branch identities, marines identify most closely with the corps level over branch distinctions. The Marine Corps reinforces this institutional pride by frequently invoking the word "pride" in its recruitment and other branding efforts. Even *Semper fidelis*, meaning "always faithful," the Marine Corps's motto since 1883, deeply underscores the unwavering dedication to other marines, the mission, and the nation. This small, corps-level affiliation results in a high degree of similarity among officer attitudes. For example, Mahnken and FitzSimonds found that only 9 percent of Marine Corps officers surveyed felt that future adversaries will benefit from long-range precision strike, and the Marine Corps had the highest percentage of officers who agree with the statement, "The U.S. armed forces must radically change their approach to warfare to compete effectively with future adversaries."[11]

Despite Builder's decision to study only the Army, Air Force, and Navy in *Masks of War*, he described aspects of Marine Corps culture that remain true today: "[The Marines] appear to be protected from harm by Congress and quite comfortable with hand-me-down equipment developed by the other services, taking more pride in who they are than in what they own."[12] This characterization underscores the "pride" element of Marine culture but also touches on another Marine cultural characteristic: frugality and emphasis on the individual over technology. In his widely read *First to Fight*, Lieutenant General Victor H. "Brute" Krulak also highlights this identification with austerity, as well as the Marine characteristics of institutional paranoia and dependence on Congress and the American people, which will be discussed later in this chapter.[13] However, some might argue that the Marines' identification with

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[10] Thomas E. Ricks, *Making the Corps*, 10th anniversary ed., New York: Scribner, 2007, p. 19.

[11] Mahnken and FitzSimonds, 2004, pp. 137, 139.

[12] Builder, 1989, p. 208.

[13] See Victor H. Krulak, *First to Fight: An Inside View of the U.S. Marine Corps*, rev. ed., Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 1999. Actual book sections are titled "The Thinkers," "The Innovators," "The Penny Pinchers," "The Brothers," and "The Fighters." In addition to his iconic status within Marine culture, his book *First to Fight* is on the commandant's reading list and is frequently quoted in marine-authored journal articles, highlighting its continued relevance and resonance within the Marine Corps.

frugality is less valid today, particularly in terms of procurement: For example, the Marine Corps purchased more F-35s than the Navy.

This emphasis on frugality is also the basis of another Marine cultural characteristic: adaptability. Marines must do "less with more" and are frequently employed in austere environments, which contributes to the need to adapt to conditions quickly to overcome the enemy. The Marine Corps intentionally inculcates this adaptability starting with junior personnel in part through its emphasis on egalitarianism and decentralized authority.[14] In his doctoral dissertation, Alfred Benjamin Connable highlighted a survey response that emphasizes the centrality of these characteristics:

> Adaptability is the ability to meet a new challenge in a different way in order to achieve success. I believe it is why the Marine Corps is so good at winning battles. Marines are given leadership roles early on and learn to make do with little resources while still accomplishing the mission. Those who are best prepared to adapt to tough situations survive, while those who cannot adapt perish. Marines adapt, Semper Gumby![15]

The Marine Corps also holds tradition more closely than the other services, which is supported by the Marine emphasis on studying the organization's own history.[16] This adherence to tradition can also be seen in the emphasis on appearance in and out of uniform, in the "Marines' Hymn," and even in the strict procedures of a Marine Corps birthday-cake-cutting celebration.[17] Completing "The Crucible," the physically demanding culmination event of boot camp, is a rite of passage for nearly all marines that must be completed before receiving one's distinctive Eagle Globe and Anchor. The Marine Corps is also the only service branch that claims membership for life.

Officially, the Marine Corps highlights virtues that include honor, courage, commitment, endurance, selflessness, decisiveness, faithfulness, and a host of others. Marine Corps doctrine identifies what it considers to be "enduring Marine Corps principles":[18]

- Every Marine is a rifleman.
- The Marine Corps is an expeditionary naval force.
- The Marine Corps is a combined arms organization.

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[14] Alfred Benjamin Connable, *Warrior-Maverick Culture: The Evolution of Adaptability in the U.S. Marine Corps*, doctoral thesis, London: King's College London, 2016.

[15] Connable, 2016, p. 172.

[16] Thomas G. Mahnken, *United States Strategic Culture*, rev. ed., Washington, D.C.: Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Advanced Systems and Concepts Office, November 13, 2006.

[17] U.S. Marine Corps, "Customs and Traditions," General Administrative Message 052/08, December 17, 2008.

[18] Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1, *Marine Corps Operations*, Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 2011, pp. 1-4 to 1-5.

- Marines will be ready and forward deployed.
- Marines are agile and adaptable.
- Marines take care of their own.

When queried about Marine ideals, most Marine interviewees reported some combination of the foregoing principles as foundational to Marine culture, perhaps evidence of both the broad acceptance of these principles within the Marine Corps and the excellent message discipline the other military services often attribute to the Marine Corps.[19] We now discuss the functional role of these ideals in shaping institutional behavior.

"Every Marine is a rifleman." This principle highlights marines' focus on egalitarianism, combat, and Marine unity in their warrior ethos. Specifically, it stresses that every marine has equal value. It also highlights the Marine Corps's infantry-centric culture, since the ability to behave as a rifleman is treated as the basis for Marine unity and the foundation of combat power. Another common refrain is that though "every Marine is a rifleman, not every Marine is an infantryman." Infantry marines are typically considered to most closely embody the Marine ethos, followed by combat support (e.g., aviation, artillery, armor), then aviation and command, and finally combat service support (e.g., logistics).[20] Senior marines dislike these kinds of distinctions, seeing them as corrosive of Marine culture and the cohesiveness of the MAGTF.[21]

"The Marine Corps is an expeditionary naval force." Highlighting the Marine Corps's naval character underscores its relationship with the Navy, but also its distinction from the Army. Highlighting the corps's expeditionary character underscores its persistent readiness (as opposed to the Army's "tiered" or "cyclic" readiness), capability for rapid deployment, and employability in austere environments, again representing an attempt to differentiate it from the Army. This claim to superior employability underscores the Marine Corps's relevance as a foreign policy tool that can be flexibly employed by an administration.

"The Marine Corps is a combined arms organization." The term *combined arms* refers to the concept of employing multiple types of combat capabilities with the intent of creating inescapable situations for the enemy. It also highlights Marine unity and promotes a team-centric rather than branch-centric approach to combat and force development. However, in the context of joint operations, this principle can sometimes be used as an argument for the Marines to retain control of all Marine units, particularly aviation assets. This Marine principle is in tension with the Air Force doctrine of centralized employment of aviation assets to maximize efficiency. Since the joint force air component commander is typically an Air Force officer, centralization is typically

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[19] MC27, marine with experience in command and legislative positions, March 23, 2017.

[20] MC97, former active-duty marine who has written extensively on Marine Corps culture, November 11, 2016.

[21] MC81, senior marine with experience in command, joint, and resourcing positions, April 6, 2017.

the preferred approach in joint operations. Since Marine units are designed with the presumption of responsive air, the issue is not simply an ideological one. This tension between Marine Corps doctrine and unit design plays out in other ways, including command and control arrangement during joint operations. The establishment in Afghanistan of a Marine regional command in Helmand province, sometimes colloquially referred to at the time as "Marineistan," was an artifact of these dynamics. Marines felt Marine units needed to be under a consolidated Marine Corps headquarters to ensure they could employ their combined arms approach.[22] At a broader interservice level, this principle is used to defend Marine aviation from arguments that it should be subsumed by the Navy or Air Force.[23]

"Marines will be ready and forward deployed." This largely echoes the ideals represented by the "expeditionary naval force" principle. It also more sharply underscores the Marine Corps's commitment to being the "force that's most ready when the nation is least ready" and its immediate availability to respond to unexpected crises, which augments the service's utility to policymakers.

"Marines are agile and adaptable." The Marine Corps views war as chaotic and seeks to build marines that can adapt to unexpected challenges rather than simply execute well-defined assigned tasks. This focus on adaptability is also beneficial to the Marine Corps at an institutional level—as a force, its ability to be employed quickly and in a wide range of contingencies helps to secure the service as a national force of choice.

"Marines take care of their own." The credibility of this commitment to its people is vital to all the services. Marines need to believe that their sacrifices will not be taken lightly and that their families will be cared for when they cannot be there for them. It also underscores the unity of marines, highlighting that being a marine involves forming a bond of kinship rather than simply performing a job.

Core Competencies

Marine Corps doctrine identifies the corps's core competencies as follows:[24]

- Conducts persistent forward naval engagement and is always prepared to respond as the Nation's force in readiness.
- Employs integrated combined arms across the range of military operations and can operate as part of a joint or multinational force.
- Provides forces and specialized detachments for service aboard naval ships, on stations, and for operations ashore.

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[22] Rajiv Chandrasekaran, "At Afghan Outpost, Marines Gone Rogue or Leading the Fight Against Counterinsurgency?" *Washington Post*, March 14, 2010.

[23] Rosen, 1991.

[24] Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1, 2011, pp. 2-19 to 2-20.

- Conducts joint forcible entry operations from the sea and develops amphibious landing force capabilities and doctrine.
- Conducts complex expeditionary operations in the urban littorals and other challenging environments.
- Leads joint and multinational operations and enables interagency activities.

Forward Naval Engagement

As part of the Marine Corps's concept of readiness, this tenet leads the Marine Corps to ensure that a high portion of its forces are deployed forward and that as much of that forward-deployed force is shipboard as possible to ensure an immediate availability for employment to address unexpected crises. After every major ground conflict, the Marine Corps quickly seeks to get back to its "naval roots," in part to avoid the perception of being a "second land army." The following three quotes from three different Marine Corps commandants underscore this dynamic. General James T. Conway's emphasis on Marine expeditionary capabilities at the height of the war in Iraq is particularly revealing.

> We [are] . . . getting back into the amphibious business . . . we are redirecting our attention seaward and re-emphasizing our partnership with the Navy and our shared concern in the maritime aspects of our national strategy.[25]

> Though our Corps has recently proven itself in "sustained operations ashore," future operational environments will place a premium on agile expeditionary forces. . . . We must be a two fisted fighter—able to destroy enemy formations with our scalable air-ground-logistics teams in major contingencies, but equally able to employ our hard earned irregular warfare skills honed over decades of conflict.[26]

> Marines will continue to operate as part of a forward naval expeditionary force capable of maintaining forward presence for steady state, crisis response, and contingency operations. We do not have the luxury of focusing on one identity, paradigm, or capability.[27]

Integrated Combined Arms

Marines will also seek to ensure that as much of the MAGTF remains under MAGTF command and control as possible when operating as part of a joint task force. Marine

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[25] Terry Terriff, "'Innovate or Die': Organizational Culture and the Origins of Maneuver Warfare in the United States Marine Corps," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 3, June 1, 2006, p. 486.

[26] James T. Conway, *Marine Corps Vision & Strategy 2025*, Washington, D.C.: Headquarters Marine Corps, 2017, p. 3.

[27] Robert B. Neller, *U.S. Marine Corps Service Strategy 2016*, Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, undated-b, p. 3.

forces, unlike Army armored brigades, are designed to fight with the presumption of quite limited armor availability, so they depend on close integration of ground and air maneuver. The highest-risk asset in this context is the F-35, which has such an exquisite suite of capabilities that any joint task force will likely quickly centralize control of these assets.

Service Aboard Naval Ships

The Marine Corps historically has been an elite shipborne light infantry. The special operations community has taken on more of that role since 9/11, eliciting concern from some Marines.[28]

Joint Forcible Entry Operations

The emphasis on joint forcible entry operations has shaped the Marine interest in high operational mobility and access, operationalized through investments in the V-22, landing craft air cushions, the now-canceled advanced amphibious assault vehicle, and the ongoing procurement of the F-35. The inability to credibly conduct joint forcible entry operations would be a significant challenge to the Marine Corps's understanding of itself, partially explaining the extraordinary investment (by Marine standards) in solutions to A2/AD threats.

Complex Expeditionary Operations

"Complex" expeditionary operations refer to irregular warfare, which itself includes a range of operations spanning from counterterrorism strikes to COIN. The Marine Corps views small wars as part of its historical legacy, and its continued competence in it is an artifact of both recent conflicts and its continued forward presence. The emphasis on "expeditionary" should be understood as more than a nod to the Marine Corps's naval heritage; it is also indicative of the kind of irregular warfare operations the Marine Corps preserves.

Leading and Enabling

Marines are increasingly leading joint operations, but this is different from Marine Corps units providing the headquarters that a joint task force or combined joint task force headquarters is built from. The Marine Corps is more likely to provide the headquarters for crisis and humanitarian responses (e.g., Operation Restore Hope in Somalia) than major ground combat operations, which typically are built around an Army Corps headquarters.[29]

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[28] Owen West, "Who Will Be the First to Fight?" *Marine Corps Gazette*, May 1, 2003.

[29] Second Military Brigade Staff, "2d MEB: Ready for Crisis," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 101, No. 2, February 2017, pp. 21–23.

Competitive Goals

Demonstrate Continued Relevance by Leveraging Forward Presence

Maintaining a robust forward presence is tied directly to Marine culture and relevance. Marine expeditionary culture is an important part of what differentiates the Marine Corps from the Army, and maintaining that culture necessarily involves relatively frequent deployments to sea or combat. Forward deployments create opportunities to strengthen institutional bonds between the Marine Corps and the Navy, better posturing the Marines to execute assigned missions. Missions that forward-deployed Marine units typically prepare for include theater security cooperation, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief operations, noncombatant evacuations, enhancing deterrence, or other forms of crisis response.

Forward-deployed forces also serve as a steady reminder of the capabilities and value the Marine Corps provides policymakers. When a crisis occurs, Marines are able to leverage their forward presence and adaptive culture to quickly respond, as in the recent deployment of elements of a MEU's artillery battery to Syria to support combat operations against ISIS, or the 2014 employment of Special Purpose MAGTF Crisis Response–Africa to assist in the evacuation of the U.S. embassy in Juba, South Sudan. The Marines were able to preserve thousands of additional personnel during the drawdowns following Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom by committing additional forces to Marine security detachments and the new Special Purpose MAGTF Crisis Response construct, which enjoyed substantial congressional support in the post-Benghazi political environment.[30]

Preserve Forcible Entry Mission for Contested Environments

The capability to conduct forcible entry operations is still seen by the Marine Corps as one of its critical contributions to U.S. options for major conflicts. Preserving this capability has motivated the majority of its major investments since before the end of the Cold War, the directed procurement of Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom being a notable exception that proves the rule. As potential adversaries have developed capabilities that drive Navy ships well beyond traditional amphibious assault range, the Marine Corps has been forced to rethink how it approaches forcible entry operations, and it faces the increased skepticism of this mission from outside analysts.

For a variety of institutional reasons, developing capabilities and concepts that allow it to overcome these challenges is important to the Marine Corps. The need to be capable of conducting a two-MEB forcible entry operation is important for justifying its force structure requirements. Further, forcible entry also underwrites the Marines' "first to fight" narrative, which assists in recruiting people of the caliber

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[30] MC31, marine with experience in command, joint, and legislative positions, April 14, 2017.

they desire. From a broader institutional perspective, if the Marines lost the forcible entry mission, it would also risk raising the question of whether they have an important role in major combat operations at all, or if they should refocus on their early-twentieth-century role as colonial infantry. Their perceived value to the Navy might also be undermined.

Maintain Operational Responsibility and Autonomy

The Marine Corps also seeks to ensure that in major operations and conflicts, marines are tasked with an operationally significant role that is theirs alone. The desire to preserve a forcible entry capability, discussed previously, is an example of this goal. This reflects the practical issue that Marine forces are designed to operate within a MAGTF, rather than being parceled out to supplement other ground forces, whether Army or SOF. In this context, the Marine Corps's identity as a combined arms force serves to justify independent, rather than joint, operations. But it also reflects a broader institutional need for the Marine Corps to continue to visibly demonstrate its combat prowess—a point of professional pride—and the need to maintain its reputation with both Congress and the American people in order to have its resourcing and recruiting needs met. This desire for operational responsibility and autonomy could be seen in the Marine desire to deploy the service's forces to Helmand province during the Afghanistan surge, rather than distributing them to higher-priority regions in Afghanistan to fall under Army division commanders.

Preserve Marine Culture

Marines view their unique culture as the foundation of their combat prowess. They know how to build marines and MAGTFs, and anything that threatens to disrupt their approach is viewed with skepticism. Recruitment, training, and operational employment in combat, crisis, and steady-state operations are important elements in how marines preserve their culture. Due to the centrality of adaptability to Marine culture, policy direction to adopt new missions will likely be embraced by the Marines, so long as they are not expected to abandon legacy missions that they believe will continue to be a more enduring source of value to policymakers—particularly if those legacy missions are central to Marine culture.

In contrast to their forward-leaning embrace of ad hoc missions, marines are likely to oppose civilian intervention into Marine force development practices. In our interviews, there was no military service more skeptical of personnel policy changes that have occurred over the last several years than the Marine Corps. Marine commandants testified in strong terms against the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell legislation and against the opening of closed combat arms occupational specialties and billets to women. Marine Corps leadership clearly had concerns about the impact of these personnel policy changes on Marine readiness, but subsequent to final decisions by the Secretary of Defense or congressional action, the Marines appeared to commit to expeditious implementation.

Arenas of Competition

The Marine Corps exercises preference in the competitive arenas of current roles and missions, personnel, and resources, but it also derives a competitive advantage in the arena of future institutional security for reasons explained here.

Future Institutional Security

Organizational paranoia may be one of the Marine Corps's most distinctive and central characteristics.[31] Marine history has included one institutional death (1783 to 1798), at least 15 efforts to dispose of or subsume it, and the skepticism or hostility of multiple presidents (most famously Harry S. Truman).[32] The Marine Corps lacks a unique domain, such as land, sea, or air, something that motivates the structure of the other military services. This sense of being slightly unmoored has left the Marine Corps justifying its existence and searching for additional missions to demonstrate its value almost since its founding.[33] The Marine Corps remains the only service to include an extensive discussion of the statutory basis for its missions and force structure within its operations manual, while remaining conscious that it lacks the same Constitutional basis the Army and Navy enjoy.[34]

Responding to a question from then-commandant of the Marine Corps General Randolph M. Pate, then-lieutenant general Krulak wrote in a private letter (later published),

> Why does the United States need a Marine Corps? . . . The United States does not *need* a Marine Corps . . . the United States *wants* a Marine Corps. . . . Should the people ever lose that conviction [that Marines are ready, effective, and produce good citizens]—as a result of our failure to meet their high—almost spiritual— standards, the Marine Corps will then quickly disappear.[35]

The continued support of Congress, the significant successes in preserving resources and force structure following the end of the Cold War and again after the reduction

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[31] The term *paranoia* is used frequently to describe this phenomenon in the Marine Corps. For example, see V. Krulak, 1999, p. 15; Terriff, 2006.

[32] In a letter to a member of Congress, President Harry S. Truman wrote, "For your information the Marine Corps is the Navy's police force and as long as I am President that is what it will remain. They have a propaganda machine that is almost equal to Stalin's." Harry S. Truman, "235. Letters to the Commandant of the Marine Corps League and to the Commandant of the Marine Corps," *Public Papers of the Presidents: Harry S. Truman, Harry S. Truman Library*, September 6, 1950; C. Krulak, "Commandant's Planning Guidance Frag Order," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 81, No. 10, 1997, pp. A-1–A-9.

[33] Millett, 1991.

[34] Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1, 2011.

[35] Victor Krulak to Randolph Pate, November 4, 1957, in V. Krulak, 1999, p. xvi.

of ground operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the increasingly prominent role marines have had in DoD's leadership since the early 1980s have likely acted to reduce the acuity of this anxiety. However, both interviews and literature indicate a sense that the security of the Marine institutional legacy is fragile and that vigilance is required to preserve DoD, congressional, and public perceptions of the Marine Corps as a unique institution.[36]

The emergent policymaker preference for precision strike solutions with minimal boots on the ground might act as a spur to renew Marine Corps paranoia over its "first to fight" mission. As noted by Mike Benitez and Mike Pietrucha, airpower has become an attractive first option for policymakers because "airpower application demonstrated political will while minimizing risk and masquerading as a strategy. In many ways, airpower changed the flavor of U.S. limited intervention from gunboats and marines to fighters and precision weapons."[37] This might be particularly frustrating to marines who remember pioneering small-team precision strike concepts during the 1990s.[38]

The net result of Marine organizational paranoia is an acute concern with the consistent demonstration of value to policymakers, Congress, and the public. The Marine Corps certainly has its own institutional preferences (e.g., its own reluctance to produce SOF forces, which is addressed later), but overall its organizational paranoia appears to place a premium on addressing policymaker interests. Ultimately this anxiety is an important driver of Marine innovation and adaptation to changes in the strategic and military environment, as seen in the development of amphibious assault doctrine before World War II and Special Purpose MAGTF Crisis Response since the 2011 tragedy in Benghazi, Libya, which resulted in the death of U.S. ambassador Christopher Stevens and three other Americans.

While this institutional anxiety helps ease parochial challenges that policymakers encounter with other military services, it has other implications. The Marines appear to have a higher tolerance for tactical risk than the Army, Navy, and Air Force when it comes to achieving tactical, operational, and institutional objectives, as exemplified by the more aggressive amphibious assault practices of the Marine Corps relative to the Army during World War II, when the Marines would trade larger casualties to achieve more rapid advances. This risk tolerance is evident again in commandant of the Marine Corps General Alfred M. Gray's advocacy for an amphibious assault on Kuwait for Operation Desert Storm. It may also be a factor in the relatively higher

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[36] Frank Marutollo, "Preserving the Marine Corps as a Separate Service," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 72, No. 6, June 1988; MC91, senior civilian Marine with experience resourcing, March 24, 2017; Terriff, 2006.

[37] Mike Benitez and Mike Pietrucha, "Political Airpower, Part I: Say No to the No-Fly Zone," *War on the Rocks*, October 21, 2016.

[38] West, 2003.

casualty rates suffered by the Marines in Operation Iraqi Freedom when compared to the Army, though the data are only suggestive.[39]

Current Roles and Missions

The Air Force could not adopt the Army's roles without becoming a fundamentally different organization; however, the Army could likely adopt (and at times has adopted) the majority of Marine roles with minimal cultural disruptions.[40] This lack of a strict monopoly on any mission underwrites the institutional paranoia that is the Marine Corps's comparative advantage.

While other services are to some extent defined and guaranteed by their roles and missions, the Marine Corps is an organization that opportunistically adopts particular roles and missions to secure its continued existence and pursue ideals valued by Marine culture. Several times over the Marine Corps's history, the service has shifted emphasis from old core missions to new ones, strengthening the service's utility in the eyes of policymakers.

The Marine Corps's decisions regarding where not to compete for missions can be as revealing as its decisions regarding where to compete. For example, the Marines do not compete for the Army's role as a heavy force capable of fighting attrition warfare against a peer adversary equipped with modern armor. Marine posture in Europe has also been quite modest (e.g., Marine Corps Prepositioning Program–Norway). Historically, the Marines have believed that if they threaten the core competencies of other services, they are more likely to elicit renewed interservice competition, which they might suffer from.[41]

Resources

The Marine Corps is a "satisficer" when it comes to personnel end strength. Compared to the Army, it has a relatively narrow band of end strength it is interested in sustaining. While end strength certainly matters to the Marines, they are content once they have achieved a fairly specific level of sustainable force structure. Commandants of the Marine Corps's remarks on end strength are consistently telling. In one interview, General James Conway stated, "I think for a garrison type of environ-

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[39] From 2003 to 2006 the Marine death rate per 1,000 in Iraq was 8.48, compared to 3.94 for the Army, 0.83 for the Navy, and 0.4 for the Air Force. Further, Marine lance corporals (E3) were 3.286 times as likely to die as the average U.S. military personnel in Iraq, compared to Army E3, who were 1.586 times as likely to die. Samuel H. Preston and Emily Buzzell, "Mortality of American Troops in Iraq," PSC Working Paper Series, PSC 06-01, University of Pennsylvania Scholarly Commons, April 26, 2006.

[40] Millett, 1991.

[41] Marutollo, 1988.

ment, 202,000 Marines are too many. We're better disposed at about 175 [thousand] to 180,000 perhaps."[42] And a Reuters article observed,

> Ask [General Robert B.] Neller about [President] Trump's main proposal to increase the number of Marine infantry battalions from 24 today to 36, and he pauses.
> "That's a lot," Neller told Reuters in an interview.[43]

The attitude toward end strength is strikingly different from that of the Army. Since end strength began to decline with the conclusion of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the onset of Budget Control Act (BCA), the Army has consistently signaled a requirement for larger end-strength levels. In part, this may be related to the much greater stability in Marine Corps end strength than that experienced by the Army at the conclusion of major land wars.[44] The Marine Corps continues to point to a statutory requirement for three Marine divisions and wings as an important rationale for its force structure, and it only relies on wartime requirements when discussing amphibious ship fleet capacity requirements.

The Marine Corps seems most comfortable with an end strength near what it has enjoyed historically and stably for decades (see Figure 5.2). Currently that end strength is close to 184,000, while historically it has floated near 200,000 since the first full year of the Korean War (193,000 in 1952).[45] General Neller, the current commandant, has only reversed course and requested additional end strength to create new information-warfare-related capabilities after an extensive deliberation where the ingoing assumption was that there would be no increase in end strength.[46]

Likewise, the Marine Corps has a more mixed attitude toward budget than the other military services. Part of the Marine Corps's long-term survival strategy has involved a strong narrative of doing more with less. That said, the Marines are increasingly in a position in which substantial resources are required to retain their core claims to relevance—readiness and expeditionary capability. Aviation readiness in particular is currently suffering, and the ability to conduct expeditionary operations in an A2/AD environment is growing increasingly challenging. The Marines have shown themselves

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[42] The Military Observer, "An Interview with Gen James Conway, Commandant, USMC," May 28, 2008.

[43] Phil Stewart, "Top U.S. Marine's Wish-List for Trump Goes Well Beyond Troop Hikes," Reuters, December 6, 2016.

[44] The issue of Marine Corps end strength growing relative to the Army's over time was raised in an interview with Russell Rumbaugh, former Senate Budget Committee defense staff, December 1, 2016.

[45] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), 2016.

[46] Sam LaGrone, "CMC Neller Wants More Cyber, Intel and Electronic Warfare Marines," *USNI News*, December 7, 2016.

Figure 5.2
Service End Strength (Thousands)
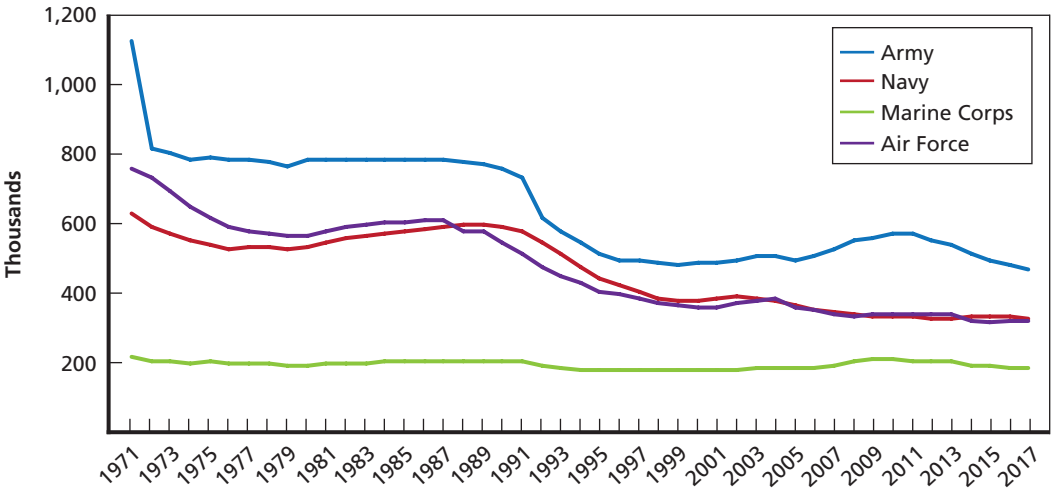
SOURCE: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), 2016.
RAND *RR2270-OSD-5.2*

to be willing to make bold bets on high-end capabilities if they believe them necessary to their core competencies. All of this might drive them to make a larger claim on budget share, if the other services were not grappling with similar modernization challenges.

In the Marine Corps's FY 2017 unfunded requirement list to Congress, reflecting the corps's priorities among capabilities not funded in the President's budget request, $1.7 billion was for Marine aviation ("blue" dollars, discussed shortly), out of a total of $2.7 billion in requests.[47]

One element of the competition for resources among the military services that is anomalous to the Marine Corps is the impact of its status as a military service within DoN. This means that it experiences interservice competition within its own secretariat, DoN, before encountering it again at the joint level before OSD. One of the central mechanisms this plays out through is the Blue in Support of Green funding. As the name implies, this is U.S. Navy funding (blue dollars) provided to obtain capabilities for the Marine Corps. All Marine aviation research, procurement, and operations costs are funded through blue dollars.[48]

The Marine Corps consistently articulates the need to be able to conduct a two-MEB forcible entry operation, reflecting wartime needs. To support such an operation,

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[47] "Document: U.S. Marine Corps Fiscal Year 2017 Unfunded Priorities List," *USNI News*, March 7, 2016.

[48] Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, *USMC Financial Guidebook for Commanders*, NAVMC 2664 REV 1.0, Washington, D.C., 2009.

38 amphibious ships are needed. Given resource constraints, the Navy and Marine Corps agreed on a 33-ship requirement (adjusted to 34 after congressional intervention) to support the assault echelon, accepting risk in sustained combat operations. The current and previous generations of Marine modernization efforts both focused on developing capabilities that would allow the Marine Corps to continue to credibly offer forcible entry options, despite the proliferation of long-range precision fire systems among our adversaries. To the extent that these systems, in conjunction with Marine concepts, solve (or mitigate) the A2/AD dilemmas, Marines will feel they are in an institutionally healthy place, assuming they also maintain the forcible entry mission.

Marine budget requests (i.e., POM submissions) to OSD typically do reasonably well, but they can be characterized by niche investments being made based on the professional military judgment of senior leaders in the Marine Corps, relatively modest amounts of analysis to rationalize the choices being made, and minimal consideration of what trades should be considered to pay for new capabilities. The Marine Corps appears to focus insufficiently on a thorough analysis of requirements and priorities during the POM development process. This leaves the Marine Corps poorly equipped to provide the cost-benefit analysis demanded by OSD's Office of Cost Assessment and Program Evaluation, even when the underlying requirements are sound. Just as troublingly, it leaves the Marine Corps ill equipped to discuss tradeoffs, surrendering the initiative to OSD to determine where funding offsets for new capabilities should come from.[49]

In the broader political economy of the U.S. national security system, this actually seems to work reasonably well, though with significant inefficiency. OSD cuts deeper than what even skeptical marines think is wise. The Marines provide Congress with what they view as their requirements, and congressional professional staff members typically screen requests with poor justification while remaining sensitive to a historical perception that the Marine Corps fairs disproportionately poorly within DoD's budget process. Sympathetic senators and representatives act as a final check to ensure that the Marine Corps's core interests are observed.[50]

Personnel

Among Marine branches, as noted previously, there is quite a high level of cooperation, perhaps rooted in the Marine Corps's focus on the MAGTF. That said, there is something of a division of labor in the functioning of Marine Corps leadership. Typically the commandant has an infantry background and the assistant commandant of the Marine Corps has an aviation background, though this pattern was disrupted when General James F. Amos was appointed commandant. The infantry community tends

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[49] MC93, former civilian marine with experience in resourcing, April 14, 2017; MC31, marine with experience in command, joint, and legislative positions, April 14, 2017.

[50] MC31, marine with experience in command, joint, and legislative positions, April 14, 2017.

to emphasize tactical and operational billets for officers who wish to advance to the general officer level. There is only modest opportunity for deviation from a fairly standard career track, though the Marine Corps's relatively small officer corps does create some opportunities for careers to be more directly influenced by senior mentors. As long as officers are on a sanctioned track and continue to receive promotions, they have as much an opportunity of making general officer and leading the institutional Marine Corps as any of their peers. However, this track does not emphasize experience managing the Marine Corps's modernization and institutional investments.

By contrast, the Marine aviation community appears to have a strong sense of who will advance to O-6 and general officer levels at an earlier point in the officer's career. As a result, careers can be more carefully managed to ensure the Marine aviation community is building an appropriate pool of talent whose members understand how to manage and lead the institutional side of the Marine aviation community. Given how capital intensive the Marine aviation community is, this is an understandable priority. As an artifact of this, however, Marine aviators are more likely than infantry to have experiences that aid in understanding how the overall budget process works (e.g., tours in the Joint Staff J8), including an understanding of the institutional personalities and interests that have to be navigated.

As a result, Marine aviators tend to play a decisive role in shaping the Marine Corps budget. Given the strong MAGTF-centric culture of the Marine Corps, this division of labor appears to work well for the institution as a whole, with both sides largely satisfied by the outcomes. It does, however, create a noteworthy cleavage in professional experience and expertise among the Marine Corps's general officer corps.

The Marine Corps also competes with the other services at a fundamental level: through messaging that conveys that the caliber of its personnel is exceptional, compared to the other services, which is fundamental to its recruiting model. The Marine Corps prides itself on being extremely rigorous in its selection, assessment, and basic training, which contributes to the elite branding that benefits the Marines in several competitive arenas. Marines also appear to place a high degree of emphasis on professionalism, discipline, and military bearing across the entire service (rather than solely within combat arms specialties, for example), which may contribute to the tendency of Congress and the public to hold positive views of marines—a competitive advantage in its own right.

The Marine Corps has a relatively young demographic, compared to the other services. Though having a younger force precludes some of the depth of specialization possible (and necessary) for the other services, it keeps the cost of Marine end strength depressed (fewer years in service means less pay), reduces the institutional risk of depressed retention from constant deployments, and allows (in conjunction with relatively stable end strengths) the Marine Corps to be selective about promotions relative to the other services, as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1
Select Marine Corps Promote Rates Relative to
U.S. Army

Rank	Service	2000	2007	2014
O-6	USMC	–31%	–23%	–12%
O-5	USMC	–15%	–37%	–2%
O-4	USMC	–8%	–45%	2%

SOURCE: DMDC, 2016.
NOTE: USMC = U.S. Marine Corps.

However, the average Marine Corps general officer is older compared to general and flag officers in other services. This is attributed to the Marine Corps's promotion policies, which favor seniority, retain midcareer officers within rank longer, and do not practice "below the zone," or early, promotions within year groups. A Marine general officer may have one or two more tours completed at the same rank than his or her counterpart from another service, for example, which can offer a substantial advantage in level of knowledge on a particular topic. However, this slower promotion policy may contribute to officers' leaving the Marine Corps prematurely.[51]

Preferred Tactics of Competition

> Occasionally individual or small groups of Congressmen raised questions about the Corps's cost and utility, but the Navy Department, the naval affairs committees, and Headquarters [Marine Corps] beat back the critics easily with ploys that included lectures on the Corps's martial past, calculations that showed that Marines were each $.25 cheaper a month than soldiers, and an offer to fight the Sioux in 1876.[52]

Since 9/11 the Marine Corps has not placed as much focus on interservice competition in the traditional sense of bureaucratic fights over budget share or the formal allocation of roles and missions as it has in the past.[53] In part this is attributable to the freezing of budget shares during the Rumsfeld era—neither the resource-rich years of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan nor the lean post-BCA years appeared to trigger a Headquarters Marine Corps response of interservice rivalry. This may be because the Marines were

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[51] Aaron Marx, *Rethinking Marine Corps Officer Promotion and Retention*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Center for 21st Century Security and Intelligence, August 2014.

[52] Millett, 1991, p. 103.

[53] MC39, former active-duty marine with experience in strategic planning, December 1, 2016.

relatively easily able to obtain their end-strength goals and are already well along their way to obtaining their most ambitious modernization goals—development of the F-35B and fielding of the V-22. However, that does not mean that competition is entirely absent. The Marine Corps is sensitive to the sources of the institutional success it has enjoyed, and it is careful to preserve and enrich those reservoirs of institutional goodwill.

In broad terms, the strategy of institutional survival that the Marine Corps appears to have embraced entails opportunistic adoption and execution of emergent, policy-relevant missions that do not threaten to encroach excessively on the core competencies of the other services in ways that might stoke interservice rivalry. The Marines appear to believe that the key to adapting effectively to new missions is to have a relatively high level of human capital across the force, participate in task organizing, and avoid a proliferation of specializations that draw off the Marine Corps's best talent into silos of excellence at the expense of the quality of the force as a whole.

Engaging the U.S. Public

To the Marine Corps, the first priority is the American people. Again citing from Lieutenant General Krulak's letter to the commandant of the Marine Corps,

> Now we have heard it said that it isn't really the people who [believe in the Marine Corps's importance]—that they really don't much care—but that it is actually Congress; or more properly a group of avid Marine-bitten, Marine-influenced, Marine-guided Congressman who maneuver to keep the Marines on the top of the heap in the face of counter-maneuvering on all sides.
>
> Nothing could be further from the fact. Oh, there is no doubt that the Congressmen are a powerful sounding board, but they are by no means just puppets dancing to Marine-controlled strings. They are doing exactly what they believe the people want them to do; no more, and certainly no less.[54]

This is wildly at variance with the perceptions of the other services, but it has important elements of truth. Broad public support for the Marine Corps creates an environment that is hospitable to lawmakers' adopting positive attitudes toward the Marine Corps. As stated previously, it is also critical to the Marine Corps's ability to recruit talent that constitutes the foundation of its comparative advantage within the military services. Surveys show that the Marine Corps is consistently viewed as the most prestigious of the military services, though not the most important. Since September 11, 2001, that perception has only grown.[55]

[54] Victor Krulak to Randolph Pate, November 4, 1957, in V. Krulak, 1999, p. xv.

[55] In 2014 37 percent of respondents in a Gallup poll believed the Marine Corps the most prestigious, compared to the next most prestigious service, the Air Force, with 17 percent. See Dave Goldich and Art Swift, "Americans Say Army Most Important Branch to U.S. Defense," *Gallup Inc.*, 2014.

President Truman thought the Marines had "a propaganda machine that is almost equal to Stalin's."[56] If so, they get a great deal of help. A Marine captain, responding to a survey, identified a broad variety of influences on his self-image as a marine:

> *Full Metal Jacket*—best over exaggerated boot camp with GySgt R. Lee Ermey; *A Few Good Men*—Colonel Nathan R. Bishop; *Hot Shots*—the sarcasm of it all; *Major Pain*—the comedy we all need to laugh at what we do; *Stripes*; *Spies Like Us*—I was an intelligence officer . . . in Afghanistan, so I could relate; *Jarhead*—some true stories, but stupid movie; *Saving Private Ryan*—the righteousness of risking a platoon to save the one survivor of the family; *Zero Dark Thirty*—again, after serving in Afghanistan, it is good to see that it was worth something; *Killing bin Laden*; *The Pacific*; *Band of Brothers*. As for commercials, Toys for Tots [a Marine charity program] and the USMC recruiting commercials. I have read too many books to list them all, but top three are *Where Men Win Glory*, the story of Pat Tillman, *The Long Walk* by Slavomir Rawicz, and Marine Corps Doctrine Publication (MCDP) 1, *Warfighting*.[57]

This sort of popular literature can at times have a polemical subtext. William M. Marcellino notes that the bumper sticker in Figure 5.3 was popularized during the reduction in force of the U.S. military that occurred following the conclusion of the Cold War. By excluding the other military services, and the Army in particular, proponents were asserting the Marine Corps was superior at expeditionary combat.[58] These sorts of stickers, or the nearly ubiquitous presence of Eagle, Globe, and Anchor (the Marine Corps's official emblem) stickers on the private vehicles of active-duty

Figure 5.3
Marine Corps FedEx Variant Bumper Sticker
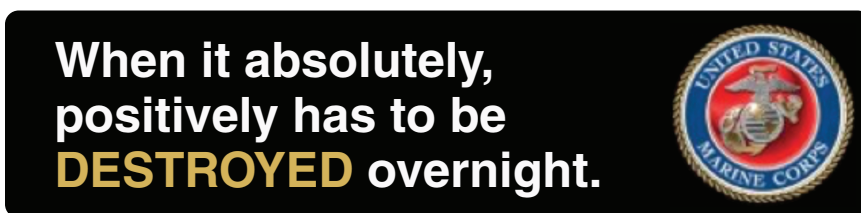
SOURCE: Marcellino, 2013.
RAND *RR2270-OSD-5.3*

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[56] Truman, 1950.

[57] Connable, 2016, p. 166.

[58] William M. Marcellino, *Talk like a Marine: A Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis of the Link Between USMC Vernacular Epideictic and Public Deliberative Speech*, doctoral dissertation, Pittsburg: Carnegie Mellon University, 2013.

marines, as well as on those of many no longer on active duty and of extended family members, create a powerful message of loyalty and valued community.

Engaging Congress

Congress continues to be perhaps the central actor in shaping the Marine Corps's institutional fate. Commandant of the Marine Corps General Alexander A. Vandergrift's "Bended Knee" speech before the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs in 1946 is storied within the Marine Corps in a way usually reserved for combat achievement.[59] It concludes,

> In placing its case in your hands, the Marine Corps remembers that it was this same Congress which, in 1798, called it into a long and useful service to the Nation. The Marine Corps feels that the question of its continued existence is likewise a matter for determination by the Congress and not one to be resolved by departmental legerdemain or a quasi-legislative process enforced by the War Department General Staff.
>
> The Marine Corps, then, believes that it has earned this right to have its future decided by the legislative body which created it, nothing more. Sentiment is not a valid consideration in determining questions of national security. We have pride in ourselves and in our past, but we do not rest our case on any presumed ground of gratitude owing us from the Nation. The bended knee is not a tradition of our Corps. If the Marine as a fighting man has not made a case for himself after 170 years of service, he must go. But I think you will agree with me that he has earned the right to depart with dignity and honor, not by subjugation to the status of uselessness and servility planned for him by the War Department.[60]

The Marine Corps's strategic alignment of itself with Congress has been a source of frustration to the Executive Branch for decades. Eisenhower complained the Marines were "so unsure of their value to their country that they insisted on writing into the law a complete set of rules and specifications for their future operations and duties. Such freezing of detail . . . is silly, even vicious."[61]

The Marine Corps is widely seen as particularly valuing and successfully cultivating its relationship with Congress.[62] According to interviews, the Marine Corps is largely successful in achieving its core goals (e.g., obtaining the 34 amphibious-class

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[59] MC27, marine with experience in command and legislative positions, March 23, 2017.

[60] Alexander A. Vandegrift, "Statement by General Alexander A. Vandegrift, USMC Before the Senate Naval Affairs Committee Hearings on S. 2044," U.S. Marine Corps History Division, Marine Corps University, May 6, 1946.

[61] James P. O'Donnell, "The Corps' Struggle for Survival," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 84, No. 8, August 2000, pp. 90–96.

[62] MC83, former senior Navy official with experience in resourcing, December 2, 2016.

ships). Though it certainly does not get everything it asks for, it is not unusual for Congress to find resources to address Marine Corps priorities that DoD passed over. During these discussions, the Marine Corps does not suggest prioritizing its needs over other services; instead, it simply lays out what its requirements are at both the principal and staff levels, and Congress conducts an independent assessment to set priorities for authorizations and appropriations.[63] Marine arguments for their priorities typically rest on the broad importance of the mission and their professional judgment of the importance of the capability under discussion to executing the mission, rather than on attempts to provide any more analytic basis.[64]

The Marine Corps is thought to be particularly good at sustaining relationships with marines who become U.S. representatives or senators. The Congressional Marines Group was founded in 1953, at the suggestion of the commandant's assistant for legislative affairs, and was composed of senators, representatives, and congressional staff. It began having regular breakfast meetings with the commandant of the Marine Corps and other officials, though there have been periods where these breakfasts have fallen out of practice.[65] At the time these meetings were begun, evening cocktail parties were a more typical setting for meetings of this kind. A morning event engaged members of Congress at a time when little else did. One of the key, founding members observed that the Congressional Marines Group was "not a clandestine clique to promote any parochial purpose. . . . [It] was intended to be a fraternal band of brothers who have in common the privilege of having served in two of America's greatest institutions: the Congress and the Corps."[66]

In an oral history, Senator George Smathers explained some of what bound marines together in the Senate: "[The] Marine Corps being smaller, they stick together very well. I got to know Mansfield . . . and one of the reasons I loved him was he was in the Marines . . . proud to claim the title of United States Marine." Upon receiving a promotion in the Marine Reserve, Senator Smathers noted, "Gee, that's great, but you know I was in the damn Marine Corps for three and a half years, overseas two years, and I couldn't get a promotion while I was there. . . . Here I am [in the Senate], I haven't done anything, and I'm getting promoted."[67]

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[63] MC91, senior civilian marine with experience resourcing, March 24, 2017.

[64] MC31, marine with experience in command, joint, and legislative positions, April 14, 2017.

[65] Interestingly, a Marine Corps caucus was established in the Senate in 2015, cochaired by three senators who had previously served on active duty in the Marine Corps, the most senior having left the Marine Corps in 1962; the caucus's inaugural breakfast was held with then-commandant (now chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) General Joseph Dunford. The Army and Navy have long had their own Senate caucuses. See U.S. Senate, "U.S. Marines in the Senate: 1787–1800," undated.

[66] Joe Bartlett, "In the Beginning: The Congressional Marines Are Formed," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 83, No. 11, November 1999, pp. 75–79.

[67] U.S. Senate, undated.

Similar to the other services, the Marine Corps also assigns marines to congressional liaison offices and offers them as fellows to congressional offices, particularly those with Marine Corps ties (e.g., prior service or districts encompassing a Marine base). Colonels assigned to the Marine OLA typically go on to command regiments (there are only seven infantry regiments in the Marine Corps) and become general officers. Given the low promotion rates from colonel to general, this reflects a careful selection process rather than chance.[68]

Another practice that seems to facilitate Marine congressional relations is the conduct of an annual "Marine Day" for congressional staff. Staff are flown to Marine Corps Base Quantico (a short distance south of Washington, D.C.) in V-22 Ospreys or other Marine aviation assets. There they are given the opportunity to shoot Marine individual and crew-served weapons, visit a Marine museum, and observe a static display of Marine systems.[69] Through this event, the Marine Corps is able to expose these key staff members to its unique capabilities and culture, building greater understanding of and goodwill toward marines and Marine equities.

Speaking with a Single Voice

The Marine Corps is a small and flat enough organization, with a focus on combined-arms operations that begins for marines at entry, that the commandants appear to have a simpler time maintaining a unified front. The commandant has historically taken a direct hand in the assignments of all Marine general officers and, aside from the assistant commandant of the Marine Corps, has no other four-star generals to contend with in Headquarters Marine Corps or the supporting establishment. This means the commandant can more easily set the tone for the corps as a whole. By contrast, the Army has four-star generals commanding four separate Army institutional organizations, in addition to the chief of staff of the Army and the vice chief of staff of the Army.

Innovation

At the operational and tactical levels, the Marine Corps consistently seeks to develop and communicate innovative concepts that address emergent problems—it certainly aims to address genuine national security challenges, but this also serves to underwrite the corps's continued relevance to policymakers inside and outside DoD. The development of the Marine Corps's maneuver warfare philosophy of war is a useful example. The commandant of the Marine Corps most responsible for the corps's adoption of maneuver warfare, General Gray, observed, "We can't let the Army be perceived as the front runners in tactical thinking with their FM100-5. They have a book and can't do it, we can do it but don't have a book." Terriff observes that General Gray read the

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[68]   MC27, marine with experience in command and legislative positions, March 23, 2017.

[69]   Kathy Nunez, "Congressional Staff Members Attend Marine Day," Marines website, May 16, 2015.

final draft of Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication 1, *Warfighting*, against a copy of the Army's AirLand Battle doctrine, FM 100-5, to ensure the Marine Corps had a unique and superior approach to maneuver warfare.[70] The Marine Corps also appears capable of emphasizing its operational and tactical roles as a rhetorical strategy to limit the scope of its missions.[71]

Naval Alliance

Throughout their history, some level of tension has played out between the Navy and the Marine Corps. Two of the perennial points of friction between the two services are funding for Marine aviation and the number of amphibious-class ships procured and maintained by the Navy, which are also needed for the Marine Corps to meet its two-MEB war requirements. The current period appears to be relatively cordial, with clear agreements being made regarding an equitable division of resources when it comes to Blue in Support of Green.[72] The last several commandants have made a point of returning to the Marine Corps's "naval roots," and the current commandant has discussed integrating Marine component headquarters with naval component commands to enhance cooperation among the naval branches. The current Marine Corps Operating Concept places a renewed emphasis on Marine support to sea control in support of the Navy's missions, a shift from the almost exclusive post–Cold War focus on power projection.[73]

Demand-Based Arguments

When assessing the success of force development concepts, Marines consistently reference CCMD demand for and employment of Marine capabilities.[74] Marines interviewed frequently referenced the high demand for F-35Bs and V-22s as dispositive evidence that these investments have been worthwhile for the Marine Corps. If CCMDs ceased to request Marine capabilities, or failed to express interest in an emergent one, the Marine Corps would likely take this as a significant problem. The employment of SOF and Central Intelligence Agency personnel in the immediate response to

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[70] Terriff, 2006.

[71] See, for example, remarks by General James Conway: "But it's my belief and the Secretary and I have had this conversation fairly recently that those rounds that he's firing right now are going over our head. He's not necessarily talking to us because Marines have broad applicability, either in a counterinsurgency environment or in a major contingency op. . . . And he and I had the dialogue that we are primarily in play at the tactical and the operational level." Quoted in Vago Muradian, "Interview with General James Conway, Commandant, USMC," *This Week in Defense News*, May 25, 2008.

[72] MC39, former active-duty marine with experience in strategic planning, December 1, 2016.

[73] Marine Corps Publication, 2016.

[74] See, for example, Robert B. Neller, *Statement of General Robert B. Neller Commandant of the Marine Corps as Delivered to Congressional Defense Committees on the Posture of the United States Marine Corps*, Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, undated-a, p. 1.

the attacks of September 11, 2001, triggered some measure of soul searching among marines concerned over their "first to fight" role.[75]

At times, readiness shortfalls articulated by other services are thought to be overstated by outside observers and some analysts within DoD. This perception rarely, if ever, applies to the Marine Corps. One of the Marine Corps's most consistent messages is that it is a combat-ready force. Undermining the narrative of readiness that underwrites one of the Marine Corps's foundational claims to existential legitimacy is likely not seen as an acceptable cost for marginal changes in resourcing. Even the Marine Corps's major modernization initiatives are closely wrapped up with readiness concerns (e.g., the F-35B). This concern to be perceived as ready could incur operational risk but is offset by the perception that the Marine Corps's continued existence is premised on continued high performance in combat.

The post–Goldwater-Nichols Act shift within the CCMDs from functional componency (i.e., air, land, and naval) to service componency (e.g., Marine Corps Forces Central Command) gave the Marine Corps direct access to CCDRs, enabling them to better advocate for the employment of their own capabilities.[76] Ensuring a high level of employability by the CCMDs is important to the Marine Corps's institutional strategy, but the corps appears to be questioning the service componency's toll on the Marines' relationship with the Navy.[77]

How Others View the Marine Corps

The Marine Corps is broadly seen as an effective middleweight force that punches above its weight in both combat and bureaucratic politics. This is seen as an artifact of genuine achievement but also excellent public relations, adroit engagement with Congress, and the presentation of a relatively unified front that other military services often times have difficulty maintaining. To the Navy, the Marine Corps is of the DoN and yet separate, with a relationship that can sometimes be friction filled when the Marine Corps calls on the Navy for supporting resources. The Marine Corps's relationship with the Army and USSOCOM is more reliably cordial, despite the fact that in recent years, the Marines have provided more in the way of land domain operations. This is because the Marine Corps is careful to aggressively pursue its niche, although it is

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[75] West, 2003, pp. 54–56. "No service was better prepared to fight the war on terror than the Marine Corps, yet it was relegated to the periphery. Has the Nation's premiere small unit infantry been replaced by the joint Special Operations Command?"

[76] Edwin Howard Simmons, *The United States Marines: A History*, 4th ed., Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2002.

[77] Marine Corps Publication, 2016.

sometimes true that the other services feel a sense of rivalry with the Marines.[78] For the public, the Marine Corps has a special cachet that signifies eliteness, patriotism, and the embodiment of American martial virtues such as duty and honor. This positive view of the Marine Corps in the public eye helps to secure the Marines' future, ensuring that young would-be recruits dream of proving themselves through service in the Marine Corps.

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[78] For example, one soldier said of the Marine Corps as a spearhead force, "The Marine Corps as spearhead comment drives me crazy. They've sold themselves as a spearhead—with three divisions. I could create one in the Army with five divisions. But they don't have to do all the stuff we do. We have to take everybody." AR09, Army officer with OSD experience, March 22, 2017.

U.S. Special Operations Command

Kimberly Jackson

Although USSOCOM is a CCMD with global operational responsibilities, it merits inclusion in this report as a competitive actor with the traditional services not only for its servicelike responsibilities, dedicated budget, and other characteristics unique among the CCMD, but also as a foil to better understand the respective competitive behaviors and goals of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps.

USSOCOM controls its own budget, MFP-11, and exhibits specific cultural attributes and competitive characteristics, many of which reflect those of the SOF it oversees. As a result, USSOCOM competes alongside the traditional services for resources, key personnel assignments, and both current and future operational relevance.

Further, in addition to its CCMD role, USSOCOM is responsible for distinctly servicelike functions: to organize, train, and equip its approximately 71,000 SOF to conduct special operations core activities globally.[1] While we do not claim that USSOCOM organizes and develops its forces in the same way or at the same scale the services do, these responsibilities, unique among CCMDs, create compelling parallels between USSOCOM functions and those of the services.

Additionally, while USSOCOM and SOF are separate entities—where USSOCOM is the headquarters command, and SOF are its personnel stationed globally who are overseen by USSOCOM—both have a culture distinct from any of the services that drives competitive behavior. This chapter considers USSOCOM culture and how it competes or postures itself to gain advantages within DoD and across the National Capital Region to gain current and future relevance. It also analyzes SOF culture, including the SOF service components, but we are careful not to conflate the two. Although USSOCOM culture tends to be strongly influenced by SOF culture and by the home service and experiences of its commander, the headquarters itself is composed primarily of conventional forces and operates similarly to other CCMD headquarters.

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[1] Joint Publication 3-05, *Special Operations*, Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, July 16, 2014.

This dichotomy further contributes to USSOCOM's unique competitive goals and culture.

In addition to its responsibilities to organize, train, and equip, USSOCOM is an influential CCMD responsible for globally synchronizing counterterrorism efforts, countering weapons of mass destruction (CWMD), and providing special operations support to the GCCs.[2] However, for most of its history, SOF had largely been relegated to small-scale missions and neglected by its services, prompting the creation of USSOCOM by Congress in 1986. For its first 14 years, the command struggled to define itself as a major player in the U.S. national security apparatus, until the events of September 11, 2001, thrust it into the operational spotlight and increased SOF relevance exponentially.

This dual role affects USSOCOM's competitive position in several major ways. First, USSOCOM's dual CCMD and servicelike responsibilities enable it to act in either role, depending on which offers the greater competitive advantage. Acting as a service, USSOCOM can argue for greater MFP-11 resources to augment its force preparation and can control certain support to its personnel assigned globally. Alternatively, in its CCMD capacity, USSOCOM can advocate for greater budget support from the services to conduct its operational responsibilities.

Second, USSOCOM is overseen by a civilian assistant secretary of defense for Special Operations/Low-Intensity Conflict (ASD SO/LIC), a position created by the same legislation that established USSOCOM.

Third, USSOCOM is tasked with a monitoring and advising role in its personnel's promotions, assignments, and professional military education, leaving the services in the powerful position of controlling the career development and professional future of the majority of USSOCOM's personnel.

We begin this chapter by outlining USSOCOM's major defining characteristics, guiding ideals, and competitive goals. Then we explore the cultural characteristics that define each service's SOF component and Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) and identify the arenas USSOCOM exercises preference to compete in, followed by those competition arenas that USSOCOM tends to deemphasize. Finally, building on this understanding of USSOCOM and SOF culture, core goals, and preferred arenas of competition, we analyze chief ways in which USSOCOM might respond to future challenges.

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[2]   Special operations activities are defined in 10 U.S.C. 167 as direct action, strategic reconnaissance, unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, civil affairs, military information support operations, counterterrorism, humanitarian assistance, theater search and rescue, and "such other activities as may be specified by the President or the Secretary of Defense."

Major Defining Characteristics of U.S. Special Operations Command

Section 167 of Title 10 U.S.C., which codifies USSOCOM's missions and responsibilities, states that the commander "shall be responsible for, and shall have the authority to conduct, all affairs of such command relating to special operations activities" and outlines ten major functions as responsibilities of the USSOCOM commander.[3] Further, in 2013, USSOCOM sought and was transferred the responsibility for manning, training, and equipping TSOC forces worldwide, adding to its servicelike responsibilities.[4] A 2016 USSOCOM official publication explains that the command "synchronizes the planning of Special Operations and provides Special Operations Forces to support persistent, networked and distributed Global Combatant Command operations in order to protect and advance our Nation's interests."[5]

According to Joint Publication 3-05, *Special Operations*, which provides SOF doctrine for DoD,

> Special operations require unique modes of employment, tactics, techniques, procedures, and equipment. They are often conducted in hostile, denied, or politically and/or diplomatically sensitive environments, and are characterized by one or more of the following: time-sensitivity, clandestine or covert nature, low visibility, work with or through indigenous forces, greater requirements for regional orientation and cultural expertise, and a higher degree of risk.[6]

In order to fulfill these requirements, SOF operate in small teams rather than large, high-visibility combat formations, another major defining characteristic of SOF. While SOF frequently operate alongside and support conventional forces and effectively contribute to a larger footprint in some theaters, on their own, the small teams are trained to operate with minimal attracted attention.

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[3] Special operations activities are defined in 10 U.S.C. 167 as "(A) Developing strategy, doctrine, and tactics; (B) Preparing and submitting to the Secretary of Defense program recommendations and budget proposals for special operations forces and for other forces assigned to the special operations command; (C) Exercising authority, direction, and control over the expenditure of funds— (i) for forces assigned to the special operations command; and (ii) for special operations forces assigned to unified combatant commands other than the special operations command, with respect to all matters covered by paragraph (4) and, with respect to a matter not covered by paragraph (4), to the extent directed by the Secretary of Defense; (D) Training assigned forces; (E) Conducting specialized courses of instruction for commissioned and noncommissioned officers; (F) Validating requirements; (G) Establishing priorities for requirements; (H) Ensuring the interoperability of equipment and forces; (I) Formulating and submitting requirements for intelligence support; and (J) Monitoring the promotions of special operations forces and coordinating with the military departments regarding the assignment, retention, training, professional military education, and special and incentive pays of special operations forces."

[4] U.S. Special Operations Command, "Special Operations Forces 2020: You Can't Surge Trust," briefing slides, 2013.

[5] U.S. Special Operations Command, *United States Special Operations Command Fact Book*, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., 2016, p. 14.

[6] Joint Publication 3-05, 2014, p. ix.

Today, USSOCOM is composed of approximately 71,000 personnel, including active-duty servicemembers, reservists, and civilian employees.[7] Military personnel represent all four services and include operators and support personnel, or enablers. USSOCOM headquarters itself is composed of approximately 2,500 employees, the majority of whom are not special operators.[8]

As USSOCOM is a joint command headquarters predominantly staffed by rotating conventional forces rather than SOF, the personality of the command headquarters itself is not fixed. According to several interviewees, the USSOCOM commander's service affiliation has a marked impact on USSOCOM headquarters' culture. Two USSOCOM employees explained that its headquarters command culture is not pronounced, but they noted that this relative malleability lends itself to adopting the personality of its commander at the time.[9] One interviewee from OSD agreed and told us that "each service has a different rank based on the affiliation of the USSOCOM commander."[10] The USSOCOM commander can theoretically hail from any of the services, though in practice the USSOCOM commander is usually from the Army.[11]

Another characteristic unique to USSOCOM is its budget category, MFP-11. The "SOF-peculiar" budget program was created in the same legislation as the command and designed to protect SOF funding from being poached by the services. In addition to MFP-11, USSOCOM receives a substantial portion of OCO funding and budget support from the Army, Navy, and Air Force, which provide funding for USSOCOM's "service-common" requirements.

While USSOCOM and SOF represent separate entities, USSOCOM's priorities and cultural characteristics generally reflect those of SOF. When asked what characteristics define USSOCOM, the majority of our interviewees noted that SOF's and USSOCOM's key defining qualities tended to be one and the same. Both SOF and USSOCOM share the defining characteristics of jointness; flexibility, adaptability, and innovation; and tactical proficiency and secrecy.

Jointness

As a result of Congress's belief that DoD was neither adequately protecting its special operations and low-intensity conflict (SO/LIC) capabilities nor fostering SOF integration across the services, USSOCOM was created by legislation in 1986 with the inten-

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[7]   Andrew Feickert, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, RS21048, January 6, 2017.

[8]   SO41, USSOCOM personnel, October 19, 2016.

[9]   SO41, USSOCOM personnel, October 19, 2016; SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2017.

[10]   SO31, OSD official, October 6, 2016.

[11]   Since USSOCOM's creation in January 1987, all its U.S. Senate–confirmed commanders have come from the Army except Air Force general Charles R. Holland (2000–2003), Navy admiral Eric T. Olson (2007–2011), and Navy admiral William H. McRaven (2011–2014).

tion that it would be quintessentially joint.[12] Today, one of USSOCOM's fundamental defining characteristics is its inherent jointness at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels.[13] Although USSOCOM was officially established on January 1, 1987, SOF had already embraced integration and joint planning and operations for years, largely as a result of Operation Eagle Claw, the tragic failed operation to rescue American hostages in Iran in April 1980. This incident, which occurred in part due to a lack of coordination across operational elements, furthered SOF commitment to joint planning and information sharing. This jointness, however, is focused more inward—among SOF from each service—than outward with the conventional services. While SOF works closely with the services, particularly in deployed environments, their commitment to and identification with jointness is largely internal.

James Q. Roberts, the SO/LIC chair at National Defense University, explained that before USSOCOM's creation, "the coolest part of SOCOM was already joint. They had built a track record on secret and sexy jointness before the law even existed."[14] Roberts also noted that for USSOCOM, creating a joint culture was relatively easy given that its members generally felt little affinity toward their home services. "All the guys in the SOCOM fold already felt ostracized by their own services. They were more willing to forsake their service culture in pursuit of excellence."[15] According to several interviewees, this observation remains true today.[16]

Of course, USSOCOM is not unique in its jointness among other CCMDs: all nine are joint organizations. In fact, USSOCOM's jointness renders the command headquarters itself somewhat indistinguishable from other CCMDs. Despite its unique charter, USSOCOM as a headquarters is not dramatically dissimilar from other CCMDs in that it is beholden to bureaucratic processes and is composed primarily of support staff. According to one senior USSOCOM representative, "We are also just a normal joint staff, which essentially works as an Army organization. We're not that much different than CENTCOM or [US]EUCOM."[17] However, some interviewees noted that USSOCOM personnel pride themselves on the command's cross-service integration and consider its multiservice character a positive attribute that prevents groupthink.[18]

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[12] USSOCOM was created as part of S. 2638 (Pub. L. 99-661), the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1987, in a provision commonly called the Nunn-Cohen Amendment.

[13] SO91, Army special operations personnel, November 29, 2016; workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[14] James Q. Roberts, SO/LIC chair at National Defense University, interview with the authors, December 19, 2016.

[15] James Q. Roberts, SO/LIC chair at National Defense University, interview with the authors, December 19, 2016.

[16] SO72, former special operations unit commander, January 12, 2017; SO21, retired SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[17] SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2017.

[18] SO41, USSOCOM personnel, October 19, 2016.

This jointness is also facilitated in large part by SOF's training, deploying, and operating together, particularly in JSOC. Although rifts between deployed forces certainly may exist, jointness also appears to be valued at the tactical level. From the perspective of one field-grade SOF officer with combat experience,

> It's as joint as you can be. There's not one thing you can do at the lowest maneuver level that isn't joint. It won't ever be just you. That's crucial. The services do lots of things just on their own. Most of the time the services will say "I can do it without anyone else." I will tell you that I can't. The ability to work in a joint environment becomes very important.[19]

Flexibility, Adaptability, and Innovation

USSOCOM emphasizes the qualities of flexibility, adaptability, and innovation at its most foundational level. Joint Publication 3-05 states, "Special operations are built on individuals and small units who apply special skills with adaptability, improvisation, and innovation."[20] Several interviewees agreed that USSOCOM's forces are best known for their operational flexibility and ability to adapt to changing environments, which allows SOF to be used in a wide variety of capacities in myriad campaigns. This reputation for multiuse, flexible employment greatly benefits USSOCOM, and it will be explored later in this chapter.

General Joseph Votel, when testifying to the House Armed Services Committee in March 2016 as the commander of USSOCOM, stated that, "As an organization that routinely deals with unique and shifting challenges, we prize our adaptability."[21] This type of language is not unusual from senior SOF officials: Previous USSOCOM commanders and ASDs SO/LIC routinely refer to these qualities as SOF hallmarks in their congressional engagements.

A congressional staff member with SOF oversight responsibilities pointed to agility and adaptability as the characteristics that most define USSOCOM, observing,

> Those values underpin everything about SOF and feed into what I think are the two most important SOF truths—that humans are more important than hardware, contrasted with the platform-centric nature of the Air Force and Navy and quality is better than quantity, contrasted with the Army's ability to generate mass.[22]

One SOF officer with experience in several USSOCOM commands observed that innovation is USSOCOM's key defining characteristic "because SOCOM is oriented

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[19] SO91, Army special operations officer, November 29, 2016.

[20] Joint Publication 3-05, 2014, p. I-2.

[21] Joseph L. Votel, "Statement Before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities," testimony, March 1, 2016a.

[22] SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016. For more information on the "SOF truths," see the discussion later in this chapter.

toward the man on the ground. They are much more accepting of change and the advancement of ideas than the Army would be, for example."[23] Indeed, civilian and military leadership alike stress the value of innovation to SOF. In testifying to Congress in 2006, ASD SO/LIC Thomas W. O'Connell said, "Our Special Operators have often been the innovators for the larger military, and the SOF mindset has been the incubator of innovation. That is especially true today."[24]

In contrast, however, one officer from the Naval Special Warfare (NSW) community told us that USSOCOM is only innovative when compared to the other services, adding,

> Not all innovations are created equal. Incremental innovation is the evolutionary steps, the continuous, linear improvement of what you're already doing today. Then there is disruptive innovation, transformational change, shifting to a totally different method of operation. . . . SOCOM is very good at incremental innovation, and not very good at disruptive innovation.[25]

The same interviewee offered that the command's consumption with near-term problem sets was its main hindrance toward investing in "disruptive innovation."[26]

Other characteristics our interviewees attributed to SOF and USSOCOM included creativity, propensity for problem solving, integrity, candor, drive, and "large return on a small investment."[27] One congressional staff member with experience in USSOCOM oversight noted, "Their relative autonomy and flexibility in thought is refreshing. They don't stick to one doctrine and operate accordingly. USSOCOM breaks out of conventional stovepipes. . . . SOCOM is inherently flexible in its solutions."[28] The same interviewee contrasted USSOCOM's flexibility with what the interviewee called the Army's typical "prescribed solution" of "maneuver units and infantry."[29]

Secrecy and Direct Action Orientation

USSOCOM is also defined by its forward-leaning warfighter mentality.[30] As DoD's lead for synchronizing planning for global operations to combat terrorist networks, USSOCOM has developed a reputation for elite tactical capabilities and for being willing to quickly employ those capabilities against threats to U.S. interests. Several

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[23] SO91, Army special operations officer, November 29, 2016.

[24] Thomas W. O'Connell, "Statement Before the House Armed Services Committee, Subcommittee on Terrorism, Unconventional Threats and Capabilities," testimony, March 8, 2006.

[25] SO82, Navy special operations officer, April 26, 2016.

[26] SO82, Navy special operations officer, April 26, 2016.

[27] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016; SO91, Army special operations officer, November 29, 2016; SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2017.

[28] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

[29] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

[30] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

interviewees made statements such as, "SOCOM is quick to go to the unilateral solution as opposed to the indigenous solution. Their dominant side is on the use of strikes and drones and raids and so forth."[31]

Although special operations span a range of activities and unconventional warfare consumes substantial USSOCOM energy, SOF operators are perhaps best known for their direct action capabilities. Indeed, many are drawn to the SOF community for the potential to deploy more frequently and engage in the counterterrorism operations that consume a tremendous portion of the command's attention. As Colin Jackson and Austin Long wrote, "Given the choice between the uncertain and long-term investments involved in unconventional warfare, and the certain and immediate rewards of a successful direct action operation, most operators would choose the latter."[32]

A SOF officer we interviewed emphasized the importance of direct action operations to SOF personnel, stating, "That direct action-centric mindset is never going to go away, that's part of the culture, who the guys are."[33] Susan Marquis captured the comments from another SEAL officer in *Unconventional Warfare*:

> One of the things that is not obvious at first glance is . . . what makes a special operator. And that is an absolute internal mandate to go into the most difficult combat situations you can, to face death, and to win. That's what it takes to get through training. That's what most of the guys want when they start training and then training reinforces that. . . . To go into very risky, very personally risky situations, where it's one on one, and go duke it out with the bad guy. That's what SOF guys want.[34]

Many of the operations that SOF conducts tend to be clandestine due to their sensitive nature and require that SOF personnel retain a low profile. Accordingly, a common nickname for SOF personnel is "quiet professionals." This name in theory is intended to underscore SOF's ability to move without detection, to minimize its operational footprint, and to remain secretive and silent about affiliation and identity, both to preserve operational security and to deemphasize personal glory. While many within SOF proudly adhere to this standard, some question whether certain SOF personnel are as committed to this principle given the publication of multiple tell-all books in recent years. One Air Force SOF officer noted, "I think in SOCOM itself, the concept of the quiet professional has kind of been lost."[35] However, one Navy SEAL officer explained that from the highest levels of USSOCOM leadership down to

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[31]   SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2017.

[32]   Colin Jackson and Austin Long, "The Fifth Service: The Rise of Special Operations Command," in Sapolsky, Friedman, and Green, 2009, pp. 138–139.

[33]   SO82, Navy special operations officer, April 26, 2016.

[34]   Marquis, 1997, p. 305.

[35]   SO51, Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC) officer, November 17, 2016.

the team level, the value of secrecy is still upheld; the individuals who had broken the quiet professional standard were in fact operators who had left the service: "The guys that gave up on the ethos went and did that."[36]

Service Ethos and Guiding Ideals

Officially, USSOCOM's guiding ideals are summarized in the command's "Five SOF Truths":[37]

1. Humans are more important than hardware
2. Quality is better than quantity
3. SOF cannot be mass produced
4. Competent SOF cannot be created after emergencies occur
5. Most Special Operations require non-SOF support

The first tenet, that humans are more important than hardware, is particularly central to USSOCOM and SOF culture. USSOCOM invests heavily in the training, recruitment, assessment, and selection of its SOF personnel based on the belief that "people—not equipment—make the critical difference. The right people, highly trained and working as a team, will accomplish the mission with the equipment available. On the other hand, the best equipment in the world cannot compensate for a lack of the right people."[38] Further, many SOF missions are not resource or technology intensive but instead rely on small, flexible teams able to conduct a wide variety of missions in a clandestine manner. This construct is in opposition to the traditional services, which often require substantial resources and platforms to conduct their missions.

USSOCOM emphasizes the five SOF truths throughout its public engagements and informational and promotional materials. The fifth, "Most Special Operations require non-SOF support," most directly outlines USSOCOM's competitive position to gain resources from the services, whose budgets dwarf the approximately $10 billion USSOCOM receives in MFP-11 and OCO funding. USSOCOM invokes this interservice support in explaining its fifth SOF truth as follows:

> The operational effectiveness of our deployed forces cannot be, and never has been, achieved without being enabled by our joint service partners. The support Air Force, Army, Marine and Navy engineers, technicians, intelligence analysts, and the numerous other professions that contribute to SOF, have substantially increased our capabilities and effectiveness throughout the world.[39]

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[36] SO82, Navy special operations officer, April 26, 2016.

[37] U.S. Army Special Operations Command, "SOF Truths," undated.

[38] U.S. Army Special Operations Command, undated.

[39] U.S. Army Special Operations Command, undated.

USSOCOM commander General Raymond A. Thomas III, in his 2016 confirmation hearing, emphasized a similar point when describing the command's reliance on the services: "There's nothing we do that we don't derive critical support from them. So, budget constraints on them will have at least a—an indirect impact on our ability to conduct our missions."[40] USSOCOM's reliance on service budgets will be explored later in this chapter.

Core Competencies

Twelve SOF core activities are defined in Joint Publication 3-05:[41]

- Direct Action
- Special Reconnaissance
- Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction
- Counterterrorism
- Unconventional Warfare
- Foreign Internal Defense
- Security Force Assistance
- Hostage Rescue and Recovery
- Counterinsurgency
- Foreign Humanitarian Assistance
- Military Information Operations
- Civil Affairs Operations

Each of USSOCOM's core competencies can largely be categorized as either a direct approach competency (such as direct action and special reconnaissance) or an indirect approach competency (such as efforts to achieve effects by working "by, with, and through" foreign partners). In practice, USSOCOM directs its forces in each of these activities, but the preponderance of operations and attention since September 11, 2001, has focused on the direct approach and, to a lesser extent, indirect missions such as unconventional warfare, security force assistance, and foreign internal defense.

Possibly in recognition of the fact that counterterrorism may lose relevance as a core task in the future, USSOCOM also recently gained ownership of CWMD leadership responsibilities for DoD from USSTRATCOM.[42] As will be analyzed later in

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[40] Joseph L. Votel, "Hearing to Consider the Nominations of: General Joseph L. Votel, USA, for Reappointment to the Grade of General and to Be Commander, United States Central Command; and Lieutenant General Raymond A. Thomas III, USA, to Be General and Commander, United States Special Operations Command," testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 9, 2016b.

[41] Joint Publication 3-05, 2014, p. II-3.

[42] Feickert, 2017.

this chapter, one of USSOCOM's competitive goals is to retain primacy over a critical mission in order to secure continued funding and institutional security well into the future, and it is investing in CWMD as that next mission.

USSOCOM also emphasizes the significance of the indirect approach, whether under security force assistance, foreign internal defense, or another umbrella, stressing that direct action is necessary but short term in its impact, whereas indirect action can have the most lasting strategic effects. As acting ASD SO/LIC Michael D. Lumpkin noted in congressional testimony in 2011:

> There are less obvious, but equally important SOF capabilities for indirect activities that enable us to persistently engage throughout the world, working with international partners to build their capabilities before conflicts arise so that they can defend themselves and, by extension, defend us.[43]

Former USSOCOM commander Admiral Eric T. Olson also praised the value of the indirect approach in a posture hearing to Congress in 2008, stating, "The indirect approach addresses the underlying causes of terrorism and the environments in which terrorism activities occur. The indirect approach requires more time than the direct approach to achieve effects, but ultimately will be the decisive effort."[44] Overall, while USSOCOM focuses on the few core competencies that guarantee the command the greatest competitive edge in reputation and resourcing, perhaps Votel's summary of SOF's raison d'être best encapsulates USSOCOM's values and how the command views its abilities to further U.S. national security goals:

> Therefore, SOF's value to the nation lies in: our global perspective that spans regional boundaries, coupled with our ability to act and influence locally with a range of options; our networked approach that integrates the capabilities of our domestic and international partners, paired with our ability to act discreetly against our most important threats; and our seamless integration with the Services to support and enhance their effectiveness, while we provide capabilities that SOF is uniquely structured to deliver. All of these are only possible due to our people—adaptive, agile, flexible, bold, and innovative—who allow us to seize opportunities early, and have strategic impact with a small footprint.[45]

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[43] Michael D. Lumpkin, "The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces: Ten Years After 9/11 and Twenty Five Years After Goldwater-Nichols," testimony to the House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, September 22, 2011.

[44] Eric T. Olson, "On the Posture of United States Special Operations Forces," testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 4, 2008.

[45] Votel, 2016a.

Competitive Goals

Maintain and Grow Relative Autonomy

One of USSOCOM's leading competitive goals is to gain and maintain autonomy in its activities, though not total autonomy, as the command stresses heavily its reliance on service support and on relationships with civilian government agencies. According to one workshop participant from the SOF community, USSOCOM is "most interested in protecting their autonomy, without interference, while also preserving their enabling support from the services."[46]

By pursuing relative autonomy, rather than total autonomy, USSOCOM seeks to support its abilities to act quickly as threats and opportunities to counter those threats arise, operate with only the necessary personnel to maintain a low profile, retain flexibility to adapt to changing operational requirements, and limit what USSOCOM perceives as bureaucratic hindrances. USSOCOM seeks autonomy in the budgeting process and in oversight, whether for gaining operational approval within the Executive Branch or legislative authorities to partner with foreign forces.

Part of this goal is operational: The fewer bureaucratic layers that must be navigated for approval, the faster SOF can execute its responsibilities. As many SOF operations are, by nature, time sensitive, this relative speed is prized by USSOCOM. SOF operations also often require small teams, a low profile, and tightly controlled information so operations can be executed clandestinely. To allow for this speed, USSOCOM's culture is marked by relative tolerance for risk, believing that "the 70 percent solution today is better than the 90 percent solution tomorrow."[47] Some interviewees noted that this emphasis on speed sometimes results in the impression that USSOCOM tends to "shoot first and ask questions later," which can create tension with the services, the GCCs, and civilian U.S. agencies.[48]

As it pursues autonomy, USSOCOM tends to be assertive and proactive in its requests to DoD, the Executive Branch, and Congress. As one OSD official noted, "Often, SOCOM comes in with sharp shoulders but eventually refines itself."[49] Others in USSOCOM believe that bias toward action not only is representative of the SOF "warrior" culture but also is a positive attribute, meaning that the command is constantly pushing to generate positive gains.[50]

USSOCOM's interest in minimizing perceived bureaucratic oversight can be observed in its relationship with its civilian representative in the Pentagon, the

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[46] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[47] Stanley McChrystal et al., *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World*, New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2015; regarding discussion of higher tolerance for risk: SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016, p. 214.

[48] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

[49] SO31, OSD official, October 6, 2016.

[50] SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2017.

ASD SO/LIC. Since the ASD SO/LIC's rank on the DoD order of precedence is lower than that of the service secretaries and of the USSOCOM commander, USSOCOM achieves greater autonomy from civilian oversight than its service counterparts do, which USSOCOM sometimes uses to its advantage, although the two entities generally enjoy a close relationship.[51] One former OSD official noted, "SOCOM doesn't always leverage SO/LIC. SO/LIC had traditionally had limited input into SOCOM. The lack of a civilian leader or service secretary adds to their arrogance. They think they have more leash than they do until the Secretary of Defense, generally, yanks them back."[52] In an effort to rectify this issue, Congress recently passed language that clarifies the ASD SO/LIC's position in USSOCOM's chain of command. Workshop participants noted that this change will likely provide a positive check on USSOCOM's power and autonomy.[53]

USSOCOM's efforts to maintain and increase its relative autonomy sometimes strike outsiders as overly aggressive, but insiders say the command learns its lessons when checked by bureaucratic processes. However, a congressional staff member with USSOCOM oversight responsibilities stressed that the USSOCOM's influence and credibility with the interagency and senior U.S. government leadership hinders the command from learning lessons about overreach.[54]

Finally, although USSOCOM places substantial emphasis on autonomy, some interviewees stressed that this goal is exclusive of the command's efforts to collaborate and communicate openly with U.S. civilian agencies and foreign forces. One former SOF unit commander pointed to cross-unit and interagency personnel rotations as a key reason that the SOF matured, noting, "We can't lose that. We can't become insular."[55] USSOCOM's interagency and intergovernment networking focus will be discussed later in this chapter.

Limit Special Operations Forces Overuse

Similar to the services, USSOCOM tends to compete by trying to posture itself for leadership and resources for missions it prefers, such as direct action, counterterrorism, and, more recently, CWMD. However, since 2001, SOF has been increasingly utilized to fulfill a wide variety of roles—in direct combat, in shaping operations, and, as one workshop participant noted, as a constabulary force.[56] Many argue that the missions SOF is asked to undertake are inappropriate uses, as general-purpose forces could be better suited to fulfill certain missions, or are placing undue stress on a small force that is already stretched thin by deployments.

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[51] SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016.

[52] SO11, former OSD official, November 3, 2016.

[53] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[54] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

[55] SO72, former special operations unit commander, January 12, 2017.

[56] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

As RAND's Linda Robinson has written,

> The root issue is conceptual clarity about how these forces should be used to best effect (i.e., a scarce asset to be employed to accomplish ends that no other military force can achieve). Without greater clarity, there is a serious danger that special operations forces will be employed in a permanent global game of whack-a-mole and in other tactical and episodic ways, rather than as part of deliberate campaigns that can achieve lasting outcomes. In addition, the special operations community is not organized to implement such orchestrated and linked special operations activities, and it has not oriented its institutions to make this its central priority.[57]

SOF's relatively low cost and small footprint in deployed environments offer policymakers and politicians what some consider to be a more palatable option along the engagement spectrum than taking no action or ordering a full-scale ground force invasion. One congressional staff member told us, "If you use the conventional Army, you very quickly have a large force presence; combat sorties are a big symbol. But with just 50 SOF guys on the ground you can do a lot of stuff." The staff member added that the "default position in DC is that SOF is the best tool to approach problem X."[58] In fact, several interviewees noted that SOF has become the "easy button" for senior policymakers, particularly during a conflict.[59]

In a December 2016 analysis for PRISM, Austin Long wrote about decision-makers' propensity for SOF overuse:

> Yet, despite the current enthusiasm, special operations are not a panacea for all security challenges. Policymakers and analysts must remain cognizant of the limits of SOF while developing military strategy lest too much be asked of the force. This is particularly important as the security environment changes—a SOF-centic strategy might be appropriate for some challenges but inappropriate for others.[60]

According to one workshop participant from the SOF community, USSOCOM is "struggling with the reality that [it] has become the nation's first responder to everything. . . . Often they respond and get so involved that they can't get themselves out and no longer are they SOF, but they have become the persistent force."[61]

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[57] Linda Robinson, *The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces*, Council Special Report No. 66, New York: Council on Foreign Relations, April 7, 2013, p. 14.

[58] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

[59] SO21, former Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[60] Austin Long, "The Limits of Special Operations Forces," *Prism: A Journal of the Center for Complex Operations*, Vol. 6, No. 3, December 7, 2016a, pp. 35.

[61] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

However, despite USSOCOM's stated resistance to SOF overuse, the heavy utilization of SOF forces actually works directly in the command's favor by strengthening its basis for resourcing requests and bolstering its warfighting reputation. This inherent contradiction provokes some to question whether USSOCOM truly does want to limit overuse—or simply dictate the terms of its heavy utilization and leverage that utilization as a justification for funding.

USSOCOM's "easy button" reputation allows the command to maintain that SOF might be called to conduct a range of operations at any time, causing USSOCOM to "argue not just for a larger MFP-11 amount but also to go to the services for MFP-2 dollars."[62] As discussed previously, USSOCOM leadership frequently invokes its fifth SOF truth, "Most Special Operations require non-SOF support," in order to gain more resources and support from the services.[63]

USSOCOM also consistently advocates for itself based on the very characteristics that lead to overuse. For example, Joint Publication 3-05 states,

> Special operations conducted by small SOF units, with unique capabilities and self-sufficiency (for short periods of time), provide the USG [U.S. government] with a wide array of military options. These options may generate less liability or risk of escalation than are normally associated with employment of larger and more visible [conventional forces].[64]

SOF leaders consistently stress these same characteristics in describing the character and utility of its forces. For example, former ASD SO/LIC Lumpkin noted in congressional testimony in 2011, "For a relatively small cost, we are able to build partner forces and gain access to better local intelligence, which can create security without requiring a large, expensive U.S. footprint."[65] This advocacy is descriptive of the conundrum facing SOF: Its relevance is largely based on its ability to be employed against nearly any threat facing the United States or its interests, but that reputation for flexibility is precisely what leads policymakers to opt for a SOF solution to every challenge.

Retain Primacy on a Critical Mission Set

One of USSOCOM's key competitive goals is to retain primacy on counterterrorism, a portfolio whose rise in policy relevance has secured the majority of USSOCOM's funding and growth since 2001, and to posture itself to lead a mission that the command anticipates will soon become similarly critical to national security objectives: CWMD.

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[62] SO21, retired Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[63] As just one example, see O'Connell, 2006.

[64] Joint Publication 3-05, 2014, p. I-2.

[65] Lumpkin, 2011.

After its establishment in 1987, USSOCOM struggled to gain respect and resources from its parent services. Despite Congress's support of special operations, DoD did not fully embrace the new command and, in some cases, senior leadership actively tried to marginalize the USSOCOM commander and ASD SO/LIC.[66] However, this dynamic changed after the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, as counterterrorism quickly grew to dominate U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Very quickly, the high-profile counterterrorism mission elevated USSOCOM's competitive position for resources, status, and relevance. While the Army had traditionally had jurisdiction in land-based campaigns, the Air Force in air-based campaigns, and the Navy in sea-based campaigns, counterterrorism did not fit neatly in any of those domains due to its transregional, transdomain, and inherently irregular nature, and it instead fell to USSOCOM.

One retired senior Army SF officer explained how "the problems came to SOF," noting, "Traditional warfighting was dispensed with fairly rapidly and we realized that now we are in these population-centric wars, and the conventional tools that we built a lot around had less utility there. . . . SOF, on the other hand, the problems started rolling into our sweet spot."[67]

Since that time, USSOCOM has worked successfully to retain primacy over counterterrorism through its demonstrated tactical capabilities, reputation for agility, and willingness to be employed against a range of threats. This operational flexibility has garnered the command substantial legislative and budgetary support resources, as well as standing within DoD and with Congress, and ensured its relevance as a command, but it has also resulted in heavy SOF employment and potential overuse of the force.

Cultures of Each Service's Special Operations Forces Component

Although we discuss SOF culture and competitive style holistically, it is important to consider that each SOF service component exhibits different characteristics that affect overall USSOCOM culture and that each has a different relationship with its parent service. Despite these service-affiliated differences among the components, the majority of our interviewees noted far more cultural commonalities with other SOF personnel than with conventional personnel from their parent service.

Several interviewees noted that competition for relevance, leadership positions, and certain missions exists among SOF entities but that at a resources level, intra-SOF competition is minimal. Interviewees also stressed that a hierarchy exists

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[66] James R. Locher III, "Congress to the Rescue: Statutory Creation of USSOCOM," *Air Commando Journal*, Spring 2012.

[67] SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2017.

among the different SOF units. We will explore this hierarchy, as well as the culture of USSOCOM's service components and that of JSOC, in the following section.

Joint Special Operations Command

According to USSOCOM, JSOC

> is charged to study special operations requirements and techniques, ensure interoperability and equipment standardization, plan and conduct special operations exercises and training, and develop joint special operations tactics. Despite its innocuous sounding charter, JSOC has made incredible strides in the special operations field and is comprised of an impressive amalgamation of rigorously screened and accessed [sic] Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Civilians. These men and women possess unique and specialized skills, and are routinely among the best in their field.[68]

In line with this characterization, USSOCOM so values JSOC's personnel and unique contributions to the command that JSOC is widely considered to occupy the highest tier in the command hierarchy. James Q. Roberts of National Defense University described the USSOCOM hierarchy as one of concentric rings, with JSOC in the center. According to Roberts, "The pre-existing JSOC culture, and the skyrocketing coolness of JSOC since 9/11, and the budget capability of the command collaborate to create a bullseye of culture." Roberts further explained,

> I think the SOCOM culture is a reflection of the JSOC culture . . . a bunch of misfits not appreciated by their services who have gone to incredible lengths to make themselves the best there is and live in the secret world that has now been blown up to everyone. The leadership at SOCOM brings the JSOC culture with them.[69]

By using the term *misfits*, Roberts is referring to the creative, sometimes iconoclastic characteristics that tend to be embraced in SOF but that are less rewarded in conventional services.

JSOC's position in the USSOCOM hierarchy is earned and influenced by the number of USSOCOM commanders in recent years who have JSOC experience.[70] The JSOC commander also has substantial interaction with the most-senior levels of policymakers, which exposes the JSOC commander to those who have to nominate and approve USSOCOM commander positions.[71]

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[68] U.S. Special Operations Command, "Joint Special Operations Command," undated.

[69] James Q. Roberts, SO/LIC chair at National Defense University, interview with the authors, December 19, 2016.

[70] SO81, congressional staff members, November 29, 2016.

[71] SO91, Army special operations officer, November 29, 2016.

JSOC is also known for being particularly collaborative and embedded within the interagency, both overseas and in the National Capital Region. One SOF officer noted, "[They] . . . are very good at positioning their guys and at messaging. They wear suits. They are always open with DoD and working with the interagency. They are very open, inclusive and proactive."[72] Another interviewee noted about JSOC personnel, "They are continuously involved with the interagency. They understand that you can have the greatest ideas but if you can't bring the interagency to your perspective—or in a legislative committee—you're not going to win."[73] This focus on collaboration within DoD and with its civilian partners in the U.S. government has positively affected JSOC's relative standing within USSOCOM.

U.S. Army Special Operations Command

U.S. Army Special Operations Command, or USASOC, is the largest service element within USSOCOM. USASOC is composed of SF, 75th Ranger Regiment (Rangers), Army Special Operations aviation, Military Information Support Operations personnel, civil affairs, and other support personnel. USASOC generally dominates USSOCOM leadership, operations, and planning positions, which is partially due to USASOC's greater share of personnel within USSOCOM and partially due to the status the USASOC, and particularly Rangers, holds in the command.[74]

The conventional Army's relationship with USASOC was described by several interviewees as mostly positive. This positivity is partially due to common experience and training baselines: SF and Rangers share the same basic tactical training as their conventional counterparts and, with the exception of a very narrow SF program designed to recruit Green Berets "off the street," SF and Rangers spend time in the conventional Army before going through their respective selection processes. The positive relationship can also be attributed to cross-component personnel assignments throughout an officer's career.[75] Rather than operating as a monolith, Ranger regiment personnel in particular often rotate in and out of conventional Army positions and back to SOF commands. This permeability facilitates relationships and mutual understanding between USASOC and the Army.[76]

Officers with USASOC experience—again, typically from 75th Ranger Regiment—often hold senior general-purpose Army positions and commands.[77] Ranger regiment's reputation as the world's most elite infantry unit renders its leaders at

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[72] SO71, Army officer with Ranger regiment experience, November 16, 2016.

[73] SO21, former Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[74] SO21, retired Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[75] SO71, Army officer from Ranger regiment, November 16, 2016.

[76] SO62, retired senior Army SF officer, March 16, 2017; SO21, retired Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[77] SO11, former OSD official, November 3, 2016.

once more elite within USSOCOM, given their highly tactical focus, and more relat-able to the conventional Army, which is comfortable and familiar with the tactics, techniques, and procedures generally employed by Rangers. One retired Army SOF officer explained that Rangers are "the natural bridge to the core competency in the Army—the raid—that SOCOM has perfected."[78]

The upshot of this reputation is that Army leadership often comes from Ranger backgrounds, and officers from the 75th Ranger Regiment dominate JSOC and USSOCOM command positions. One USSOCOM official noted about his own headquarters that "the Rangers always end up on top of the pyramid."[79] This both reflects and influences USSOCOM culture and competitive style.

SF, on the other hand, largely remain within their SF community upon entrance, which some in the SOF community believe has led to a disconnect between the Army and its SF and a lack of understanding of the value of skills that SF specialize in, such as unconventional warfare and foreign internal defense.[80] SF groups, originally intended to serve as experts in unconventional warfare who worked primarily through foreign partners to advance U.S. military objectives, were deployed heavily after 2001 to conduct what were largely direct action operations—certainly not outside the realm of SF's capabilities, but not ideally matched to SF's intended purpose. This experience in direct approach combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan supported proportion-ately high promotion rates in SF, but those rates do not reflect what many Green Berets say is an institutional bias that values Rangers' and conventional combat arms' core capabilities over the cultural expertise, foreign-language proficiency, and other indirect approach skills that define SF.[81]

This Ranger bias was reflected by every SF officer we interviewed and also by outsiders. One former OSD official noted of the Army, "It's a Ranger mafia. One Navy, one Air Force commander of USSOCOM. There's never a Special Forces officer commanding SOCOM. Why? Because it's a non-kinetic force. They are force multi-pliers. It's not sexy."[82]

Another retired senior SF officer agreed with that interviewee's point: "You have a SOCOM leadership that is very strike-centric, very much appreciated by the services, and then this other side of USASOC that is in fact not very well understood, and in many cases not very well liked," referring to SF, civil affairs, and Military Informa-tion Support Operations.[83] The same officer warned that if status quo is maintained

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[78] SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2017.

[79] SO41, USSOCOM personnel, October 19, 2016.

[80] SO21, retired Army SF officer, November 15, 2016; SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2017.

[81] SO21, retired Army SF officer, November 15, 2016; SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2017.

[82] SO11, former OSD official, November 3, 2016.

[83] SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2016.

in investing in direct action capabilities at the expense of indirect capabilities, the U.S. military, including USSOCOM, may be ill equipped to face future challenges.

Naval Special Warfare Command

The U.S. Navy and NSW exhibit starkly different cultural characteristics from each other. As opposed to Marine Corps Special Operations Command (MARSOC) or USASOC, the conventional Navy does not share common training in tactical skills with Navy SEALs.

Although NSW's predecessor organizations played substantial roles in World War II and Korea and SEAL teams were actively involved in operations from Vietnam onward after their creation in 1962, it was not until the global war on terror that SEALs began to gain the level of prominence in the SOF community and in the general public that they have today.[84]

NSW is composed of various elements, including SEAL Delivery Vehicle Teams, Special Boat Units, Support Activities, the Naval Small Craft Instruction and Technical Training School, and other support personnel. However, the vast majority of focus is on supporting the Navy SEALs, who are NSW's core operators. SEALs conduct both direct and indirect special operations, but they have been heavily utilized since 2001 for their direct action capabilities in counterterrorism campaigns globally.

According to one OSD official familiar with USSOCOM resourcing, NSW generally has a harder time gaining budget support from its parent service than the other SOF component commands do.[85] Several interviewees mentioned that the Navy regards its support requirement to NSW grudgingly but recognizes that NSW is a powerful recruiting tool for the Navy overall.[86] One retired Army SF officer noted, in distinguishing the differences between the relationship that the Army and its SF have and the relationship between the Navy and its SEALs, that the Navy derives "a huge benefit from a very small part of the force that has nothing to do with the core competencies of the Navy."[87]

Indeed, the Navy also does not view NSW's core tasks of foreign internal defense, special reconnaissance, unconventional warfare, direct action, and counterterrorism as central to the Navy.[88] One interviewee offered the example that the Navy previously supported reserve helicopter squadrons to provide specialized support to NSW because conventional Navy deployment schedules were challenging to synchronize with

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[84] Naval Special Warfare Command, "History," undated.

[85] SO31, OSD official, October 6, 2016.

[86] SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2017; workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.; SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2017.

[87] SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2016.

[88] U.S. Special Operations Command, *Organizations and Function*, Directive 10-1cc, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla., December 15, 2009.

NSW schedules. However, under increasing budgetary constraints, the Navy stood down those helicopter squadrons, signaling its view of those units as expendable and not central to the Navy's core mission.

Part of the antipathy felt by the conventional Navy toward NSW stems from its required support, often to SEAL teams, which can be challenging to execute. The Navy is frequently tasked to support NSW operations without adequate advance warning, due to the nature of SEAL missions, which places stress on the fleet.[89]

Within USSOCOM, NSW and particularly SEALs tend to garner credibility, respect, and key command positions and operational leadership roles. Part of this is due to the hierarchy at USSOCOM, which places combat forces with ground-level experience in the highest tier. Further, related to the observation that USSOCOM culture is greatly influenced by the commander's affiliation, SEALs received a relative elevation in status during the command tenure of Admiral William McRaven from 2011 to 2014, whose leadership in the 2011 raid to kill Osama bin Laden and forward-leaning leadership style lent credit to his fellow SEALs. Finally, NSW benefits from the relative celebrity and credibility afforded to SEALs in Washington and particularly on Capitol Hill based on operational successes and elite branding, a competitive strategy used by USSOCOM overall that will be analyzed later in this chapter.

Several interviewees noted that NSW tends to manage its personnel particularly well:

> In contrast to the rest of big Navy, NSW takes care of its officers they put in the Beltway. They recognize the strategic value of having officers who are knowledgeable and known within the beltway. They can interface effectively with professional staff members on Capitol Hill, and throughout the interagency, to effectively convey the priorities and requirements the NSW leadership has.[90]

With the SOF community, SEALs sometimes face skepticism and lack of trust due to the actions taken by some former SEALs to earn money from publicizing their experiences. As James Q. Roberts noted, "The SEALs have done a good job of [earning respect within USSOCOM] but I think their willingness to avoid being the quiet professional and to talk and write makes them highly suspect in the core."[91]

U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command

From a cultural perspective, the Air Force and AFSOC are relatively similar. While Air Force special operations and conventional missions require different skill sets, both the

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[89] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.; SO72, former special operations unit commander, January 12, 2017.

[90] SO21, retired Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[91] James Q. Roberts, SO/LIC chair at National Defense University, interview with the authors, December 19, 2016.

Air Force and AFSOC are largely defined by their role as "support" entities and their orientation toward platforms. The tension over service-common versus SOF-peculiar costs tends to be minimized between the Air Force and AFSOC, as "they are closer to their parent service than the others," which some interviewees conjectured may be due to both entities' platform-centric missions, similar training, and lack of a differentiating selection process in AFSOC.[92]

The Air Force also views AFSOC as an asset, as it recognizes that its AFSOC personnel are often those closest to current operations and lend operational credibility to the service, as well as serving as a substantial recruiting tool for the Air Force more broadly.[93] However, the Air Force does not view AFSOC's operations as closely related to its core missions, despite the substantial role it plays in its current missions.

Within USSOCOM, AFSOC is largely respected but is still considered a support organization to SOF ground forces. This perception is reflected through several observations. First, AFSOC gains relatively few leadership opportunities within USSOCOM and JSOC. An AFSOC operator has never commanded JSOC, and only one officer originally from the Air Force, General Charles R. Holland, has ever commanded USSOCOM (between 2000 and 2003). While some feel that this pattern may change as rising stars in the AFSOC community become poised to potentially take these assignments, overall, AFSOC personnel note a hierarchy within USSOCOM in which AFSOC sits at the bottom in relation to the other services.[94]

One AFSOC officer noted that when USSOCOM is pressed to make resourcing tradeoffs, the command's strategy is frequently to cut a higher-priced item in order to preserve funding for several lower-cost items, which disproportionately affects AFSOC given their use of more-expensive platforms. The officer noted that USSOCOM "will let one unit suffer to the benefit of all the others. . . . It's the Air Force that tends to get screwed. Of all the services that request MFP-11, the Air Force is the only one who will ask for a big ticket item."[95]

Further, AFSOC is viewed as somewhat of an outsider from the rest of USSOCOM. Part of this is due to its predominate support role to the rest of SOF. Even within AFSOC, its personnel recognize this impression. One interviewee observed that "in the services, not just SOF-specific, the entire military culture gives the guys on the ground more credibility and utility than any of the support functions."[96]

A USSOCOM official from the AFSOC community expanded on this observation: "They think we aren't real SOF. Why? I didn't need to go through selection

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[92] SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016.

[93] SO51, AFSOC officer, November 17, 2016; SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2017.

[94] SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2017; SO51, AFSOC officer, November 17, 2016.

[95] SO51, AFSOC officer, November 17, 2016.

[96] SO51, AFSOC officer, November 17, 2016.

as a pilot. Our ground guys—combat controllers, parajumpers, etcetera—they do go through selection. But they are never in charge of AFSOC."[97] The same interviewee further explained that although the Air Force treats its AFSOC personnel well, AFSOC is still considered a separate entity from its parent service—and from USSOCOM: "AFSOC is the red-headed stepchild in either case because to SOCOM, we are a support element, and to the Air Force, we are 'just SOF.'"[98]

Within the USSOCOM command headquarters, where operators sit atop the personnel hierarchy, AFSOC personnel frequently fill the resourcing positions. These positions, which control budgets and acquisitions for USSOCOM, offer a strategic advantage to AFSOC, as the J8 controls the building of the command's Integrated Priority List, which communicates command priorities derived from requirements and gaps to the Joint Staff.

U.S. Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command

MARSOC personnel—or Raiders, as they are called—are also culturally similar to their parent service. Deriving its roots from the Marine Raiders of World War II, MARSOC culture is largely defined by the same cultural characteristics that tend to define Marines: Spartan, disciplined, and steeped in tradition.[99]

The creation of MARSOC, which was mandated by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld in 2002 and established in 2005, initially faced strong opposition from Marine Corps leadership. This opposition was rooted in the deeply held belief throughout the Marine Corps that marines are already elite, so a "more elite" force was unnecessary and antithetical to Marine culture.[100] Eventually, however, the Marine Corps opposition gave way to DoD pressure to expand SOF and also in understanding the rising relevance of SOF throughout the services.

Despite their similarities, a divide exists between conventional marines and MARSOC Raiders. Marines often bristle at the "special" characterization that Raiders receive. One expert in Marine Corps history told us, "There is also resentment that you are breaking the 'we are all equal Marines' idea."[101]

Culturally, Raiders and conventional marines exhibit certain distinctions. Another interviewee with experience as a Raider stated that "MARSOC culture definitely differs from USMC culture," noting that MARSOC emphasizes autonomy and deemphasizes rank structure, placing greater emphasis on individual performance

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[97] SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2016.

[98] SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2016.

[99] SO52, Marine Corps historian, March 2, 2017; James Q. Roberts, SO/LIC chair at National Defense University, interview with the authors, December 19, 2016.

[100] SO52, Marine Corps historian, March 2, 2017; Carlie J. Morrison, *Paranoia Blinds Corps to Benefits of MARSOC/Raider Cultural Integration*, prepared for U.S. Marine Corps commandant, April 25, 2013.

[101] SO52, Marine Corps historian, March 2, 2017.

rather than adherence to discipline or tradition.[102] Another distinction is that "[conventional] Marines have a bias for action without thinking through it, to just 'get it done.' MARSOC's mission set requires that they think before acting, instead of just throwing resources at the objective."[103] Further, MARSOC seeks to recruit personnel who display personal integrity over discipline, a trademark characteristic of the Marine Corps.[104]

Regardless of these distinctions from the conventional Marine Corps, MARSOC's almost 3,000 personnel "think of themselves as Marines first and MARSOC second."[105] MARSOC personnel rotate in and out of the MARSOC organization, enabling integration with its parent service.

The rest of USSOCOM tends to view MARSOC positively and as a true contributor to SOF missions. However, MARSOC's mission is somewhat ill defined. Given its creation several years after the start of the global war on terror, MARSOC has not created a specific niche in the world of special operations. Accordingly, it has taken on a variety of missions to underscore its flexibility and cultivate relevance. When asked what MARSOC's core mission is, an interviewee stated, "I don't know. To recruit and deploy expeditionary forces to conduct missions. If I had to give any definition to their mission set is that it is diverse. . . . They have to prove that the nation wants them, not needs them. They have to say yes to a bunch of missions and be as flexible as possible to have value."[106] From a tactical perspective, this positive relationship appears to endure. One interviewee noted that the rest of SOF sees MARSOC as "the younger stepbrother" but that "at the individual level, [the relationship] has always been positive."[107]

Arenas of Competition

Although USSOCOM competes across all four arenas we cover in this analysis, the current policy environment has focused the command on two in particular: current roles and missions and, increasingly, future institutional security. USSOCOM has not necessarily shown weakness in the personnel and resources arenas; however, without major funding challenges or direct control over key personnel processes such as professional military education and promotions, the command's competitive role in those arenas is somewhat mitigated.

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[102] SO22, Marine Raider veteran, December 7, 2016.

[103] SO52, Marine Corps historian, March 2, 2017.

[104] SO52, Marine Corps historian, March 2, 2017.

[105] SO52, Marine Corps historian, March 2, 2017.

[106] SO22, Marine Raider veteran, December 7, 2016.

[107] SO22, Marine Raider veteran, December 7, 2016.

Current Roles and Missions

Reflected in SOF's leading role in many U.S. military efforts, one arena of competition that USSOCOM dominates and prefers is current roles and missions. These are largely defined by direct action and special reconnaissance for counterterrorism purposes, in which USSOCOM has developed substantial credibility and a competitive edge through successful, sometimes high-visibility operations; effective messaging and branding; and interagency coordination. This earned reputation enables USSOCOM to affect national security policy, campaign development, and decisions on which missions it undertakes.

While the advent of the global war on terror was clearly a major opportunity for SOF to demonstrate its capabilities and thereby increase its relevance to policymakers, Colin Jackson and Austin Long outline two other factors that contributed to SOF's rise and ability to maintain relevance in the United States' current roles and missions: the creation of USSOCOM, as we detailed earlier, and technological advancements such as remotely piloted aircraft, precision-guided munitions, and targeting data that favor small, precise, intelligence-driven operations in the global war on terror.[108] These three factors together enabled SOF to compete for current roles and missions in an unprecedented manner for its community.

USSOCOM's ownership of the counterterrorism realm has been so effective—potentially to the detriment of USSOCOM's other core tasks, particularly on the indirect side—that some in the U.S. government and even the general public incorrectly believe that USSOCOM's only function is as a counterterrorism strike force. James Q. Roberts expanded on this point, observing that "counterterrorism has consumed the great majority of the inner circle energy for the past 16 years," referring to USSOCOM's leadership. "That mission footprint has expanded beyond all others and so it's irrefutable—when people think of the SOF guy, they see a [counterterrorism] strike force guy."

While USSOCOM's reputation is now strongly rooted in its counterterrorism, direct action, and special reconnaissance abilities, interviewees stressed that USSOCOM's competitive edge in current roles and missions extends to other core tasks under the command's purview, including indirect "by, with, and through" tasks such as security force assistance and unconventional warfare. USSOCOM's low-visibility, small-footprint nature helps to define SOF's natural jurisdiction as one that spans traditional campaign jurisdictions of air, sea, and land. As one retired Army SF officer noted,

> Every service has a domain they are associated with and they are the instrument of choice for. . . . I posit that what you have seen and why SOCOM's rise has occurred, is that our enemies have chosen to contest us in human terrain and that has become its own domain, the human domain. And that's where SOCOM is the force of choice.[109]

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[108] Jackson and Long, 2009.

[109] SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2017.

The same interviewee explained that USSOCOM's flexibility both at the headquarters level and in its tactical-level teams also increases its ability to adapt to changing environments and dynamic threats more quickly than the traditional services can:

> The enemy will migrate to the places where they think they can maneuver to their effect. Whether it's Iranians through proxies, Quds Force, Hezbollah, or Russians and their little green men and motorcycle gangs and terrorists' ability to gain adherents who will blow themselves up, we are in a different kind of fight. It's what SOCOM was built for.[110]

USSOCOM's competitive edge in this arena has proved incredibly effective for its reputation, its ability to retain ownership of the missions it wants, and its ability to advocate for policy positions that serve to increase its competitive position, now and into the future.

Future Institutional Security

Building directly from USSOCOM's competitive experience in current roles and missions is the command's increasing focus on securing its institutional future. USSOCOM has accomplished this primarily by continuing to demonstrate its flexibility and transregional capabilities and by pursuing a leadership role on a critical mission: CWMD.

Especially since 9/11, USSOCOM has gained a reputation for flexibility and tactical proficiency that is appealing to many U.S. policymakers, securing competitive advantage in resourcing, authorities, and operational approvals. This credibility helps to secure the relative autonomy that USSOCOM seeks as a key competitive goal. Understanding that threats to U.S. national security and policy focus will likely expand beyond counterterrorism, USSOCOM is taking steps to leverage that credibility and reputation into the same relative autonomy in CWMD.

In pursuit of this future security, in 2017, USSOCOM formally gained leadership in coordinating DoD's CWMD efforts from USSTRATCOM. While USSOCOM is naturally poised to lead on certain aspects of the CWMD mission, such as containing threats posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the remaining responsibilities, such as consequence management and nonproliferation, have not been capabilities in which USSOCOM has historically invested.

USSOCOM's success in the CWMD leadership role will depend on several variables, but one in particular: Will the CWMD mission be prioritized within DoD and by U.S. policymakers? Daniel Gerstein of RAND noted in February 2017, "SOCOM's success as a global synchronizer could depend largely on the degree to which the other combatant commanders include counter-WMD activities in their theater engagement

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[110] SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2017.

plans."[111] Further, some argue that USSOCOM will need to glean substantial support from the services, and the Army in particular, in order to be strategically successful in the CWMD mission. Regardless of these challenges, USSOCOM's ability to synchronize efforts across regions to swiftly address threats and its reputation for tactical proficiency made USSOCOM the optimal choice to reassign the CWMD to as it gains relevance.[112]

Andrew Feickert of the Congressional Research Service summarizes external concerns about USSOCOM's assumption of the CWMD mission:

> There are, however, concerns about USSOCOM's new counter-WMD responsibilities. Some question whether USSOCOM has been ceded too much power, noting that recently USSOCOM was also given the authority "to coordinate all U.S. efforts to track foreign fighters globally." Another concern is how effectively USSOCOM will address the counter-WMD mission given its primary focus on terrorism. With senior USSOCOM leadership and policymakers alike warning that USSOCOM is already extensively committed and its forces "strained," it is unclear how elevating USSOCOM's involvement in the nation's counter-WMD efforts will affect USSOCOM's overall readiness.[113]

Beyond the CWMD mission, USSOCOM is also seeking authorities to secure relevance and autonomy on a range of national security challenges that the United States may confront on a greater scale into the future, even though at the same time it is seeking to limit its potential overuse. According to a congressional staff member familiar with SOF issues, "USSOCOM is also positioning itself to play a bigger role in the 'gray space' struggle," where operations are conducted in a difficult-to-define environment somewhere short of war.[114] Throughout the global war on terror, USSOCOM has proved successful at gaining additional authorities and increasing its relative autonomy to conduct its missions under the auspices of moving more quickly to develop and approve operations against dynamic targets, accessing more partners to leverage for support of counterterrorism operations, and providing resources to its SOF so that they are better able to support the GCCs. All of this increases USSOCOM's ability to secure its future, increasingly showcasing its ability to adapt to changing security threats faster than the services or the CCMDs can.

To adapt to this role, USSOCOM is focusing on developing relationships with its Eastern European counterparts as a means to bolster their efforts to deter Russian

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[111] Daniel Gerstein, "SOCOM Will Soon Lead the Pentagon's Anti-WMD Efforts. Here's What It Needs," *Defense One*, February 17, 2017.

[112] SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016.

[113] Feickert, 2017, p. 12. The internal quote is from Dan Lamothe, "Special Operations Command Takes a Leading Role in Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction," *Washington Post*, December 23, 2016.

[114] SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016.

aggression. USSOCOM is favorably positioned to move into this role quickly by uti-lizing its Joint Combined Exchange Training authority, as these engagements do not require major equipment movements but rather an exchange of skills training with foreign forces.[115]

According to participants in one of our workshops, USSOCOM's primary focus of late has been on shaping strategy and maintaining its preeminence in operations. These efforts all directly support USSOCOM's efforts to remain relevant into the future and, according to one workshop participant, "to be autonomous and selective" in line with USSOCOM's chief goals.[116]

An emerging conversation within NSW and other areas of USSOCOM demon-strates that the command and its components are also thinking critically about how to adapt to fill gaps on the indirect spectrum:

> There is open dialogue about whether [focusing on direct action] is the best thing for the community. There is recognition that there is this operational preparation of the environment, advanced force operations kind of world and maybe that is where NSW could posture itself to be the most effective and contribute the most within the SOF community to meet national level requirements. There are gaps there and no one else really appears to be stepping forward to find solutions for them, particularly in a maritime environment. And what does modern maritime special operations mean? It's probably not SEALs with automatic weapons running across the desert. Not that we don't train to that, but it's got to be more advanced, to get back to being more of a clandestine force.[117]

At the same time, USSOCOM is also wary of becoming a "Swiss Army knife," being used as a tool to combat the range of threats that face the United States.[118] Avoid-ing this overuse will require balancing USSOCOM's branding as capable of address-ing a universe of threats while also mitigating demand so that the force can retain or improve its readiness levels and only be utilized on its preferred missions.

Indeed, USSOCOM struggles in finding a balance between its focus on the cur-rent fight, which tends to consume the majority of the command's resources and atten-tion, and preparing for future challenges. While USSOCOM leadership frequently extols the value of innovation and has invested in institutional structures meant to incubate creativity and future concepts, such as various future innovation cells and SOFWERX, an entity that seeks to establish greater partnership between the SOF community and the private sector, USSOCOM leadership—and, by extension, their

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[115] SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016.

[116] Workshop findings, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[117] SO82, Navy special operations officer, April 26, 2017.

[118] Workshop findings, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

staffs—are forced to focus on current roles at the expense of future ones. One SEAL with USSOCOM experience noted,

> There is a saying here, that "Futures get less priority when your three-meter target is shooting at you." Even though SOCOM will posture itself for being the go-anywhere, do-anything command, and that's inherently open minded and futuristic, the reality is when you're tasked with being the [counterterrorism], 911 response force, you end up having to put aside your talk about futures because it ends up just being talk and you are consumed with being the President's immediate response force. There is inherent friction there.[119]

The same interviewee continued, "Unless there is a way of intentionally organizing—giving the future-focused subunit access to resources and to assets that the larger exploitation unit has produced, then the exploration ends up failing. I haven't seen a real robust or significant dedication to exploration in SOCOM."[120] This inherent tension between addressing near-term threats and investing in ways to confront ones the future may pose will likely continue to create friction at USSOCOM headquarters and in its subordinate units.

Personnel

In line with USSOCOM's leading SOF truth that "humans are more important than hardware," the command focuses heavily on recruiting, selecting, training, and employing its SOF personnel. Due to its small-team, low-footprint nature, USSOCOM's primary unit of measure is its 71,000 personnel, rather than its technology or platforms. As Acting ASD SO/LIC Lumpkin noted, "SOF is successful because we equip the man, not man the equipment. It's all about our people."[121]

In terms of recruiting highly qualified personnel, USSOCOM performs exceedingly well: Due to its elite reputation and secretive, direct action missions, SOF has little trouble drawing far more applicants than it can select. Also, USSOCOM invests heavily in tactical training of its forces in order to ensure they are able to execute the breadth of missions SOF is assigned. However, some argue that USSOCOM's focus on tactical training has come at the expense of its servicelike responsibilities. Linda Robinson argued this point:

> These institutional tasks of personnel and doctrine development have not been sufficiently valued in what might be termed the "operator culture" of the special operations community. One manifestation of this has been U.S. Special Operations Command's recurring bid to increase its operational role rather than attend

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[119] SO82, Navy special operations officer, April 26, 2016.

[120] SO82, Navy special operations officer, April 26, 2016.

[121] Lumpkin, 2011.

to these vital institutional needs of leadership and doctrine development that will ultimately do more to create world-class special operations capabilities.[122]

Some believe that USSOCOM has not done enough to develop its personnel, particularly for senior leadership positions. USSOCOM is hamstrung in part from fully embracing this responsibility, as the command is only charged with "monitoring the promotions of special operations forces and coordinating with the military departments regarding the assignment, retention, training, professional military education, and special and incentive pays of special operations forces."[123]

This division of responsibilities places USSOCOM only in a consultant role: "They have to live with what the services give them."[124] While SOF representatives certainly can, and do, play influential roles on these boards, their inability to control promotions in the SOF community certainly diminishes USSOCOM's ability to compete with the services in the personnel arena.

SOF personnel also fill strategic personnel assignments in Washington, such as on the National Security Council, where recently one SOF representative has served on a counterterrorism portfolio every year. These assignments provide the SOF individual substantial experience, as well as a foothold into the policymaking process regarding use of and authorities for USSOCOM.[125] These assignments are generally made at the service level, and each service prioritizes strategic-level assignments differently. USSOCOM also selects high-performing individuals for another strategic personnel assignment, in the Special Operations Legislative Affairs office that interfaces with Capitol Hill on USSOCOM's legislative priorities. However, our interviewees also noted that USSOCOM tends to staff these offices with personnel who have achieved success in combat, which may not translate to success in congressional relations.[126]

USASOC forces present a particularly instructive case. Several interviewees noted that Army SF values tactical experience over interagency networks and development. One interviewee noted that particularly in the Army's case, "your best guy is not a SOCOM liaison officer, he's not in OSD. He's at arm's length, helping the unit and you. . . . They measure 'huge help to the commander' over 'huge help to the community.'"[127]

This bias is also reflected during the Army's promotion boards, which tend to value tactical experience over strategic-level, policy-oriented assignments. One inter-

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[122] Robinson, 2013, p. 17.

[123] 10 U.S.C. 167.

[124] SO21, retired Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[125] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[126] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[127] SO91, Army special operations officer, November 29, 2016.

viewee noted that, particularly for Army SOF, if you are not working at an operational command,

> you don't really exist. If you're in the Pentagon or the interagency working for a civilian, it becomes the kiss of death. During promotion boards they go, "Ok, this Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, whatever that is, says this person should be a brigade commander. What do they know about this?" So unless you are being rated by someone who is a champion, you are screwed.[128]

While the other services do not necessarily value the same characteristics in their promotion boards, the Army's challenges with understanding USASOC assignments may be illustrative of the challenge that USSOCOM faces without full oversight over its personnel processes.

Another area in which USSOCOM may struggle is professional military education (PME). Per Title 10 U.S.C, Section 167, USSOCOM does not retain responsibility for educating its personnel but rather only for monitoring PME.[129] Instead, the services retain responsibility for managing their personnel's PME despite prior efforts by USSOCOM to gain ownership over PME for its forces. As a result, some believe SOF do not receive military education on "the predominant forms of conflict . . . to become truly professional at it."[130]

Resources

Although USSOCOM receives substantial budget support from Congress, the command does not prefer to compete in the resources arena—nor has it truly had to since 2001. On one hand, USSOCOM has enjoyed substantial budget support through OCO funds due to its leading role in the global war on terror, denoting relative success in securing its resourcing goals. USSOCOM's budget, approximately $10 billion including OCO funding in FY 2017, is comparatively small when viewed in the context of the services' budgets. Congressional members who oversee USSOCOM's budget on Capitol Hill tend to support USSOCOM's resource requests. This support is due to the relatively small share of the budget that USSOCOM claims, to the trust that USSOCOM has developed with certain members of Congress who act as vanguards of USSOCOM's requirements, and to substantial pressure on Capitol Hill and among national security decisionmakers overall to support current counterterrorism operations.

USSOCOM is also served well by keeping its budget small relative to those of the other services, because it helps to preserve the command's autonomy and also helps to

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[128] SO21, retired Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[129] 10 U.S.C. 167.

[130] SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2017.

ensure additional service support for its requirements. One of our workshop partici-
pants noted, "SOCOM has never been interested in growing their budget. They have
grown it because they've been asked to do more things, but they are most interested in
protecting their autonomy, without interference, while also preserving their enabling
support from the services."[131]

On the other hand, however, because USSOCOM has not had to face sustained
budget cuts or engage in a true competition for resources since 2001, it is unknown
how USSOCOM would fare if that type of constraint becomes a reality. This concern
is particularly salient when considering the resourcing challenges that USSOCOM
will face if and when OCO no longer exists, given the command's heavy reliance on
that funding source.

As stated previously, USSOCOM is heavily reliant on OCO, which supports
many of USSOCOM's counterterrorism-related activities globally. When OCO is
eliminated, as is anticipated in coming years, USSOCOM will have to shift to sourc-
ing its funding from DoD's base budget. This change would require USSOCOM to
compete more actively for resources than it does today, a realization that creates anxi-
ety throughout the command. However, USSOCOM is taking steps to diversify its
mission portfolio with CWMD, potentially creating to an extent a funding replace-
ment for counterterrorism.

Also critical to USSOCOM's total budget is the substantial "service-common"
support USSOCOM receives from each of the services. While this number is compli-
cated to calculate, USSOCOM estimated that in 2015, the total was approximately
$7 billion.[132] This funding goes toward USSOCOM requirements that are specific to
SOF, such as headquarters buildings, basic uniforms, and cargo transport platforms.
However, a definition for what constitutes service-common or SOF-peculiar items is
not uniformly applied, creating budget-related tension between USSOCOM and the
services.[133] This process of determining which costs are borne by which entity can be
subjective, and it is occasionally adjudicated by Congress.[134] This friction has caused
some SOF personnel to feel orphaned from their service. One interviewee explained,
"We have to convince them to take care of their guys in SOCOM."[135]

Without a four-star-equivalent civilian service secretary, USSOCOM is uniquely
challenged to advocate for some of its positions. The ASD SO/LIC certainly holds
formidable rank and stature in bureaucratic negotiations, but even with the recent
legislative clarification of the USSOCOM chain of command, the lack of parity with

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[131] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[132] Marcus Weisgerber, "Peeling the Onion Back on the Pentagon's Special Operations Budget," *Defense One*,
January 27, 2015.

[133] SO31, OSD official, October 6, 2016.

[134] SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016.

[135] SO41, USSOCOM personnel, October 19, 2016.

the other services' civilian leaders still exists. Also, while the four-star USSOCOM commander certainly carries substantial weight in policy and resourcing conversations, some feel that when USSOCOM's goals are represented by an individual in uniform, civilians outside DoD may respond negatively.[136] Further, the USSOCOM commander is based in Tampa, while the service chiefs are based in the Pentagon. In response to these disadvantages, and in seeking a position to advocate for resources and policy positions in Washington, USSOCOM created a three-star vice commander position to head the USSOCOM Washington Office, based in Washington, D.C.[137]

James Q. Roberts warned that, going into the future, if USSOCOM faces budget cuts and has to fight for its resources, it faces major disadvantages largely due to the command's relatively minor focus on developing resource and budget expertise among its personnel:

> You need the "iron majors" who run the service staffs. The time-honored way to know how to knife fight is to go to a service staff as a major somewhere in the money business. Requirements, capabilities, office of the Chief of Staff, budget office, office of legislative affairs, budget prep, all those offices grind away in unison on a yearly basis and there are touchstones and points in the year on what they are thinking about that don't change. If you do that as a major then forever more you know you have to read every letter headed to the President's budget, and look for ways you might be getting screwed without realizing it. . . . If the drawdown really does start, SOCOM will have to go into a cagey, defensive crouch to defend what they have. They haven't sent nearly enough officers to work in OSD, service staffs, the Joint Staff and DC in general to understand the knife fighting they will get into.[138]

Preferred Tactics of Competition

Recognized as being highly networked and characterized by specific methods of interacting with the rest of DoD, with Congress, and with other agencies, USSOCOM and its special operations personnel exhibit marked preferred tactics of competition. These tactics can serve USSOCOM well, but they have also hindered the command's ability to pursue its goals.

Interagency and Intergovernmental Coordination

USSOCOM places substantial emphasis on interagency coordination in order to develop networks to facilitate the relative autonomy it seeks and to foster information

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[136] SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016.

[137] SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016.

[138] James Q. Roberts, SO/LIC chair at National Defense University, interview with the authors, December 19, 2016.

sharing to more effectively execute the missions it is asked to undertake. The command emphasizes both its facility for and the importance of developing like-minded networks across the U.S. government and its partner nations to collaborate toward common goals.

In his confirmation hearing to become USCENTCOM commander, USSOCOM commander General Joseph Votel stated,

> The big ideas that I think about, frankly, are relationships. What I have learned in my experience at SOCOM is that relationships are absolutely vital to the things that we do, and they have to be sustained, they have to be multilevel, and they have to be routinely engaged upon.[139]

The command's embrace of interagency coordination is often linked to the efforts of General Stanley McChrystal, who as JSOC commander organized his headquarters in Iraq to facilitate constant communication and collaboration with its interagency partners in country. Beyond focusing on forward-deployed coordination, the command also formally embraces this interagency network in its U.S.-based organizations. The creation of the Joint Interagency Task Force–National Capital Region, a USSOCOM entity based in the Washington, D.C., area, for example, was intended to facilitate face-to-face interaction and information sharing among USSOCOM and its federal agency partners in Washington. Civilian agencies actively participate in formal personnel exchanges and liaison opportunities with the command, particularly at JSOC. One interviewee noted that "the interagency only sends rookies to most other interagency organizations, but their best and brightest do go to JSOC . . . because they want to touch the magic."[140]

Not only does this coordination create goodwill with other agencies that work toward the same objectives that USSOCOM does, but it enables USSOCOM to strategically place its personnel as liaisons in organizations to pass information back to USSOCOM or its components so its personnel can better understand how to appeal to another agency's interests or address its concerns about a USSOCOM initiative, as well as advance the command's goals overall. One former USSOCOM unit commander explained the value of its liaison officers:

> SOCOM has an interagency network of liaison officers and overseas special operations liaison officers that is unmatched. No other headquarters in DoD has what they have. You send a little pulse of electricity through that network and you have an understanding no one else has. You have a representative for working directly with the interagency.[141]

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[139] Votel, 2016b.

[140] SO21, retired Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[141] SO72, former special operations unit commander, January 12, 2017.

In formal testimony to Congress, USSOCOM leaders routinely emphasize its embrace of interagency coordination, often highlighting the role that other U.S. agencies play in supporting military operations.[142] For example, in a 2011 hearing, USSOCOM commander Admiral William McRaven stated,

> I think if you would talk to ambassadors across the 75 countries in which we are in kind of day in and day out, they will tell you that the support provided by the military information support teams, the civil affairs teams, and then the joint training that happens with the Special Forces and the SEALs is tremendous to support U.S. policy. So they see immediate results when they invest in Special Operations. And I think that is what brings us together.[143]

However, this forward-leaning coordination can sometimes draw skepticism that the coordination is merely lip service and a cover to operate even more autonomously. Some of our interviewees reported that they believe USSOCOM may sometimes misunderstand when it causes tension with the interagency due to its aggressive advocacy style. While USSOCOM officials believe that certain actions that have caused tension with Congress, such as McRaven's Global SOF Network initiatives, were aberrations that do not truly reflect USSOCOM's culture, others outside the command point to the initiatives as representative of USSOCOM preferences to proceed without substantial coordination and to circumvent established policy processes.[144]

Congressional Interaction

Despite substantial opposition from the Pentagon, USSOCOM was created by legislation in response to Congress's belief that DoD had not sufficiently protected SOF equities. Since USSOCOM's creation in 1987, and particularly before 9/11, it continued to face hostility toward its existence and authority within DoD. The command's strongest advocates were—and many feel still are—on Capitol Hill, which is reflected in USSOCOM's preference for congressional interaction.

Support for USSOCOM from Congress, in terms of both resources and authorities, remains strong, 30 years after the command's creation. Several interviewees noted that this is due to not only USSOCOM's relatively small budget but also support for USSOCOM's role in combating terrorist threats. According to one congressional staffer familiar with USSOCOM's Hill engagements, this support has less to

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[142] For a few examples of a USSOCOM commander's formal references to interagency coordination before Congress, see Olson, 2008, and Votel, 2016a.

[143] William H. McRaven, "The Future of U.S. Special Operations Forces: Ten Years After 9/11 and Twenty Five Years After Goldwater-Nichols," testimony to the House Armed Services Committee Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities, September 22, 2011.

[144] SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2016; SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016; SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016.

do with sophisticated outreach tactics necessarily and more to do with general respect for SOF's capabilities and the low cost of its resourcing requests when compared to those of the traditional services.[145] Interviewees noted that some congressional members are infatuated with USSOCOM's secrecy and involvement in dangerous and classified operations, and in their desire to "touch the magic" of SOF, they allow the command far more patience in issues that might otherwise upset members, such as cost overruns.[146]

USSOCOM also uses its relatively small budget requirements to its advantage when requesting additional funding, often highlighting its relatively small costs by comparing them to one of the services' expensive major platform systems, such as the Navy's Littoral Combat Ships or the Joint Strike Fighter.[147] This comparative argument succeeds particularly as SOF investment appears to yield a much higher return.[148]

Despite the widespread support that USSOCOM receives from its advocates in Congress, a few recent examples demonstrate that the command does not have unlimited influence on the Hill. USSOCOM's Preservation of the Force and Families and Global SOF Network campaigns both were faced with substantial pushback not to the substance of the proposals but rather in the unorthodox and opaque manner in which the initiatives were introduced.[149] Both initiatives caused substantial rancor throughout DoD for perceived overreach on the part of USSOCOM and, particularly for the Global SOF Network, raised concern in Congress that the command was moving forward too quickly. In line with this view, congressional appropriators inserted language into their bills to express dissatisfaction with that USSOCOM initiative.[150]

USSOCOM also experienced resistance from Congress in seeking certain legislative authorities, such as in legislative proposals for SOF security force assistance in 2013 and 2014. USSOCOM does not frequently experience major challenges in gaining support for its dedicated budget, which creates an expectation within the command that they will gain widespread support for all of their initiatives.[151] However, USSOCOM officials disagree on whether the Global SOF Network and Preservation of the Force and Families were watershed events that caused internal reflection of

[145] SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016.

[146] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND corporation, Arlington, Va.

[147] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

[148] SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2017.

[149] SO41, USSOCOM personnel, October 19, 2016; SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016.

[150] For an example, see U.S. House of Representatives, Department of Defense Appropriations Act: House Report No. 113-113 (to accompany H.R. 2397), 113th Congress, 1st session, July 30, 2013.

[151] SO61, congressional staff member, September 28, 2016.

advocacy practices, or if they were perceived as aberrations from USSOCOM's usual engagement strategies with Congress.[152]

Congressional staffers we interviewed noted that despite USSOCOM's emphasis on congressional liaisons, the command does not strategically staff its liaison positions the way that some of the services do. One staffer noted that USSOCOM's emphasis on congressional relationships "ebbs and flows. The SOCOM attitude is, 'if you give us the time, space and autonomy to do what we want to do, we will get it done.' They view the Hill and ASD SO/LIC as impediments."[153] A former OSD official familiar with USSOCOM noted, "SOCOM gets access to the House, Senate, authorizing and appropriations committees all at once through its legislative liaisons. It's an advantage if you know what you're doing. However, there is zero training. They don't put much thought into it. Who is available is who is selected for those positions."[154]

Elite Warrior Branding

According to USSOCOM personnel, the command's competitive style is defined largely by its ability to leverage operational successes in order to sustain and increase credibility for current and future institutional relevance. This branding focuses specifically on SOF's ability to execute successful, dangerous, sometimes high-profile operations that achieve measurable results using relatively few personnel and resources.[155] This elite branding is heavily dependent on USSOCOM's direct action successes, particularly since 2001. As a former OSD official told us about USSOCOM, "They also compete on prestige, brand strength, and intellectual strategic thought. Because of their battle success, they have that brand strength."[156]

Media coverage also contributes heavily to USSOCOM's elite warrior reputation. Although many of USSOCOM's activities, such as its security force assistance and civil affairs programs, are indirect approaches, the media tends to focus largely on USSOCOM's counterterrorism raids, which congressional staff members report works to USSOCOM's advantage. One congressional staffer spoke of elite branding's effects on support from Capitol Hill: "For the most part, Congress says, 'you guys keep killing bad guys, we will keep giving you $10.5 billion per year.'"[157]

This branding is not simply due to media coverage; USSOCOM actively promotes its reputation of engaging in dangerous operations that can be conducted by

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[152] SO41, USSOCOM personnel, October 19, 2016; SO21, former Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[153] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

[154] SO11, former OSD official, November 3, 2016.

[155] SO41, USSOCOM personnel, October 19, 2016.

[156] SO11, former OSD official, November 3, 2016.

[157] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

only the most elite personnel. The command's public affairs materials include photographs of SOF conducting high-risk, adrenaline-fueled training or operations. Congressional briefings and engagements with U.S. civilian agencies often emphasize SOF flexibility, precision, and maturity.

Beyond just tactical proficiency, USSOCOM promotes among senior policymakers its brand as an agile, effective option for conducting a wide range of tasks. USSOCOM routinely stresses its ability to deliver small footprint, high risk, high return options to security threats.[158] The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, which specifically calls for these attributes, is quoted by USSOCOM leadership often: "Whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives."[159]

At the same time, USSOCOM stresses that not despite but precisely because of its elite nature, the fifth SOF truth, "Most Special Operations require non-SOF support," was added in 2009 by USSOCOM commander Admiral Eric T. Olson to ensure that the services—and Congress, which oversees the budget each entity receives— understand the direct linkage between SOF success and non-SOF support. Despite its unique and proven special operations capabilities, the command cannot execute its missions without substantial support from the rest of DoD.[160]

While USSOCOM may not seek to be utilized in every contingency, it increases its competitive advantage to be considered as a key option in every logical contingency. This level of demand requires that SOF retain a high degree of readiness and be sufficiently trained and resourced to respond to the wide-ranging requests policymakers may direct at it. Of course, those requirements mean that USSOCOM is able to ask for—and receive—more direct resources, more flexibility, and more support from the services than it would if only considered a niche force.

Shift Between Service and Functional Combatant Command Roles

USSOCOM's goal to protect its autonomy relies on its ability to shift between its CCMD and servicelike roles, an option that fosters substantial competitive advantage for the command. The balance itself is what contributes to USSOCOM's competitive advantage: By emphasizing its servicelike responsibilities, USSOCOM can gain and has gained greater autonomy and control over its SOF, and by leaning forward in its CCMD role, USSOCOM has strengthened its relevance in current roles and missions and in future institutional security by securing leadership roles in counterterrorism and CWMD. The ability to leverage "the best of both worlds" underscores the observation

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[158] As an example, see Votel, 2016a.

[159] U.S. Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, Washington, D.C., January 5, 2012, p. 3.

[160] Joint Special Operations University, *Introduction to Special Operations*, undated.

that USSOCOM has "no desire to become a service," solely because such a designation would necessarily deemphasize USSOCOM's desired operational responsibilities.[161]

Some interviewees from Capitol Hill reported that USSOCOM leans toward its operational, CCMD role more than its servicelike responsibilities, preferring to emphasize and focus on operations instead of its "man, train, and equip" responsibilities. This preference is reflected in USSOCOM's authorities and resourcing requests to Congress, and it is dependent on the commander's comfort level and priorities as well.[162]

Overall, the resourcing and budget issues that occupy the services' attention are minimized at USSOCOM, given its far smaller budget. However, as mentioned previously, USSOCOM sought and was transferred responsibility in 2013 for manning, training, and equipping TSOC forces, an argument the command made based on its servicelike responsibilities. This transfer of command and control responsibilities for TSOC forces increased USSOCOM's role in these issues.

USSOCOM also leans on its CCMD role when attempting to gain resources from the services. In this vein, USSOCOM strategically chooses which senior-level meetings to send representation to. For example, to advocate for USSOCOM resources, USSOCOM created a three-star vice commander position based in Washington, D.C., in 2010 to oversee USSOCOM's servicelike responsibilities.[163] This vice commander represents USSOCOM in person in all DMAG meetings, where DoD's senior-most military and civilian officials discuss and adjudicate planning, programming, budgeting, and execution issues for DoD. In the DMAG, the other CCMDs participate via teleconference; USSOCOM joins the services in participating in person, indicating equal representation on service issues.[164] However, USSOCOM chooses not to participate regularly in other forums such as the Tank, a periodic meeting of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the service chiefs, in order to preserve its identity as a CCMD. One USSOCOM representative called this deliberate choice to not attend certain forums "competing by not competing."[165]

The lack of clarity regarding the role USSOCOM is expected to play is something that the command exploits. One former senior SOF officer noted about USSOCOM, "They will play ambiguity and mommy against daddy to gain bureaucratic advantage more often than not."[166] Officials from USSOCOM agreed with this characterization, noting that this technique of shifting between its roles is a natural form of competition.

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[161] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[162] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

[163] SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2017.

[164] SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2017.

[165] SO41, USSOCOM personnel, October 19, 2016.

[166] SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2017.

How Others View U.S. Special Operations Command and Special Operations Forces

The non-SOF DoD community and many interagency actors tend to view USSOCOM and SOF as agile and effective but also relatively opaque, particularly when contrasted with USSOCOM's internal view that the command is transparent and communicative. The general public tends to idealize SOF, viewing USSOCOM as a highly elite, secretive command engaged in high-risk counterterrorism raids globally.

Impressions are not necessarily universal across types of SOF. For example, Navy SEALs generally are viewed both as more elite by the general public, due to their high-profile raids and media coverage, and as more self-serving within DoD.[167] Also, some interagency actors view JSOC more favorably than they do the rest of USSOCOM, as JSOC works closely with the interagency and tends to cultivate strong relationships with its counterparts in D.C. As one interviewee noted, "There is an inherent bias towards the JSOC perspective in the interagency, particularly with an active National Security Council. They are comfortable with the JSOC commander. They've worked closely with him. So he's a natural fit."[168]

While these external impressions range from positive to negative, they all certainly contribute to USSOCOM's ability to compete with the services and across DoD more generally.

Elite Warriors

As a result of USSOCOM's branding tactics, the general public views USSOCOM and SOF synonymously and its personnel as highly proficient, secretive, and almost mythical. The public associates SOF with direct action operations, such as raids and surgical strikes.[169] This deep interest and even adoration has been amplified by numerous "tell-all" books written by former SOF personnel and movies that dramatically depict certain SOF heroism and operations.[170] The consumer market for SOF branding is robust, from fitness programs and television shows to nutritional supplements and tactical gear.

Some members of Congress also view USSOCOM with the same lens, which contributes to the command's ability to gain the authorities, resources, and general support it seeks from the Hill. Even those members who are skeptical of the command's aims tend not to disagree with the elite warrior characterization, which paints SOF as the force of choice when lawmakers desire an effective but low-investment solution.

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[167] As an example of satire that plays on Navy SEALs' reputation for writing tell-all books, see "US Navy Adds Intensive Creative Writing Course to SEAL Training," *Duffel Blog*, May 28, 2014.

[168] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

[169] Robinson, 2013.

[170] Examples of these movies include *Zero Dark Thirty*, *Act of Valor*, and *American Sniper*.

The benefits accrued from the elite warrior reputation encourages USSOCOM to highlight its tactical proficiency throughout the arenas of competition, which some believe may cause indirect action capabilities to atrophy. As one former OSD official we interviewed told us, "SOCOM thinks if they are good on the battlefield then all other skills are fungible."[171] A retired Army SF senior officer noted that USSOCOM's focus on the counterterrorism mission has been at the expense of focusing on its roles as a force provider and in concept and doctrine development. The officer stated, "I think that is a deficiency that has created huge gaps in the nation's capabilities."[172]

Indeed, the elite warrior reputation can also have negative reputational consequences. Outside DoD, civilian agencies can be put off by the aggressive language SOF (and the military more broadly) sometimes uses to denote aggression or combat operations in areas where war is not currently occurring, such as "operational preparation of the environment" or "political warfare." Because SOF is so often associated with direct action operations, its involvement in a region or a campaign, even in support or enabling roles, often raises the suspicions of civilian representatives, who may question what USSOCOM's role is in a noncombat environment.[173]

Desiring Total Autonomy

Although USSOCOM endeavors to limit unnecessary overuse of its personnel, many on the conventional side of DoD, the interagency, and Congress tend to view USSOCOM's value as the exact opposite of this and perceive it as cultivating conditions and reputation to allow the command to "take over the world."[174] External audiences sometimes construe USSOCOM's valuation of speed and agility as an indicator of an aggressive desire to be freed of oversight and bureaucratic processes.

In 2016, many outsiders blanched at Secretary of Defense Ash Carter's announcement that JSOC would assume leadership of DoD's efforts to track, monitor, and disrupt terrorist external operations.[175] This action read to some outside the SOF community as JSOC's being delegated too much responsibility.[176]

A specific instance in which USSOCOM's view of its own behavior and external views came into conflict was during then-commander Admiral William McRaven's efforts to establish the Global SOF Network. Internally, USSOCOM understood that

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[171] SO11, former OSD official, November 3, 2016.

[172] SO62, retired Army SF senior officer, March 16, 2017.

[173] SO21, former Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[174] Workshop notes, a.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[175] U.S. Department of Defense, "Joint Press Conference by Secretary Carter and Minister Le Drian," transcript, October 25, 2016; Raymond Thomas III, "Prologue," *Prism: A Journal of the Center for Complex Operations*, Vol. 6, No. 3, December 7, 2016, p. 3.

[176] Thomas Gibbons-Neff and Dan Lamothe, "Obama Administration Expands Elite Military Unit's Powers to Hunt Foreign Fighters Globally," *Washington Post*, November 25, 2016.

its effort was to augment the GCC's efforts, to increase information sharing and relationships with interagency actors, and to streamline USSOCOM's ability to flexibly provide support to a range of contingencies worldwide. However, externally, the Global SOF Network effort was viewed as an opaque attempt by USSOCOM to increase its ability to operate without oversight. This perception was fueled by USSOCOM's assertive advocacy campaign for its approval and perceived neglect of bureaucratic processes.[177]

To mitigate this external skepticism, USSOCOM leadership consistently stress in their congressional and other public engagements that they work closely with their interagency partners and directly support the GCCs in their campaign plans. Even so, so long as USSOCOM seeks to abbreviate certain bureaucratic processes for the sake of speed and agility, its actions will be perceived by some as aggressively independent.

Naturally, USSOCOM personnel bristle at these characterizations, and they are particularly proud of USSOCOM's efforts to engage its interagency and foreign government partners to gain support for its activities and to share information and resources with others. Craig Michel, a former SF officer, wrote in 2016,

> The notion that SOF roam the globe with impunity is also a myth. In reality, SOF is confined by detailed planning and long chains of approval that reach beyond even the senior levels of the Department of Defense. The approval process for special operations spans the U.S. government and requires painstaking analysis of costs and benefits. When possible, host-nation partnering and concurrence is sought as well. Where other U.S. forces are present, SOF's role is usually as a subordinate, complimentary component to a larger conventional command, which owns the regional battle space. In some locations, it is even common for SOF to incorporate representatives from conventional units in order to mitigate the potential for misunderstandings.[178]

Special Operations Forces as Center of the Universe

USSOCOM's celebrity affords it several competitive benefits, as noted previously in this chapter, but its reputation also breeds distrust and skepticism outside the SOF community. USSOCOM's high-profile raids, central role in senior-level policy debates, and media coverage, which sometimes paints SOF as reckless mavericks, lead external audiences to conclude that the command relishes the attention and actively perpetuates the public's fascination with SOF. This impression translates to a perception of what some believe is self-absorption to the detriment of the rest of DoD. An OSD official said that USSOCOM "is not always cognizant that they need to consider the services, the GCCs, and the interagency" in their initiatives.[179]

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[177] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

[178] Craig Michel, "Dispelling Myths About Special Operations Forces," *War on the Rocks*, March 17, 2016.

[179] SO31, OSD official, October 6, 2016.

Another interviewee explained that USSOCOM's reputation for being self-serving also impacts its relationships with government entities outside DoD:

> They think they are the center of the universe. They are successful because of that type A, pushing forward mentality. It doesn't always work with the interagency, though. SOCOM gets nailed when they do one thing wrong; people are waiting for them to fail. They should position themselves better in the interagency.[180]

As discussed earlier, several SOF and USSOCOM interviewees noted that USSOCOM does not want to be overused and is afraid of being viewed as a "one size fits all" or "easy button" force. However, many throughout the interagency perceive USSOCOM as posturing itself precisely in the opposite way, searching for a role in every logical military effort in order to increase its relevance and SOF demand. Some wonder if USSOCOM gets "caught up in being a solution for every problem. . . . The command is seen as an escape hatch for the interagency and National Security Council. Using SOF lets you bypass the tough decisions of manpower."[181]

A retired Army SF officer expanded on this view:

> I think SOCOM does a good job of positioning itself for being involved in everything. Their swath of capabilities, readiness and agility make sure that SOCOM always has an operational vignette to share with decision-makers—and appropriators—and to say "here is what we did in this country. We can do it for you too, over here." In peacetime or war, there is this whole box of things we can throw out to justify continuing funding, standing up a mission, or new authorities.[182]

According to one former OSD official commenting about USSOCOM's external reputation, "They believe that battlefield prowess equates to good leadership, which isn't the case. [USSOCOM can be] tone deaf, arrogant and bullying in the interagency."[183] Clearly, while USSOCOM enjoys strong relationships with many of its counterparts inside the U.S. government, its reputation for being self-serving endures.

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[180] SO71, Army officer with Ranger regiment experience, November 16, 2016.

[181] SO81, congressional staff member, November 29, 2016.

[182] SO21, retired Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

[183] SO11, former OSD official, November 3, 2016.

Implications for Future Conflicts

The Future of Competition

In the previous chapters, we analyzed how the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marine Corps, and USSOCOM have developed unique cultures and how those cultures manifest in specific competitive positions and preferences in their quest to achieve their respective goals. While this analysis provides a fascinating lens through which to view each entity's competitive behavior, we now ask, What does all this mean for OSD, the state of competition, and the future of war? How might the services and USSOCOM adapt and respond to major changes—whether to the national security environment or to the domestic policy environment? To answer these questions, we posed two scenarios in a set of workshops in early January 2017. These were intended to be not operational scenarios but rather simple bureaucratic scenarios. We asked how each service would respond if it knew that civilian policymakers would only prioritize a single policy issue over the next ten years. The first scenario investigated a Pentagon focus on China; the second focused on North Korea. Participants in the workshops provided us rich and compelling viewpoints on how each of the services and USSOCOM would posture itself in response to these major policy shifts. As a research team, we also analyzed the adaptations we conclude each service would exhibit if faced with missions set in the Asia-Pacific theater. These conclusions, as well as general analysis on how each service and USSOCOM is likely to try to shape future conflicts, follow. As stated previously, when we discuss "preferred" forms of conflict, it should be placed in context: War itself is rarely the preferred outcome for the military.

Army

Implications for Future Competition

Going forward, the Army will prefer defense policy orientations that favor conventional landpower and, under that overarching pursuit, allow it to pursue its key goals of building end strength to reduce risk and continuing to serve as America's foundational force. It will pursue these goals by exerting conceptual leadership, persistently arguing for its

view of the nation's security threats, and refining its ability to calculate and communicate risk to the American people. The Army will continue to be relevant to the current contingencies the United States is involved in around the world, but it will push for a very different future role that plays to the Army's preferences for longer-term planning, focus on readiness and modernization, and assurance of its indispensability in a land war. If the Army's funding continues to go largely to OCO rather than base, its sense of crisis will deepen. The Army believes that to serve the nation, it must prepare for future war with Russia or North Korea—more-conventional, land-based wars that would require Army leadership, whether the nation understands this is so or not. Contingency funding pushes the Army toward everything it is disposed to dislike: It keeps the Army trapped in an eternal present, deferring modernization and distracting from the work of strategy building. It legitimizes what are seen to be insatiable CCMD demands and increases the divide between the operational and institutional and between tactical leadership and strategic thinking. For the Army, this path means sacrificing readiness for an existential threat in favor of current operations against a far lesser enemy.

If the nation is instead engaged in the future in more contingency operations, the Army will not refuse, but it will look to mitigate the harm of this continued mission in a few ways. First, the Army will seek to provide conceptual leadership to the joint force, partnering on operational concepts that move it beyond irregular warfare, even if it must assume supporting roles to USSOCOM or the other services in some cases. Next, the Army would continue to sharpen and refine its assessments of risk, to quantify the cost to the nation of its continued path. Last, the Army could pursue increased modularity, both to double down on its flexibility and to preserve force structure, increasing the size of battalions and companies but having fewer per brigade so as to retain as many brigade-level flags as possible.

In the more distant future, if the present intolerance for risk and casualties continues, it will be hard for the Army to gain support for any more-ambitious missions, such as regime change in a near-peer country. Even at a large force size, such an Army would feel unready for a real conflict and would have to make a decision: become the handyman of choice for America's low-risk, limited-objective needs, or open a breach between the Army and civilian leadership. Stuck between a rock and a hard place, the Army would be unable to escape a major shift to its culture and would be forced to either abandon its self-image as the master of warfare or cease to be the nation's loyal servant.

Response to an Asia-Pacific Conflict

For the Army, a strong DoD focus on China is not conducive to its institutional health because it does not feature a strong role for landpower. This makes the Army's arguments for its foremost competitive goals—acceptance of the value of landpower and preservation of end strength—harder to pursue. The Army will fear that a China scenario could result in losses to end strength and force structure. It will adopt a conservative force structure strategy, pushing enablers into the Reserve in order to maintain

maximum combat power in the active forces. The Army is likely to employ its tactic of persistence to continue to argue for the relevance of landpower, likely making the argument that the Army will be left to deter all other threats while the Navy, Air Force, and Marines are occupied with the China problem set. The Army is likely to emphasize the Baltics and the Middle East as threats, as well as to highlight the uncertainty of future war. The Army will build its resourcing strategy and its POM around non-China threats, continuing to resist building items like antiship missiles, Terminal High Altitude Area Defense, and improvements to the Patriot missile system into its budget until OSD specifically asks it to. Finally, the Army will try to play a foundational, if supporting, role by authoring joint concepts for a China scenario.

A strong DoD focus on North Korea would cement the Army's relevance in the mid- and long term by playing to the Army's key strength of landpower and its sense of being the foundation of the force. Because North Korea is not seen to be a rational actor, the Army will interpret this as a return to total war. In order to meet the many challenges of a Korean Peninsula scenario, the Army is likely to argue that it needs additional force structure to counter conventional threats in North Korea, defensive operations and crisis management in South Korea, and more. The CWMD mission belongs to USSOCOM, and the Army will not want to assist in it because it is not primarily a combat mission. However, because USSOCOM lacks the personnel to secure an unknown number of sites in unknown locations, the Army will grudgingly offer to help. For the Army, the challenge here is not technology or operational concepts; it is capacity, plain and simple.

Navy

Implications for Future Competition

As the security context continues to shift toward a renewed sense of great-power competition, the Navy will likely continue shifting its focus toward traditional maritime warfare roles that have gone unrepresented following the end of the Cold War. In particular, it will emphasize capability to carry out sea control missions and SLOC protection. As it does so, it may discover that the types of platforms and operating principles required for those missions are incongruent with those required for direct support of joint operations on and over land.

As mentioned previously, from an institutional perspective, the Navy would likely prefer that the global security context continue to be framed first and foremost by the threat of conflict with China. Of course, this is not to say that Navy leaders actually hope that war with China will come; after all, they too recognize that the cost in lives on both sides of such a conflict would be enormous. Rather, the institutional preference is more nuanced—perhaps a better characterization would be that if the *threat* of a conflict with China endures, the Navy would prefer that China remain deterred from aggression through the threat of U.S. military force, especially naval force. That

would necessitate continued investment in the Navy but without the bloodshed and carnage that would accompany an actual war. It is also important to note that it is not China itself that makes it an appealing competitor; rather, China simply represents the current manifestation of a great-power competitor with an advanced navy with whom a conflict would naturally entail fighting at sea.

Toward deterring such a competitor, the Navy would naturally continue to push for investment in building high-end, advanced ships, submarines, and aircraft capable of carrying out sea control missions against a near-peer adversary at sea. It would also advocate for greater capacity for power projection, through some combination of aircraft carriers with fifth-generation aircraft and advanced land-attack cruise missiles able to launch from ships and submarines.

Of course, as seen by the Navy's continued emphasis on the "four plus one" (China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea, plus violent extremism), the Navy will continue to highlight the potential for conflict and instability all over the globe.[1] This narrative provides context for which a robust forward naval presence, deployed not just to the Asia-Pacific theater but all over the world, is necessary.

If geopolitical focus does not remain on China or some other state able to contest sea control (and thus power projection from the sea) but instead shifts back toward the threat of nonstate actors and violent extremists, the Navy would likely not radically adjust its force posture or alter its preferred core competencies. As was seen during the COIN-heavy wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, it might take on additional roles and missions that are outside its traditional preferences, but they would be unlikely to actually supplant sea control and power projection in terms of the Navy's institutional preferences. Indeed, the Navy's enduring preference for sea control as one of its three favored core competencies naturally lends itself to larger-scale conflicts. The Navy would also likely continue to emphasize the unpredictability of the future global security context, arguing that given the long lead times required to design and build ships, the nation cannot afford to give up its ability to wage a high-end fight at sea today simply because the current threat does not require it.

Most people attribute the Navy's reluctant acceptance of "joint" to its compulsion 30 years ago by the Goldwater-Nichols Act. To be sure, the act's shake-up certainly forced an inherently more joint operating construct into the military. However, it is worth considering that it was only after the Soviet Union collapsed, and with it the only other navy in the world capable of challenging the U.S. Navy at sea, that the Navy genuinely embraced its commitment to supporting the joint force. Once again faced with the prospect of a major war in the maritime domain against a near-peer adversary, the Navy may understandably begin to push back against the contemporary embrace of jointness wherever it perceives that joint operations or even joint interoperability must necessarily come at the expense of its ability to effectively carry out maritime

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[1]   U.S. Navy, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Marine Corps, 2007.

missions. In so doing, the Navy must recognize it will face renewed accusations of parochialism and defiance and be ready to counter them.

Response to an Asia-Pacific Conflict

The Navy would likely consider a DoD focused solely on China as a significant advantage in achieving its competitive goals—that is, in preserving the relevance of forward presence, sea control, and power projection. The nature of the geography surrounding China makes the maritime domain likely to feature prominently in any future war in that theater. The two most likely situations that could spark a conflict with China are a Taiwan invasion scenario and an escalation of a maritime claims dispute in the South China Sea. Both scenarios are sea based and therefore make the maritime domain the most likely one in which a military conflict could erupt. They also make it unlikely that a large-scale ground fight would feature prominently in any China conflict. Furthermore, China's robust maritime ISR network, modern surface ships and submarines, antiship missiles, and land- and carrier-based maritime strike aircraft provide a formidable set of naval capabilities, which the Navy would be glad to showcase as justification for procuring the types and numbers of high-end ships and aircraft the Navy prefers. For these reasons, the Navy would likely do all it can to ensure the United States remains focused on China. However, it might also try to frame that focus in a context of China as the only real potential for a major high-end great-power conflict, but alongside the potential for small, unpredictable conflicts to erupt from time to time elsewhere in the world. That would enable the Navy to move toward its goals of building its preferred force structure and maintaining the relevance of sea control in modern warfare in the face of a potential China war, but it would also maintain an arguable need for forward presence throughout other regions of the world as a means of responding to smaller-scale regional crises.

In a North Korea scenario, the Navy would not likely vie for primacy but would be more likely to emphasize its unique characteristics that would prove useful ashore in support of that ground fight. These include its ability to project power by striking targets via carrier-based aircraft and ship- and submarine-launched TLAMs, both of which provide a redundancy to ground-based airpower that might be vulnerable to ballistic missile attacks early in any potential fight.

The Navy would also point out that in order to provide that redundancy, it must necessarily be able to control the seas from which those platforms will operate. Since North Korea does have some limited naval capabilities, most notably in the form of submarines and antiship cruise missiles, it would be necessary to ensure that joint operational planning accounts for Navy platforms carrying out ASW, AAW, ASuW, and even strike missions (against Coastal Defense Cruise Missiles, for example) for the purpose of achieving sea control.[2] It would also highlight its ability to conduct missile

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2   IHS Markit, "Korea, North—Navy," *Jane's World Navies*, March 23, 2017.

defense of potential U.S. and allied targets from North Korean ballistic missile attacks with Aegis ballistic-missile-defense-capable surface ships. However, while being sure to highlight the ways the Navy would be relevant to a North Korea fight, it would certainly also be doing all that it could to move the spotlight back to other potential geopolitical contingencies around the world, in particular a possible China conflict. In so doing it would stress the Navy's need for capability to gain and maintain sea control against advanced, highly capable naval and A2/AD systems, rather than just those needed in a lower-end naval fight against North Korea. Beyond China, it would also likely try to highlight the uncertainty of where and when smaller regional crises and conflicts will erupt around the world, and therefore the need to maintain a robust forward presence as a means of providing the country with rapid and flexible military response options.

Air Force

Implications for Future Competition

With respect to the Air Force's role in future conflicts, we expect the service to compete for ways to demonstrate its relevance to the fight by promoting the need for air superiority and command and control, targeting, and ISR aspects of its space and cyber capabilities.

According to one respondent,

> Today, at the end of major combat operations, the Army and Marine Corps will get less, the Air Force will get more with nuclear modernization, F-35s. Minus a change in resourcing practices, there will be inter-service competition because services are competing for a finite amount of resources.[3]

Going forward, the Air Force's investments in space, cyber, and nuclear modernization will serve its strategic interests well in that its relevance is diversified and enables it to be a major player in a range of potential conflicts. The Air Force is also likely to continue linking future challenges to its storied past to build nostalgia for what the service can accomplish and how its forward-looking investments can achieve similar battlespace success, regardless of what the battlespace looks like. These linkages would likely include anecdotes of how impactful the threat of air superiority has been and can be, but further magnified by the service's expanded capabilities.

Focusing on leadership opportunities in the future, the Air Force will likely continue its pursuit of gaining command positions in the CCMDs to exert additional influence in conflicts globally, and it will likely continue to lead competition for many joint resourcing and budget roles. Where the Air Force is able to lead in a conflict, it

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[3]   AR27, retired Army field-grade officer with multiple joint duty tours, December 28, 2016.

will endeavor to do so, but where it is relegated to a support role, as it largely has been since 9/11, the service will seek to carve out specific missions (again, such as in the space and cyber realms) that result in the Air Force's indispensability.

Looking ahead to potential future conflicts, air dominance will almost certainly remain a critical component of the Air Force's role, but the service is likely to seek ways to better integrate its other air, space, and cyber missions in order to advocate for resources to tell a cohesive story about airpower. According to a flag-level officer interviewed for this study, "We have raised an entire generation that hasn't even thought about fighting a peer competitor. We do ISR now, but that won't help us fight China or Russia. The Air Force has enough money, people. Just a matter [of] how best we use those resources."[4] The Air Force will continue to seek ways to integrate its signature capability—air dominance—with the capabilities needed for unconventional dominance, such as enhancing its space architecture to thwart adversary advancements in space-enabled capabilities.[5] The Air Force will continually seek the resources and personnel it believes it needs to retain dominance in the realms for which it maintains responsibility.

Carl Builder's words from 1994 remain relevant today when considering the future of Air Force as a part of our national security apparatus: "The nation's interests in the future, as in the past, are likely to be better served by the diversity than by the scale of capabilities offered by the Air Force."[6] In *The Icarus Syndrome*, Builder also notes,

> In a chaotic world, the aerospace continuum will offer power elites three unique attributes not available through any other military force: *universal access*, *vantage point*, and *speed* to bring military power—both force and infrastructures—to bear upon situations and adversaries, both of which may know no borders.[7]

Into the future, we can expect the Air Force to continue to invest heavily in systems, processes, and platforms that sustain and grow those attributes, even though the meaning of each continues to evolve. The adversaries confronting the U.S. military now and in the future may change, but the advantage of airpower will continue to be strategically decisive. No matter the mission area, this principle is a central tenet in today's Air Force that drives its future outlook. The Air Force's future competitive posture will seek to retain that strategic advantage while accounting for emerging challenges and technological advancements that can deter adversaries and their capabilities.

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[4] AF12, flag-level officer, October 19, 2016.

[5] Harris, Bunch, and Nowland, 2017, p. 15.

[6] Builder, 1994, p. 285.

[7] Builder, 1994, p. 289.

Response to an Asia-Pacific Conflict

While threats emanating from North Korea and China do not provide inherent leadership opportunities for the Air Force, the service will seek ways to demonstrate its indispensability in the Pacific theater. Air Force leaders have stated the need to prepare for the range of Asia-Pacific threats, and they are conducting planning to be able to do so if needed. For the Air Force, this planning for potential conflicts with either of these countries will include promotion of technological advancement and measures to ensure skilled personnel are trained to operate this technology. If the United States were to pivot to conflicts in the Asia-Pacific—namely, with China and North Korea—two of the Air Force's preferred competition tactics—practicing strategic analysis and emphasizing battlefield criticality—would manifest themselves in several ways. First, as noted by a workshop participant, the Air Force would want to determine which service would be charged with winning the war. This refers to the need to establish supported and supporting commands, in addition to knowing whether a strategy for a North Korean conflict would rely on A2/AD. If so, the Air Force would arguably want to retain control of that mission as a way of emphasizing its battlefield criticality. In a conflict with either country, the Air Force could also do so through command of cyber and space activity, and these could well be their main contributions to a China conflict dominated by land and naval forces. Indeed, a North Korean conflict might cause a crisis in the Air Force because of the nature of the conflict. The Air Force might be inclined to argue for global strike, forward-deployed air forces, and no land forces not only as a way of inserting a level of control over operations but also to emphasize its importance. For the North Korean fight, the Air Force may look to impose costs on the enemy with a penetrating deep strike capability, technology suited to the high-end fight the service is best suited to lead.

Marine Corps

Implications for Future Competition

Going forward, policymakers should continue to expect the Marine Corps to focus on creating tactically proficient and adaptive forces, adjusting the force structure only when necessary to sustain or strengthen comparative advantages in core competencies. The two missions the Marines appear to be placing the most focus on developing capabilities for now are limited crisis response operations and operations in A2/AD environments. There are meaningful tensions between those two roles that the Marine Corps will continue to wrestle with in order to find an appropriate balance. Currently it appears that the service is favoring a force structure designed around flexibility, while making select capability investments where necessary to sustain or extend core competencies. It is not comprehensively optimizing for high-intensity combat with a peer competitor, preferring to organize itself for broader applicability. It will continue to seek to strengthen its relationships with the Navy and SOF community to increase

opportunities for employment. Further, it will continue to prioritize forward presence to support CCMD requests, even at the cost of stress on the force (e.g., high deploy-to-dwell rates) and degraded unit readiness—so long as it can preserve ready units to meet current operational needs.

Today, the Marine Corps is on track to procure 420 F-35 B and C variants, compared to 260 F-35Cs the Navy is planning to procure. A skeptic might note that the Marine Corps's air force is outgrowing the Navy's air force. The CH-53K is coming close in cost to that of the F-35. In its FY 2017 budget request, DoD requested for the Marine Corps's Marine aviation more than triple the amount it requested for Marine ground forces. By comparison, aviation has a much larger share of Marine procurement dollars than Army (a $35 million Apache seems almost inexpensive compared to the $120 million F-35B).[8] The Marine Corps has several initiatives under way to increase its cyber, electronic warfare, and unmanned capabilities.[9] This raises the question whether the Marine Corps is becoming more technology-centric over time.[10]

Marines interviewed tended to emphasize rational, mission-oriented explanations. They underscore the point by claiming that marines "don't man the equipment, we equip the individual." Marines are still seen as central, and technology is still perceived as helping the Marine Corps adapt to the environment. The parallel development of maneuver warfare with many of the aforementioned systems would seem to support this view. However, this technology is helping the Marine Corps adapt to the environment in a specific way (as does maneuver warfare doctrine) that has implications for its longer-term roles, missions, personnel model, and organizational culture.

Response to an Asia-Pacific Conflict

A Marine Corps focused on China would likely double down on its expeditionary advanced base concept. This would entail pressing forward with the procurement of F-35s, but it might reconsider whether its America-class amphibious ships need a well deck. Originally the America class was designed without one in order to optimize flight operations, but currently the Marine Corps's plans for future variants include a well deck to optimize its flexible employment globally. Additional investment in air-launched, low-observable antiship munitions like long-range antiship missiles might be considered. Development of unmanned systems and air defense and sea control systems (e.g., antiship multiple-launch rocket systems) would be increasingly important. New investments in information operations—including cyber and electronic

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[8] Megan Eckstein, "Lawmaker Worries Marine Corps Investing Too Heavily in Aviation over Ground Vehicles," *USNI News*, March 10, 2017; "U.S. Military Aircraft Programs," *Forecast International's Aerospace Portal*, 2016.

[9] Neller, undated-b.

[10] Some of this might merely be an artifact of the idiosyncrasies of naval aviation funding mechanisms and a lack of alternatives. Marine aviation is procured with Navy dollars. The Navy can substitute modernized F/A-18s for additional F-35Cs, while the Marine Corps has no vertical/short takeoff and landing alternatives to the F-35Bs available.

warfare—technology, and force structure would take on new importance and would likely see growth even without additional end strength, with bill payers being found in ground maneuver units. Global forward posture and operational tempo would likely be reduced in order to increase the readiness of follow-on forces. Pacific deployments would remain robust and perhaps be strengthened by having the MEU that typically passes through and continues on to the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf region remain in the Pacific to increase engagement with regional partners.

In a North Korea–focused conflict, amphibious assault would play a key role. The Incheon landing holds an important place in Marine Corps's cultural and operational history. A Marine Corps focused on Korea would likely place less emphasis on expeditionary advanced base concepts, focusing instead on operational maneuver from the sea—to include vertical maneuver (e.g., V-22s) and enhanced surface connectors (e.g., the Ultra Heavy-Lift Amphibious Connector and Expeditionary Fast Transport). The Light Armored Vehicle Anti-Tank Modernization and Amphibious Combat Vehicle would likely meet many of the service's ground maneuver needs, though the Marines might reconsider recent force structure reductions to their tank units. The need for these capabilities would entail continuing with current plans for future America-class amphibious ships to include a well deck to support amphibious operations, rather than optimizing to support air operations. The F-35 would continue to be important from both a readiness and a capability perspective. Older aircraft are becoming increasingly difficult to sustain in an operational status, while North Korea's A2/AD capabilities are sufficiently robust to place a premium on the employment of fifth-generation, low-observable aircraft to destroy both threat air defenses and antiship capabilities to enable surface and vertical amphibious assaults. Investments in cyber and electronic warfare would be less pressing than in the China case but would retain significance. Unmanned systems would remain an important technology space to help enable amphibious assaults (e.g., unmanned first wave to absorb A2/AD munitions). The Marine Corps would likely be less inclined to reduce global presence and operational tempo given that a joint and combined campaign against North Korea would require a substantial Army buildup in South Korea, giving the Marines sufficient time to reallocate forces from lower-priority missions.

U.S. Special Operations Command

Implications for Future Competition

When facing future conflicts, USSOCOM's flexibility and agility will continue to serve as the command's greatest strengths: For nearly any adversary or type of threat the United States may face, USSOCOM will seek to define a critical role for its personnel to combat it, and it will likely be able to do it faster and with fewer resources than the other services. While the rest of DoD, and particularly the traditional services, might struggle to change course if faced with an unexpected reorientation of

U.S. security priorities, USSOCOM is built for such reorientations. However, similar to the challenging balance the command faces now, USSOCOM will have to compete for only the roles that it wants and can optimally execute without risking overburdening its forces.

Without autonomy, USSOCOM would necessarily lose some of its competitive edge with the services and the GCCs: Autonomy is what allows SOF to remain flexible and agile in crisis response. Accordingly, we can expect that USSOCOM will invest further in its efforts to gain even more operational latitude and freedom from bureaucratic processes, including additional authorities, but that it will simultaneously continue or expand its collaboration with civilian agencies. This collaboration has thus far proved useful both for USSOCOM and to the agencies it partners with, a point USSOCOM will undoubtedly continue to highlight.

While USSOCOM's advocacy for greater autonomy may not always succeed, the command will continue to push for increasing leeway, but not for so much that it would cleave itself from the budgetary support of the services. When asked about how USSOCOM will approach future challenges, one senior USSOCOM official stated, "We are known for doing whatever it takes; we will push for it. It's good for us to get our hand slapped sometimes. It means we are taking risks. It's a good thing. SOCOM will try to figure it out. Maybe DoD or the Hill will rein us in, but at least we tried."[11]

As future missions expand beyond counterterrorism, we expect that USSOCOM will continue to try to retain its flexibility and relative autonomy while staking ownership over near-term operations requiring a high degree of training, agility, and tactical proficiency. Although some interviewees noted that the loss of the counterterrorism mission as a primary focus would incite an "identity crisis" within USSOCOM, it is likely that the command would push for primacy in new missions even when facing conventional adversaries, as it has with CWMD.[12]

As discussed, lead responsibilities for the nation's CWMD mission were recently transferred from USSTRATCOM to USSOCOM via the Unified Command Plan. USSOCOM will likely seek to modify or create authorities to prepare for and respond quickly to CWMD-related crises and continue to emphasize the need for service support for its activities. Several interviewees noted that USSOCOM will likely adapt its counterterrorism planning framework to the CWMD mission by establishing, for example, regular inter-DoD or interagency working groups around CWMD issues to generate momentum and collaboration.[13] Further, SOF and USSOCOM representatives felt that, so long as it is able to secure adequate resources, USSOCOM will comfortably settle into its new mission without substantial difficulty. As one former senior

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[11] SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2017.

[12] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

[13] SO42, USSOCOM official, January 4, 2017.

Army SF officer noted, "SOCOM is just going to color the WMD version to a different version of the raid. It's well within their sweet spot."[14]

However, this focus on the CWMD mission will likely come at the expense of the other SOF core tasks, which some feel have atrophied as the global war on terror has so heavily focused USSOCOM's efforts on counterterrorism and direct action since 2001. Foreign internal defense, unconventional warfare, civil affairs, and military information support operations in particular were named by our interviewees as critical skills that may be lost.[15]

As USSOCOM looks to fulfill one of its leading competitive goals, to retain primacy on at least one major mission set, it will likely also diversify beyond the CWMD mission. As USSOCOM will likely not be the lead in conventional missions, nor does the command have the personnel or the desire to, it is likely to seek relevance in the "gray zone" conflicts—somewhere between peace and active armed conflict but where threats and aggression are still employed—where its SOF can serve to shape such a situation, improve understanding of it, and ideally mitigate the likelihood that it would develop into a full contingency. In pursuit of that role, USSOCOM will likely continue to gain authorities to prepare for and operate in such environments. These authorities would ideally enable USSOCOM to apply funding—MFP-11 or otherwise—to develop infrastructure, enhance partners' capabilities, and forward deploy its forces for access and placement purposes.

Response to an Asia-Pacific Conflict

In an Asia-Pacific conflict, similar to any other emerging threat, USSOCOM's competitive edge would be its ability to shift more quickly than the conventional services in order to confront the aspects of the threat that USSOCOM deemed most appropriate for it to address.

USSOCOM would also quickly turn to Congress, DoD leadership, and the White House to advocate for greater authorities to allow latitude and operational flexibility, but it would clearly and unequivocally emphasize its support role to the services, both in an attempt to limit potential overuse of SOF and to try to garner additional funding from the services to accomplish its narrower mission.

As one interviewee noted to us, USSOCOM does not try to lead in every campaign, but the command does want a role in every campaign. USSOCOM's small size and targeted capabilities make the command poorly suited to wage conventional warfare on its own. With this in mind, it is unlikely that USSOCOM would attempt to assume leadership of either a China or a North Korea mission.[16] Instead, the command would narrowly define its utility in both, likely emphasizing its unconventional

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[14] SO62, retired Army SF officer, March 16, 2017.

[15] SO62, retired Army SF officer, March 16, 2017.

[16] SO21, retired Army SF officer, November 15, 2016.

warfare abilities in the China scenario and its CWMD leadership in the North Korea scenario.

In a scenario in which China is the United States' chief adversary, USSOCOM would likely not seek a lead role in conventional warfare. Rather, we would expect USSOCOM to stress the importance of, and move quickly to orient its capabilities, training, and investments to, clandestine operations intended to disrupt Chinese lines of communication. USSOCOM would likely redouble its support to and focus on unconventional warfare, potentially elevating the Army's SF capabilities and status within the command.

In response to a North Korea scenario, USSOCOM would likely fill a more robust and direct role on the CWMD front. Given the current concern over North Korea's nuclear arsenal, we can expect that concern to grow exponentially in the event of a conflict with the nation and its unstable leader. However, to locate and secure all the sites where these weapons are located would likely require a substantial amount of ground forces, which USSOCOM is not able to provide. Another service—most likely the Army—would need to lead in that role, to the Army's discomfort. Workshop participants also noted that in a North Korea conflict, USSOCOM would likely invest in clandestine undersea and mobile missile-hunting capabilities in order to increase its relevance in that mission. One participant stated, "If they had enough time to get ahead of it, it would be taking a look at what authorities they could use in unconventional warfare that they currently use in [counterterrorism]."[17]

Regardless of a China or North Korea conflict and the role that USSOCOM would play in each of those, USSOCOM would also not entirely abandon its counterterrorism primacy in the short to medium term. Instead, it will likely attempt to generate even more autonomy in that arena as the rest of DoD focuses on a conventional war with China.

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[17] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.

Conclusion

This report has focused on how the character of competition among the military services has changed since the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, the current modalities of competition, which tactics of competition each service employs, and how the services posture to gain resources, authorities, and influence. These portraits of culture and competition in our armed forces demonstrate a wide disparity between each service's cultural distinctions, competitive goals, preferred employment, and vision of how wars, if they occur, should be conducted. The differences described in the preceding chapters are unlikely to abate as the shape of conflict continues to change and could present substantial challenges for DoD leadership to know the extent to which military advice they receive is colored by each service's parochial lens. Understanding the foundations and goals of each service, as well as their tactics of competition, will provide defense policymakers with a framework for making the best national security decisions in a complex institutional environment.

Summary of Findings

Overall, we found that many of the service cultures and distinctions described by Builder endure. Culture still drives each service's competitive goals and behaviors, which both strengthen and impede services' ability to adapt and react. We also found that, while the foundational elements of each service culture persist, certain characteristics evolve slowly to adapt to the present environment, such as the Army's reliance on technology, the Navy's slow acceptance of jointness, or the Air Force's increased focus on cyber and threat capabilities.

Second, the competitive landscape in DoD has indeed changed since the passage of Goldwater-Nichols and the Nunn-Cohen Amendment of the FY 1987 National Defense Authorization Act. The arenas of competition have expanded: Substantial competition—and, in some cases, collusion—can be observed in the arenas of personnel, current roles and missions, and future institutional security, as well as in the more traditional resourcing arena. As a result of this heightened complexity, and also due

to strategic shifts within the national security environment, the tactics of competition utilized by each of the services have evolved as well.

Third, the services remain the most powerful competitors in DoD. However, the character of competition and its relevant players have expanded to include elevated roles for OSD, the CCMDs, and the Joint Staff. Two actors in particular that Builder had not included in *Masks of War* for different reasons—the Marine Corps and USSOCOM—are now such relevant competitors that we chose to include them as primary actors in this study. We found that not only have both organizations changed competition across the four arenas in their own right, they also offer lenses through which to view competitive strategies of the other services and, in some cases, innovative ways to achieve service goals that can be informative to the entire DoD.

Many defining qualities that Builder observed in the Army, Air Force, and Navy are still present today. For example, branch distinctions within each service still exist, but they are more pronounced in some services than others, and many of the services' salient characteristics are sharply defined by their domains of land, sea, and air. However, this report details findings that differ from Builder's in several key ways. Our chief observations on each service, and how these observations depart from *Masks of War*, are summarized here.

The Army competes for missions by positioning itself as a master of leadership and command, and for resources by arguing for its positions in terms of unacceptable risk to the nation. This competitive style is driven by the Army's beliefs that it is essential to the nation's identity, that it alone understands war, and that it is too selfless, taking on every task asked of it. The Army seeks to drive acceptance of the centrality of conventional ground combat, preserve and grow end strength and force structure, and participate in all contingencies. The competitive arena of current roles and missions is where the Army is most comfortable competing. To achieve its goals, the Army utilizes arguments pertaining to its status as a master of leadership and command, its ubiquity and mass, and its persistence, as well as risk-based arguments. Others think of the Army as the nation's foundational service but recognize difficulty in understand the Army's priorities. Compared to the other services, our assessment of the Army today is closest to Builder's but reflects a greater sense of the Army as "too selfless" and greater appreciation for branch distinctions.

The Navy is characterized by hierarchical structure, deep branch distinctions, and a preference for operating forward and independently from the other services. It prepares for resource competitions through a rigorous internal POM process and competes for roles and missions through its tightly articulated service strategies and institutional resistance to jointness. The Navy's chief competitive goals are to maintain forward presence, sea control, power projection through force structure changes, and DoD acceptance of purely naval missions. It prefers to compete in the resources, personnel, and future institutional security arenas. Its adversarial and competitive POM process, reliance on analysis, proactive congressional engagement, rigorous

competition in career progression, and Navy service strategies are typical tactics the Navy utilizes to compete across all four arenas. Outsiders tend to view the service as independent to the detriment of jointness and resistant to change. While Builder emphasized the hierarchical nature of the Navy's branches, little evidence that shows the Navy's hierarchy translates to institutional power or influence. Further, we found evidence that contradicts Builder's characterization of the Navy as a service bound by tradition: Today, the Navy's adherence to tradition has little impact on institutional decisionmaking.

As for the Air Force's competitive posture, it focuses on technology, innovation, and strategic analysis, and it competes through early investment in and promotion of top performers, as well as the development of senior-level resource management expertise. The Air Force aims to make air superiority central to U.S. strategy, reinforce an identity beyond enabling, and sustain dominance in space and cyber realms, and it exercises preference for competition in the resources and future institutional security arenas. To achieve its competitive goals, the Air Force focuses on innovation, identifies and invests in top performers early in their careers, develops resource management expertise, practices strategic analysis, and emphasizes its own battlefield criticality. Others see the Air Force as valuing technology above all else, as experiencing an internal identity crisis, and as being highly effective in competing for resources. Our findings were similar to Builder's in our analysis of the Air Force, specifically that the service bases many of its competitive positions on the idea that airpower alone can prove decisive across the sea, air, and land domains. However, we also found that while the Air Force maintains focus on technology, it has evolved to equally value its personnel and their technical expertise to operate that technology.

The Marine Corps identifies as a "middleweight" naval expeditionary force in readiness; perceives itself as adaptive, innovative, and frugal; and is institutionally paranoid. This service competes by engaging Congress and the U.S. public and protecting its elite brand. The service's competitive goals are to demonstrate relevance through forward presence, maintain operational autonomy, and preserve Marine culture and the forcible entry mission. Of the four competitive arenas, the Marines demonstrate preference for current roles and missions, resources, and personnel. Marines operate in these arenas most effectively by engaging the U.S. public and Congress, speaking with a single voice, innovating, leveraging their alliance with the Navy, and making demand-based arguments. Others view the Marines as an elite, tradition-bound force that competes well above its relative size. That we included the Marine Corps as a unit of analysis deviates in and of itself from Builder's assessment of this service's competitive prowess; however, the few cultural observations Builder did make of the Marine Corps's pride in its personnel over its "toys" reemerged throughout our research. Today, the Marine Corps is a major competitive actor on equal footing with the other services, and an analysis of interservice competition that neglected to consider this organization would have been incomplete.

Finally, USSOCOM—both a CCMD and a servicelike institution with force organization responsibilities—is characterized by internal jointness and interagency coordination, adaptability, secrecy, direct action orientation, and its focus on humans over technology. Although USSOCOM is composed of SOF from each of the services, we found that commonalities between SOF personnel seem to be greater than those between SOF and their parent service. USSOCOM primarily competes by building on its operational credibility, by strategically shifting between CCMD and servicelike roles, and by maintaining strong congressional support. Its chief competitive goals are to maintain and grow autonomy, limit SOF overuse, and retain primacy on a critical mission set that highlights its uniqueness. However, these goals are often at odds with one another. The command is particularly effective at competing in the current roles and missions and future institutional security arenas, but it may face challenges in the resources arena as OCO funding dries up. USSOCOM utilizes competitive tactics such as building interagency and intergovernmental coordination and relationships, maintaining congressional interaction, branding its personnel as elite warriors, and shifting between its service and its functional CCMD roles when advantageous. Its forward-leaning behavior and deliberate branding result in others viewing USSOCOM as containing elite warriors, desiring total autonomy, and being highly self-centered as an organization. As USSOCOM had just been created when *Masks of War* was published, Builder was unable to include this organization in his analysis. However, in the last 30 years, USSOCOM has emerged as a major player in DoD, particularly in its status in current roles and missions, and will continue to vie for its relevance well into the future. Demonstrating distinct competitive goals and patterns of behavior across all four arenas, USSOCOM not only enriches the analysis of interservice competition throughout the Pentagon but also provides examples of ways to pursue competitive goals that other services may not have considered previously.

The Future of Competition

In assessing how our research might apply to a future Asia-Pacific scenario, we found that the Army, Navy, and Air Force will continue to argue the relevance of their own domains, while the Marine Corps and USSOCOM will emphasize their adaptability across domains. Both of these approaches offer competitive advantages and limitations: While the Marine Corps and USSOCOM can leverage their agile reputations to remain relevant as forces of choice across a wide range of contingencies and can help satisfy policymakers who seek smaller-footprint approaches, the domain-centric Army, Air Force, and Navy are better poised to direct resources toward solutions they prefer.

Based on these cases and the research in the preceding report, we conclude that the services will remain as primary competitive actors, but other entities, such as the GCCs, USSOCOM, OSD, and the Joint Staff, will continue to add to the complexity

of the four competitive arenas identified in this study. Further, while competition will continue to exist in the personnel, resources, current roles and missions, and future institutional security arenas, collusion between multiple actors will continue to serve as a key attribute, particularly in the resource arena in periods of budget austerity. Given strategic shifts—the return to great-power competition, for example—it is likely that cultural foundations and chief competitive strategies will endure but that certain approaches and priorities will also gradually transform.

As we move forward, this analysis provides us a framework to answer questions critical to U.S. national security decisionmaking. When will services compete or collude? Competition is more likely when resources are unconstrained and when a service's relevance appears to be in question. On the other hand, policymakers can anticipate collusion in times of resource constraint, when the services are more likely to join and support each other against OSD or congressional budget cuts. Under what circumstances is competition good or bad for national security? Policymakers can harness competition to benefit defense policy. First, competition appears to spur innovation. Second, competition can enable the balancing of traditional service strengths with the adaptability and agility inherent in USSOCOM and the Marine Corps, which could facilitate prudent diversification and prevent overoptimization for a single specific threat. And finally, how might future innovations affect services' capabilities and ability to adapt? Each of the services demonstrates willingness to adapt to different innovations, so long as those innovations can directly support the service's underlying competitive goals.

Ultimately, this research helps to explain why the services behave the way they do, and it helps clarify the motivations and preferences behind military advice and analysis. As Terry Terriff explained, "Organizational culture thus can provide a compelling explanation for why specific military organizations may continue to pursue ways of warfare that are incompatible with emerging or prevailing strategic and operational realities, or why they resist change."[1] With these insights, policymakers can better anticipate the choices, preferences, and subjectivity inherent in service-driven arguments, and they can more clearly issue top-level guidance to help mitigate typical service responses. Further, they can use this analysis to more effectively consider institutional goals and strategies alongside operational needs in formulating guidance such as the National Defense Strategy and Defense Planning Guidance. Before the passage of Goldwater-Nichols, many people, including Builder, believed that the power relationships inside DoD were fixed and unchangeable. Our research has shown this belief to be unfounded. Some believe that the pendulum of influence is swinging back in favor of more military control. At the time of writing, various proposals are in circulation that seek to change the balance of these actors, such as breaking apart

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[1]   Terriff, 2006, p. 478.

OSD's powerful Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics office or increasing the duties of the Joint Staff. The insights in this report can assist policymakers as those proposed changes are considered.

Beyond utility for policymakers, servicemembers and those who work closely with the service branches can use this research to better understand how to navigate the other services' competitive equities, drive toward objectivity in analysis, and perhaps derive useful lessons to improve the competitive position of one's own service based on the successes of another. While the future national security landscape cannot be fully anticipated, one fundamental tenet in understanding military responses to emerging challenges will remain true: What motivates the services in competition is the continued fight for relevance.

Historical Milestones Narrative

Rebeca Orrie

The years since Carl Builder published *Masks of War* have seen drastic alterations in the U.S. military services' operating environment, strategic objectives, technology, personnel management, and available resources. In order to understand the context of this report's subsequent case studies, we briefly cover the major milestones from the passage of Goldwater-Nichols to the present.

We define milestones as events predominantly external to the services' control that resulted in paradigm shifts in at least one military service. These shifts can result in adjustments to a service's culture or the way in which a service competes. The milestones covered in this appendix represent some of the most important defining moments in the records of the services since the Goldwater-Nichols Act, but we do not attempt to provide an all-inclusive history of them. Instead, we use them as illustrative examples of overarching trends we will discuss later.

Approach

Informed by the literature on competition and primary source research, interviews, and workshop discussions, we compiled a history of milestones in recent defense policy. Each of these milestones is associated with responses elicited from the services. This is not perfectly chronological in its presentation: An impact to service culture or competition may reveal itself years after the event or not exist at an exact point in time. Additionally, the milestones are not limited to those that directly affected every service, as this would exclude important service-specific milestones.

Our historical narrative looks at four grand strategic eras and discusses the major events and threats that defined them. Our grand strategic eras are shown in Figure A.1.

Through our analysis of each of the periods, we do not attempt to capture the full history of these events but rather focus on the major strategic-level trends that emerged from our identified milestones.

Figure A.1
Grand Strategic Eras

| Bipolarity | Unipolar moment | Rise of nonstate actors | Great-power competition |

1986   2017

Bipolarity: The Final Years of the Cold War, 1986–1990

Today's services are the products of their history, with World War II serving as a key transition point. World War II reshaped U.S. military strategic views on such issues as isolationism, maintaining a standing army, carrier aviation, and strategic bombing. Transposing these concepts onto the Cold War did not always reveal a perfect match but set the stage for how the United States would approach the Cold War. Prominent milestones during those years include Secretary Harold Brown's "Offset Strategy," President Ronald Reagan's nuclear buildup, and the rise of CCMDs as a result of the DoD reorganization mandated in Goldwater-Nichols. This section will focus on these last two milestones.

Setting the Stage: Service Posture at the End of the Reagan Buildup

While the present report's analysis begins after the passage of Goldwater-Nichols, it is important to note that President Reagan's military buildup during the 1980s before Goldwater-Nichols provides context that illuminates the degree to which Goldwater-Nichols and later the conclusion of the Cold War affected the services.

During this time period, and building on interservice divisions that had existed for decades, the services themselves continued to grow in power and wield substantial influence relative to joint or civilian organizations in DoD. As each service vied for its own interests, parochialism overshadowed efforts toward service integration and hindered the services' ability to provide the best military advice to civilian leadership. Further, these tensions were not exclusive to the services: The concentration of influence in the services also created increasing friction between the military and Congress, OSD, and other members of the Executive Branch. As Archie D. Barrett, a key House Armed Services Committee staff member during the Goldwater-Nichols era, wrote, "Although service ascendancy does not mean the military is unresponsive to civilian control, it does mean the military input into decisionmaking, whether through service secretaries, the JCS, Joint Staff, CINCs [commanders in chief], or components, is oriented toward service, vice national, interests."[1]

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[1]   Archie D. Barrett, *Reappraising Defense Organization*, Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1983, p. 4.

In the 1980s, amid this service parochialism, Reagan pushed greater resources toward defense, peaking in 1985 at a height of $517 billion in 2010 inflation-adjusted dollars.[2] For the Army, Navy, and Air Force, it was a decade of expansion, tied to strategies that explicitly highlighted their particular contributions. For the Marines, the reorientation away from peripheral wars posed a challenge to the core identity of the service.

For the Army, the 1980s were a period of conceptual renewal.[3] As the failures of Vietnam began to recede from the forefront of the military mind, two powerful outside changes transformed Army thinking. The first of these was the transition from conscription to an all-volunteer force, which pushed the Army to professionalize and intellectualize its thinking, and the second was the renewed focus on the threat of the Soviet Union and the attendant buildup of military budgets.[4] Amid these forces, the Army reconceptualized the battlefield through the doctrine of AirLand Battle, which employed concepts of the extended battlefield, emphasis on the corps and the operational level, and the integrated battle, in which both instruments of landpower and tactical assets of the Air Force would integrate to deny the enemy gains.[5] The Army's belief in the success of AirLand Battle became the foundation of a key competitive tactic: ensuring its place in future war by generating operational concepts for the joint force.

For the Navy, the final years of the Cold War were characterized by the "600-ship Navy" buildup and its associated Maritime Strategy. The Maritime Strategy envisioned the Navy waging global war against the Soviet Union at sea and had an offensive bent, necessitating the increased resources the Navy received during the 1980s.[6]

President Reagan's defense buildup also included measures to restore U.S. advantages in airpower over the Soviets. While the Air Force did not experience a dramatic increase in force levels, it was able to modernize fighter aircraft, including investments in fighter-bombers that would improve U.S. tactical airpower in Europe.[7] The Strategic Defense Initiative, introduced in 1983 as a way to move toward a more active deterrence posture, famously earned the nickname "Star Wars" for its focus on developing space-based technology to intercept and destroy a Soviet ICBM at various stages of flight. Critics of the program highlighted the enormous amount of research

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[2]   Todd Harrison, *Analysis of the FY 2010 Defense Budget Request*, Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, April 12, 2009, p. 8.

[3]   Phillips, 2014.

[4]   Richard Lock-Pullan, "How to Rethink War: Conceptual Innovation and AirLand Battle Doctrine," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4, August 1, 2005, p. 696.

[5]   Romjue, 1984; and Douglas W. Skinner, *Airland Battle Doctrine*, Professional Paper 463, Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analysis, 1988.

[6]   Benjamin H. Friedman, "The Navy After the Cold War: Progress Without Revolution," in Sapolsky, Friedman, and Green, 2009, p. 78.

[7]   Rebecca Grant, "The Reagan Buildup," *Air Force Magazine*, September 2014, pp. 84–85.

and development needed to perfect such technology, as well as the corresponding costs associated with such an effort.[8]

Contrasting the other services, the post-Vietnam era of the Cold War was an anxious time for the Marine Corps. DoD had reoriented from smaller, peripheral wars to bolstering conventional deterrence in the European theater, prompting the Marine Corps to consider how to contribute to a fight against a highly capable, mechanized Soviet force without becoming so "heavy" with armor that it became indistinguishable from the Army. The Marines responded by investing in systems that enabled operational maneuver from the sea, such as V-22s, landing craft air cushions, and amphibious assault vehicles, and establishing their own maneuver warfare doctrine.

While Congress did not create USSOCOM until 1986, SOF in 1980 had been around for decades, often undervalued by their home services. This pattern reached a crisis point in 1980 with Eagle Claw, the failed SOF operation to rescue Iranian hostages. As will be discussed in greater detail later, the weakness of SOF during this period precipitated the creation of SOF and set the stage for its future rise.

As these individual service shifts were occurring, each service continued to grow more powerful—and less willing to integrate its capabilities or expertise with the rest of the services. In 1983, former Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger testified that the military operation in Grenada in 1983, Urgent Fury, was operationally successful in part due to the leadership role of the Navy, which strongly resisted integrating itself into any other service command structure. Schlesinger explained, "One of the reasons the Grenada operation went as well as it did was because it was run by the Navy. The Army and the Air Force are less unwilling to place their forces under the command of an admiral."[9] Schlesinger continued,

> In all of our military institutions, the time-honored principle of 'unity of command' is inculcated. Yet at the national level it is firmly resisted and flagrantly violated. . . . Unity of command is endorsed, if and only if, it applies at the service level. . . . The inevitable consequence is both the duplication of effort and the ultimate ambiguity of command.[10]

By the mid-1980s, Congress had become so concerned with the service-heavy imbalance in DoD that the landmark Goldwater-Nichols Act to reorganize the entire department was created in 1986. While the massive DoD overhaul also targeted management and administration issues, the central purpose of the legislation was to rebalance service and joint influence in DoD for the purpose of improving U.S. military effectiveness.

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[8]   Atomic Archive, "Reagan's Star Wars," *Cold War: A Brief History*, undated, p. 20.

[9]   Richard Halloran, "U.S. Command Is Divided in Grenada, Senator Asserts," *New York Times*, November 3, 1983.

[10]   Halloran, 1983.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act

Goldwater-Nichols fundamentally changed the power dynamic within DoD and laid the foundation for the modern era of U.S. military internal interactions. By reorienting and redefining roles and relationships within DoD, Congress helped mitigate the negative consequences of service competition and poor interservice coordination and communication that resulted in operational blunders in the Iranian hostage crisis, the Marine barracks bombing in Beirut, and the Grenada invasion.[11] Three key milestone trends occurred during this period: a decrease in the power and influence of the services relative to DoD civilian leadership and the CCMDs, an emphasis on joint operations, and the creation of USSOCOM. This era focused not only on interservice competition but also on competition with those broader entities within DoD.

In addition to the integration and power-balancing goals described earlier, the Goldwater-Nichols Act also aimed to increase the influence of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff relative to the service chiefs by clarifying his responsibilities and expanding his staff. The chairman became the principal military adviser, ending the services' practice of producing "watered down" advice that all could agree on but that did not provide adequate military advice to the secretary.[12] It defined the Secretary of Defense as having "sole and ultimate power within the Department of Defense on any matter on which the Secretary chooses to act," empowering a position whose "responsibilities [were] not in reality matched by commensurate powers."[13] Additionally, the CCMDs received responsibility for planning and executing operations, leaving the services to focus solely on the "organize, train, and equip" missions. As a result, leadership prominence shifted within the services in several ways, including by increasing the importance of positions overseeing resource and requirement processes. Previously, the most-influential senior service leaders came from warfighting backgrounds. While combat experience remained—and remains today—a common characteristic among many general and flag officers, several of our interviewees asserted that the services' general officers who were adept at planning, programming, and budgeting began to rise in prominence and influence.[14] This phenomenon is especially prevalent in the Air Force, which tends to groom general officers for commands that control resource allocations when more operationally focused joint command positions have gone to other services. We discuss this observation in greater detail in Chapter Four.

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[11] Murdock et al., 2004.

[12] James R. Locher III, "Taking Stock of Goldwater-Nichols," *Joint Force Quarterly*, August 1996, p. 36.

[13] U.S. House of Representatives, Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986: Conference Report 99-824 (to accompany H.R. 3622), 99th Congress, 2nd session, 1986, p. 101; and John G. Kester, "The Office of the Secretary of Defense with a Strengthened Joint Staff System," in Barry M. Blechman and William J. Lynn, eds., *Toward a More Effective Defense*, Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger, 1985, p. 187.

[14] Workshop notes, December 14, 2016, RAND, Arlington, Va.

During this time, Congress emphasized the need for a truly joint culture as operational failures highlighted the interdependence of the various domains of air, land, and sea. No longer did one service operate solely in a single domain. Before Goldwater-Nichols, joint positions were viewed negatively within the services as neither assisting with individuals' promotions nor proving very fruitful to their respective services.[15] Title 4 of the act sought to alter this perception. It created the joint specialty officer designation and set requirements for their selection, training, assignment, and promotion. This further depleted service influence at the Pentagon by altering the balance of talented officers assigned to service staffs in favor of the Joint Staff. Goldwater-Nichols required officers to attain joint qualifications as a condition of promotion to flag or general officer rank, so rather than seeking assignments to service staffs, top-performing officers instead would seek assignments on the Joint Staff. While this joint requirement further diminished certain service influence at the Pentagon, the effects appear to have been positive and far reaching in terms of facilitating joint planning, joint operations, and cross-service understanding of the range of capabilities resident across DoD.[16] One potentially unforeseen consequence of the focus on jointness was the elevation of the Marine Corps to an equal footing among the services, allowing marines to reach senior positions in the CCMDs and other joint positions.[17]

Stakeholders who made Goldwater-Nichols possible also paved the way for the creation of USSOCOM per Section 1311 of the FY 1987 National Defense Authorization Act, commonly known as the Nunn-Cohen Amendment. The amendment established a new CCMD specifically to oversee SOF and created a civilian leadership position in the Pentagon, the ASD SO/LIC, to represent SOF interests and provide oversight of SOF policy and resources. The creation of USSOCOM would later have far-reaching effects on how warfare is conducted, particularly after the events of September 11, 2001.

Despite DoD resistance to Goldwater-Nichols and the Nunn-Cohen Amendment, their impacts were substantial and greatly affected how DoD prepares for and fights wars today. While the services maintain their roles of influence and competition in resource allocation and mission development, operational CCMDs now dictate force employment. This relationship complicates U.S. military force management and identification of requirements.

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[15] Howard D. Graves and Don M. Snider, "Emergence of the Joint Officer," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Vol. 13, Autumn 1996, p. 56.

[16] Locher, 1996, p. 39.

[17] Asad Khan, *The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986: Impact and Implications for the Marine Corps*, Quantico, Va.: Marine Corps University, School of Advanced Warfighting, 1998.

Unipolar Moment: The Rise of Discretionary Operations, 1990–2000

The 1990s were an era in which discretionary operations rose in prominence. During this time period, we conclude that four major shocks impacted service culture and competition (see Figure A.2). First, the collapse of the Soviet Union, codified in 1991, signaled the end of an era not only for Russia but also for U.S. defense objectives as the services' point of reference disappeared. Second, the First Gulf War, or Operation Desert Storm, represented the United States' first major conflict in the post–Cold War era. Iraqi president Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait marked a greater role for the United States in the Middle East than it had previously played. Third, the United States engaged in military operations in the Bosnian and Kosovo wars. Unlike the types of military conflicts the services prepared for in Europe, these discretionary operations did not involve a near-peer competitor but were disputes largely contained to the Balkan states. Fourth, an attempt by U.S. forces to capture the Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed backfired, evolving into what is now termed the Battle of Mogadishu. While many other examples of shocks occurred during the 1990s, we will focus on these to illustrate the discussion of trends that follows.

This era is characterized by two broad trends: First, the technological advancements of the information age brought hope of a "revolution in military affairs." Second, the discretionary nature of conflict in this period pushed the United States to prefer operations with limited objectives and limited risks, favoring those services that could best deliver high-end effects with few losses. This was aided by a 24-hour news cycle that amplified the political nature of operational failure and decrease public tolerance for American casualties.

Search for Relevance and the Revolution in Military Affairs

The Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) and its emphasis on technology and precision began in the 1970s but solidified in the 1990s as a result of operations like Desert Storm. It refers to a Soviet hypothesis that a "military-technical revolution" would

Figure A.2
Unipolar-Era Shocks

occur, allowing for advances in technology to attain comparable accuracy and lethality to tactical nuclear weapons.[18] Some have argued against the conclusion that the United States underwent such a revolution; however, the perception that the revolution was occurring had significant impacts on the services.[19] As discussed later, the emphasis on technology called for investments that the Army and Navy were slower to implement than the Air Force, which seemed primed for the RMA. This is broadly consistent with Mahnken and FitzSimonds's finding on service-based support for the RMA, as discussed in *The Limits of Transformation*.[20]

During the post-Vietnam Cold War, the Army employed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Central Front scenario as the anchor of its doctrine, equipment, and force structure.[21] "The tasks, though challenging[, were] simple and stable" and fit with the Army's preference for high-intensity, conventional warfare.[22] When the Soviet Union collapsed, the Army lost its conceptual anchor. Having achieved a sort of victory without war, the Army faced mounting budget cuts and uncertainty as to whether the driving concepts of the Cold War era would survive in a world where the United States stood alone as a superpower. Concurrent with the demise of communism, Operation Desert Storm provided the military with a quick win that settled some of these anxieties. From Desert Storm, Army chief of staff Carl Vuono concluded that "many elements of military strategy and force design that served the nation so well throughout the Cold War will remain relevant in the era that follows."[23] Instead, the Army found itself worried that it would be a victim of its own success: Having accomplished its objectives in Iraq so quickly and with such an apparent modicum of effort, the Army would have to make strong arguments to justify maintaining its force.[24] This was exacerbated by a common view that airpower in Desert Storm was decisive and that it could solve a wide range of American problems with a low level of risk.[25]

What the Army did embrace in terms of change in this era was a need for more technology and even faster and more agile forces. The slow buildup toward Operation

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[18] Thomas Keany and Eliot Cohen, *Gulf War Airpower Survey Summary Report*, Washington, D.C.: Defense Technical Information Center, 1993, p. 236.

[19] Keany and Cohen, 1993.

[20] Mahnken and FitzSimonds, 2003a, pp. 35–36.

[21] Colin Jackson, "From Conservatism to Revolutionary Intoxication: The US Army and the Second Interwar Period," in Sapolsky, Friedman, and Green, 2009, p. 43.

[22] Jackson, 2009, p. 45.

[23] Carl E. Vuono, "Desert Storm and the Future of Conventional Forces," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 2, 1991, p. 49.

[24] And argue it did. The remainder of Vuono's *Foreign Affairs* piece is dedicated to considering all the many conventional contingencies that could require the use of landpower. Vuono, 1991.

[25] Price T. Bingham, "Air Power in Desert Storm and the Need for Doctrinal Change," *Airpower Journal*, Winter 1991.

Desert Storm worried many Army thinkers, who were concerned that the United States was vulnerable to strategic risks as a result of Army deployment speeds.[26] The study "The Army After Next," led by Major General Robert Scales, concluded after four years of wargames that the Army of the future would optimize "firepower-intensive, limited wars."[27] "If the Army is to remain relevant to the security needs of the nation we must now begin to accelerate the speed with which we can project legitimate, powerful, and balanced forces to threatened regions overseas."[28] As if holding onto the core ideals of its previous Cold War mission while attempting to implement the RMA, the Army produced a new foundation for relevance: force readiness to project power quickly by leveraging high technology. The essence of this operational concept was expressed in AirLand Battle, as previously discussed. However, this contrasted sharply with how the U.S. government used the Army during the 1990s: in low-intensity and peacekeeping missions, such as in Bosnia, that were seen as an erosion of capabilities or misuse of resources or in missions entailing limited utilization, such as in Kosovo.

Similarly, during the 1980s, the Navy employed a core strategy geared toward the Soviet Union, called the Maritime Strategy, briefly introduced earlier. After the end of the Cold War, the Navy faced no rival that approached U.S. capabilities, and the concept of a global war at sea, such as that described in the Maritime Strategy, dissipated. So too did the apparent need for a high-end blue-water Navy. The search for relevance led the service to produce *. . . From the Sea*, refined two years later in *Forward . . . from the Sea*, both of which described the concept of operating from the littorals, or nearshore areas of the sea, to project strikes ashore, essentially using the Navy to influence the ground fight, since rival navies did not exist and sea control could be assumed from the outset of any fight. While Navy leaders saw this concept as a way to reorient Navy decisionmaking in the context of new global realities, opponents outside the service viewed it with skepticism as a means of justifying the Navy's continued relevance and protecting its share of the defense budget.[29]

Much like the Army, the Navy was apprehensive about the results of Desert Storm, which to it "served as a reminder of their diminished relevance in a world where U.S. adversaries were rogue states with small or nonexistent navies."[30] While the service had air capability to bear, resistance to new joint structures resulting from Goldwater-Nichols and the Navy's lack of investment in technology as compared to the Air Force led to a lackluster Navy contribution to the air campaign in Desert Storm, and Naval

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[26] Christopher Pernin et al., *Lessons from the Army's Future Combat Systems Program*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-1206-A, 2012, p. 5.

[27] Robert H. Scales, Jr., *Yellow Smoke: The Future of Land Warfare for America's Military*, Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005, p. 5.

[28] Robert H. Scales, Jr., *Future Warfare Anthology*, Carlisle, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 1999, p. xiv.

[29] Friedman, 2009, p. 81.

[30] Friedman, 2009, p. 79.

airpower now appeared "backward." By the time of the Kosovo conflict, the Navy appeared to learn these lessons from Desert Storm, becoming more integrated with the Air Force and leveraging new technologies in radar, electronic processes, and smart bombs.[31] Throughout this period, historically influential groups within the Navy, such as submariners, took on a diminished role, and the Navy embraced some previously disdained systems such as the TLAM. As part of its bid to regain relevance in the world of RMA, the Navy did originate the popular concept of network-centric warfare, which became the conceptual framework on which many concepts for the other services were hung. Network-centric warfare called for integrated sensor networks, information processing, and high-precision weaponry to decrease response times and increase accuracy.[32]

Like the Navy, the Marines resisted the technology-focused RMA. During Desert Storm the Marine commandant, General Gray, had a planning cell in Quantico develop an amphibious assault option for USCENTCOM to consider for operations to seize Kuwait. Many at the time saw this as a Marine effort to underscore the continuing relevance of a core Marine mission, though developing operational plans fell outside the Title 10 remit of the military services.[33] Later, Marine commandant General Charles Krulak argued that human factors were more important than technology in combat.[34] Instead, he advocated for a "Three Block War" mind-set, which proposed that Marines could face the full spectrum of tactics, from humanitarian assistance to midintensity conflict, within the same three blocks in an urban environment.[35] The Marines argued that the other services required the transformation more, since the Marines were not designed as a Cold War force.[36]

Even as the Marines argued for the continued relevance of the Marine Corps, they linked arms with the Navy to argue that the naval services as a whole were shifting from a focus on open ocean conflict with Soviet forces to a focus on regional forward presence, power projection, and crisis response in the littorals.[37] Even as they sought to ensure their ground forces were distinct from the Army's, their aviation portfolio began

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[31] Friedman, 2009, p. 81.

[32] Arthur K. Cebrowski and John J. Garstka, "Network-Centric Warfare: Its Origin and Future," *US Naval Institute Proceedings*, Vol. 124, 1998, pp. 28–35.

[33] Michael R. Gordon, and Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf*, Boston: Back Bay Books, 1995.

[34] Charles C. Krulak, "Commandant's Planning Guidance Frag Order," *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 81, No. 10, 1997, pp. A-1–A-9.

[35] See Charles C. Krulak, *The Strategic Corporal: Leadership in the Three Block War*, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Center for Army Lessons Learned, Virtual Research Library, 1999.

[36] Frank G. Hoffman, "Complex Irregular Warfare: The Next Revolution in Military Affairs," *Orbis*, Vol. 50, No. 3, 2006, p. 405.

[37] O'Keefe, 1992.

to mirror the Navy's and Air Force's through a commitment to the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. Though in many ways the F-35 on its face appears to conflict with the Marine Corps's force design philosophy, the convergence of a need to replace legacy systems, a need for unity of effort with the Navy to minimize Marine-unique developmental costs, concerns over the survivability of legacy aircraft even against regional adversaries, and the fact that Marine Corps aviation budgets are funded out of the Navy budget all led to the F-35B.

As opposed to the other military services, the discretionary operations during the 1990s highlighted and lauded the Air Force's prowess and relevance. The Air Force appeared to promote and validate the RMA as its use of advanced technology bore significant responsibility for rapid victories. The battlefield impact of precision weapons led the Air Force to invest in adding the technologies to the entire service.[38] Enforcing the Army's insecurities, Pentagon correspondent Michael Gordon and retired Marine Corps general Bernard Trainor wrote in their book *The Generals' War*, "The Air Force did deliver on its promise to make any ground offensive a walkover."[39]

Operations in Kosovo and Serbia further bolstered the argument for airpower dominance and confirmed the results of Desert Storm. Historian John Keegan went so far as to declare, "The capitulation of [former Serbian] President [Slobodan] Milosevic proved that a war can be won by airpower alone."[40] While President Milosevic's reasons for capitulating remain up for debate, later analysis of the conflict revealed the deficiencies in the air campaign. At the time, however, the perception of airpower dominance won over counterarguments such as those from General Wesley Clark that it was the threat of ground forces that led to the capitulation.[41] Airpower successes of the 1990s paved the way for a generation of airmen raised on the premise that air superiority is a decisive, and necessary, precondition for success in combat. This theory shapes modern Air Force culture and competitive styles, as discussed throughout Chapter Four.

The advent of precision strike and other technology made available as part of the RMA also positioned USSOCOM to later surge forward as a force of choice that excelled in small-team, low-cost, intelligence-driven operations. However, USSOCOM's rise is most effectively analyzed as part of the following era, which was largely defined by U.S. efforts to counter extremists globally.

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[38] Weiner, 2009, p. 103.

[39] M. Gordon and Trainor, 1995, p. 93.

[40] John Keegan, "Private Armies Are a Far Cry from the Sixties Dogs of War," *Electronic Telegraph*, June 6, 1999, quoted in Richard P. Hallion, *Storm over Iraq: Air Power and the Gulf War*, Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 1992, p. ix.

[41] William M. Arkin, "Operation Allied Force: 'The Most Precise Application of Air Power in History,'" in Andrew J. Bacevich and Eliot A. Cohen, eds., *War over Kosovo: Politics and Strategy in a Global Age*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, p. 26.

As budgets began to follow historical patterns of constriction following the end of Cold War, the U.S. defense environment was primed for a bloody budget battle as the relative relevance of the services was in the midst of being redefined. However, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell's notion of "base force" and uniform budget reductions across all three services steadied the atmosphere and created a trend of avoiding "right sizing" U.S. forces in favor of politically acceptable reductions into the next administration.[42]

Myth of the Quick and Painless War

The absence of great-power competition and the trend toward low-intensity discretionary operations affected the services culturally and set the stage for new patterns of competition in the following eras. As just discussed, the experiences of the 1990s created an impetus for doctrine that emphasized rapid responses and advanced technology. A marriage between the effects of constant media attention and casualty intolerance, mixed with the trends discussed earlier, shaped a new expectation of quick and painless war.

Left as the world's superpower in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States was not left without security responsibilities overseas. A widespread perception grew that the current global peace was a *Pax Americana*—that it came as the result of the United States' status as the world's policeman on watch for threats to stability everywhere.[43] This created pressure for the United States to intervene to solve problems that were not directly threatening to U.S. national security interests but rather affected allies or sidelined bad actors. These operations were limited in nature and inherently political—failure would carry massive reputational consequences. This combined with newly invigorated concern for the public reaction influenced by news media coverage. Operation Eagle Claw presented a new type of media coverage of war termed the "CNN effect," referring to around-the-clock coverage that could influence policy and military decisions by the way it portrayed events. During this period, many debated whether the CNN effect actually caused policy changes. Proponent Lewis Friedland asserted, "CNN pushed the boundaries of world news: no longer did the network merely report events, but through its immediate reportage, CNN actually shaped the events and became a part of them."[44] Opponents contend that the CNN effect is overstated. For example, Eric Larson at RAND produced a study that disparaged the conventional wisdom regarding its influence.[45]

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[42] William A. Owens, "Creating a U.S. Military Revolution," in Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff, eds., *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002, p. 212.

[43] Charles A. Kupchan, "After Pax Americana: Benign Power, Regional Integration, and the Sources of a Stable Multipolarity," *International Security*, Vol. 23, No. 2, 1998, pp. 40–79.

[44] Lewis Friedland, *Covering the World: International Television News Services*, New York: Twentieth Century Fund Press, 1992, p. 2.

[45] Eric V. Larson, *Casualties and Consensus: The Historical Role of Casualties in Domestic Support for U.S. Military Operations*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MR-7126-RC, 1996, pp. 45–47.

Whether or not one attributes policy changes to public reactions to media coverage, most agree that this period saw the rise in casualty intolerance and preference for rapid conclusions to conflict as U.S. preferences. Charles Moskos, a former professor of military sociology at Northwestern University, observed, "The Somalia syndrome is what's shaping our consciousness now rather than the Vietnam syndrome. . . . You don't take casualties."[46] While one can debate whether the horror-filled media coverage of the failed operation in Mogadishu caused President Bill Clinton to pull U.S. servicemembers from the country, the reigning perception of many in the United States and among its enemies was that the United States was—and still is—casualty intolerant. Another example of this intolerance is the 1995 shoot-down of the F-16 flown by Captain Scott O'Grady over Bosnia. While the Secretary of Defense had previously acknowledged that American casualties were inevitable in the conflict, the incident, involving a single airman, became a political crisis for the Clinton administration.[47]

In addition to the aversion to American casualties, the new mind-set included a desire to avoid *any* civilian casualties. The RMA and the technology of precision strike, now available, bolstered this mind-set: that the United States could target so accurately as to reduce the number of unintended casualties to zero. President George H. W. Bush told reporters during Desert Storm that "this high technology weaponry, ridiculed in the past, [is] now coming into their [sic] own and saving lives—not only American lives and Coalition lives, but the lives of Iraqi citizens."[48]

The stunning successes and failures during the 1990s birthed an attitude of zero tolerance toward casualties of any kind and an expectation for quick and painless American victories. This translated into a decreased acceptance of risk for American forces and strengthened arguments for air strikes—both by manned aircraft and by TLAMs—as the low-risk military option of choice.[49] Mahnken and FitzSimonds gathered officer attitudes toward the changing character of war in the early twenty-first century and found that officers surveyed believed that technological developments would reduce the risk of casualties (63 percent) and the duration of war (49 percent).[50] In general, Air Force officers tended to be the most sanguine about both the potential reduction in casualties and the potential shortening of war, and Army officers the least sanguine.[51] Further, belief in the RMA's ability to affect the character of war

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[46] Quoted in Jacob Weisberg, "Zero Tolerance for Casualties in War; Nation Suffers from an Inability to Reason About Risk," *New York*, Vol. 27, No. 40, October 10, 1994, p. 21.

[47] John Sims, Jr., *Shackled by Perceptions: America's Desire for Bloodless Interventions*, thesis, Montgomery, Ala.: Air University, School of Advanced Airpower Studies, 1997, p. 59.

[48] Quoted in Alan Geyer and Barbara G. Green, *Lines in the Sand: Justice and the Gulf War*, Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992, p. 137.

[49] Sims, 1997, p. 64.

[50] Mahnken and FitzSimonds, 2003a, p. 60.

[51] Mahnken and FitzSimonds, 2003a, pp. 50–53.

strengthened as respondents increased in rank.[52] As we will see in the next section, the aversion to U.S. casualties would fundamentally shape the Army's response to terrorism and perceptions of USSOCOM's utility as a surgical force for limited war.
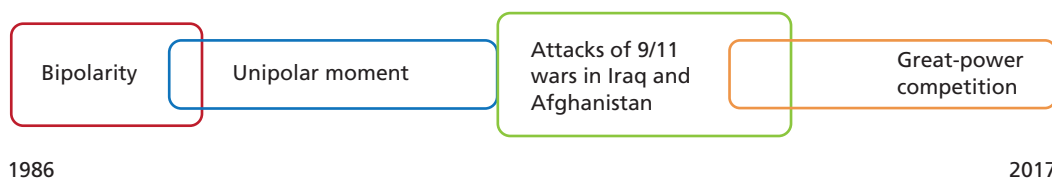
Rise of Nonstate Actors: The Global War on Terror, 2001–2014

On September 11, 2001, the United States experienced the largest coordinated terrorist attacks in its history, presenting the first shock of the nonstate actor era (see Figure A.3). The ability for nonstate actors to inflict such damage and high casualties, operating from remote spaces in Afghanistan, directed U.S. attention toward Al Qaeda and other violent extremist organizations as part of the global war on terror. The attacks and subsequent wars in Afghanistan and Iraq served as a key transition point for U.S. defense. To understand the rapid turnaround in attitudes during this time, it is helpful to refer to Mahnken and FitzSimonds's account of the disparate responses from officers before and after the 2001 attacks:

> Seventy-three percent of Army officers believed that within the next ten years some adversaries would likely have the ability to use long-range, precision-strike weapons such as ballistic and cruise missiles to deny the United States the use of fixed military infra-structure, such as ports, airfields, and logistical sites. This represented a complete turnaround from 2000, when only eight percent agreed with that statement. . . . It appears that the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon shattered a sense of invulnerability that had previously obtained.[53]

Three major milestone trends developed as a result. First, while the defense budget expanded rapidly for war, those involved in the ground war received the more significant increases. Second, the two wars' focus on insurgencies rather than conflicts

Figure A.3
Nonstate-Actor-Era Shocks

| Bipolarity | Unipolar moment | Attacks of 9/11 wars in Iraq and Afghanistan | Great-power competition |

1986   2017

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[52] Mahnken and FitzSimonds, 2003a, pp. 50–53.

[53] Mahnken and FitzSimonds, 2004, p. 65.

involving conventional militaries elevated the importance of COIN capabilities and USSOCOM as a go-to defense tool of choice. Third, the budget expansions enabled technological advancements and a focus on modernizing U.S. forces. As part of this emphasis on modernization, the rise in cyber capabilities and reliance on this area created a new, relatively unclaimed domain that led to the creation of USCYBERCOM.

Budget Increases

After the attacks on September 11, 2001, the U.S. military saw its largest influx of resources since President Reagan's buildup. The invasions into Afghanistan and then Iraq required an increase in strength from the decline witnessed during the previous decade. The operational demands of these conflicts pushed policymakers to break from the trend set by General Powell to "right size" the U.S. military in favor of land forces over air and maritime.

Between 2001 and 2009, the defense budget doubled; however, the services did not feel this increase equally.[54] As shown in Figure A.4, the services experienced relatively proportionate growth until 2002, when the Army began receiving additional resources, coinciding with the invasion of Afghanistan.[55]

Figure A.4
Budget by Military Department
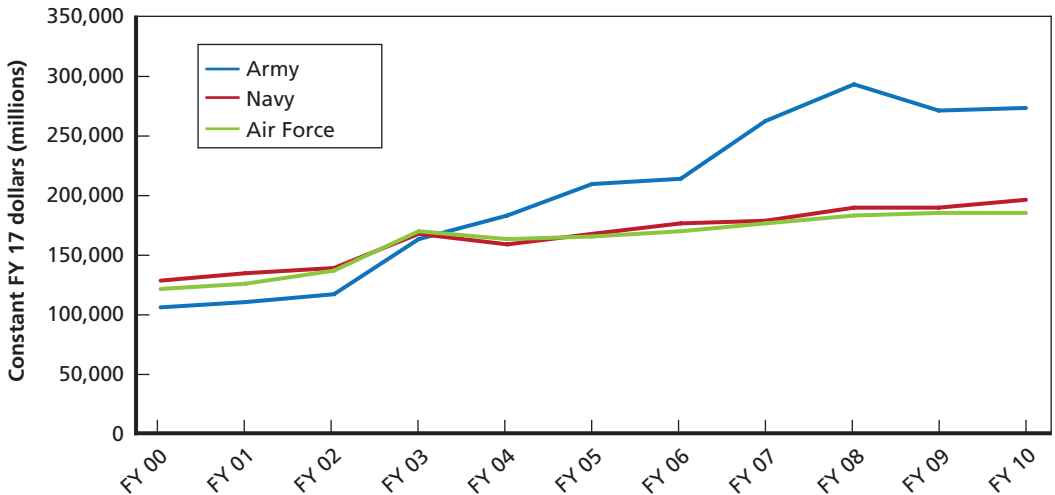
SOURCE: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), 2016.
RAND *RR2270-OSD-A.4*

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[54] John T. Bennett, "'The Spigot Is Starting to Close,'" *Defense News*, May 11, 2009.

[55] The chart does not distinguish the Marine Corps budget, as this is included within the Navy's. However, given the Marine Corps's emphasis on monetary efficiency, comparisons between its budget and the rest of the services may not accurately illustrate the greater reliance on marines.

The Army budget continued to surge in FY 2003, equaling the other two services for the first time since Desert Storm and then surpassing them beginning in FY 2004. Despite this disproportionate increase, the proposed FY 2004 budget came as a relief to the other services, as it maintained current defense programs, though it did not seek to introduce new ones.[56] Additional funding for the Navy allowed for the increase in ships and additional aircraft for itself and the Air Force. Additionally, the Air Force received the resources needed to maintain gains in its personnel and readiness budgets.[57] One crucial aberration from past defense budgets was the nearly 50-percent increase in resources allocated for USSOCOM on account of its substantial role in the global war on terror.[58]

A second spike occurred during FYs 2006 through 2008, primarily as a result of the "surge" in Iraq, a total increase of 30,000 additional troops deployed to stabilize the country. This plan focused on ground troops—namely, soldiers and marines. As illustrated in Figure A.4, the Air Force and Navy did not experience the same sharp incline as the Army. During this period, these services' budgets were subject to the needs of the ground forces. For example, in 2006, the Air Force requested an increase in resources to cover the costs of operating in Iraq and Afghanistan.[59] However, the next year, much like the Navy, the Air Force was forced to undergo budget cuts in favor of the Army and Marines, which continued to operate beyond the spending appropriated by Congress.[60]

In addition to base funding, a critical development after the September 11 attacks regarding the U.S. budget was the introduction of OCO funding. DoD leveraged OCO designations in order to assist with personnel increases, operations, and maintenance associated with the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.[61] The introduction of this new stream of funding not limited by legislation altered the nature of resource competition among the services and USSOCOM, as resource constraints were relatively relaxed for requirements relating to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and more generally to the global war on terror. For the Army and for USSOCOM, OCO funding was an increasingly predictable source of money that, for the Army, created a certain level of budgetary complacence and, for USSOCOM, served to build a force to rival the services in relevance. For all of the services, the ready availability of OCO money served as a salve to resource competition.

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[56] William Matthews and Nathaniel Levine, "The 4.4% Plan, War Costs Extra; New Dod Budget Would Hike Spending, but Ignores Iraq," *Armed Forces Journal*, 2003.

[57] Stephen Lorenz, *FY04 Air Force Budget: Launching the 2nd Century of Air & Space Power*, January 31, 2003.

[58] Matthews and Levine, 2003.

[59] Erik Holmes, "Refilling the Coffers Air Force Wants $83B from DoD for Operations, Recouping Costs," *Air Force Times*, December 11, 2006.

[60] Vago Muradian, "Budget Blues Wars and Fuel Costs Eat into People-for-Planes Savings Sought for Modernization," *Air Force Times*, September 3, 2007.

[61] Marcus Weisgerber, "'Magic Money': DOD's Overseas Contingency Budget Might Dry Up," *Defense News*, June 29, 2014.

The Dominance of Landpower

One striking characteristic of conflict in this era is the dominance of landpower in the minds of defense policymakers and military leaders. The wars of this era share the unusual similarity of occurring in countries—Iraq and Afghanistan—that are land-locked, or nearly so. Moreover, the wars of the post–September 11 era were chiefly fought in the same CCMD's area of responsibility. In the time from the entry into force of Goldwater-Nichols to the end of 2016, the USCENTCOM area of responsibility has been led by an Army general 61 percent of the time and by a Marine Corps general 37 percent of the time. The Navy, by contrast, led USCENTCOM for only 3 percent of this period. Thus, the ground combat perspective has been well represented in this CCMD, likely influencing the nature of USCENTCOM's campaign plans. While the Air Force did play a role in these conflicts, that role was largely seen as "supporting" by policymakers, as the debate over the A-10 "Warthog" showed. The A-10 is a fixed-wing attack platform that is primarily used for close air support. Over a period of many years, including before 9/11, the Air Force has sought to decommission the A-10 in favor of newer, multimission craft, arguing that the Air Force risks losing air dominance unless it does so. But others have protested this move, with Army general and then–chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Martin Dempsey calling the Warthog "the ugliest, most beautiful aircraft on the planet," arguing that the A-10 was essential to support ground combat in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere.[62] Congress sided firmly with ground forces, further reinforcing the idea that landpower was the dominant domain of the era.

While maintaining the A-10 also serves as a link to the Air Force's less glamorous close air support mission, there is at least an anecdotal perception within the service that ceding this mission would diminish part of what the Air Force brings to the fight.

Similarly, the Navy's role in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan was primarily a supporting one. While TLAM and carrier-based air strikes contributed significantly in the opening days of both conflicts, traditional sea power became less relevant to these wars as they evolved from conventional military fights to COIN. The Navy therefore began to take on roles and missions outside the scope of its traditional preferences. Starting in 2006, it stood up two riverine squadrons, marking the service's first river-ine operations since Vietnam.[63] It also reversed a previous decision to transfer several patrol coastal ships to the U.S. Coast Guard, instead deploying them to the northern Arabian Gulf to conduct maritime security patrols, specifically focusing on protection of Iraqi oil platforms.[64]

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[62] Quoted in Chris Davenport, "Air Force Plan to Get Rid of A-10s Runs into Opposition," *Washington Post*, April 10, 2014.

[63] Dave Nagle, "Riverine Force Marks One-Year Anniversary," Navy News Service, June 7, 2007.

[64] U.S. Navy, "U.S. Navy FactFile: Patrol Coastal Ships—P.C.," updated January 9, 2017; and David Axe, "Congress Hates on the Navy's Tiniest Warships: Lawmakers Won't Let the Sailing Branch Count Its 'Cyclone' Patrol Boats," *War Is Boring*, April 21, 2015.

In addition to SOF, other ground forces also had to engage in COIN and counterterrorism activities. The emphasis on these irregular tactics stood in stark contrast to the type of war the Army preferred to fight and for which it had prepared. In 2009, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates attempted to begin redirecting U.S. military capabilities away from conventional warfare and toward "the wars we are in today and the scenarios we are most likely to face in the years ahead."[65] He was concerned that while conventional military methods had a foundation within DoD, a similar institutionalized structure did not exist "for the capabilities needed to win today's wars and some of their likely successors."[66] Today, Army concerns that the United States focused too much for too long on COIN feed its continued argument for large, conventional warfare.

Rise of U.S. Special Operations Command

The attacks of September 11, 2001, launched USSOCOM to the forefront of U.S. military operations, quickly elevating the command to become instrumental in the two wars. Although the circumstances in Iraq and Afghanistan differed, both required the United States and its partners to be proficient in irregular warfare and counterterrorism operations in order to defeat deadly insurgencies—skills that were core to USSOCOM. To reflect this new emphasis on the CCMD, in January 2003, Secretary Rumsfeld announced an increased role for USSOCOM.[67] Instead of primarily serving as support, it now had greater responsibility for planning and conducting its own counterterrorism operations.[68] The following year, the revised Unified Command Plan named USSOCOM as the lead in synchronizing planning for global terrorism operations.

Accordingly, USSOCOM received a major boost in its base budget and in OCO funding after the September 11 attacks. USSOCOM's dedicated budget line, MFP-11, equaled $4.3 billion in constant dollars in FY 2001 and grew to $16 billion in constant dollars, including OCO, in FY 2012 (Figure A.5).[69] Given its new leading role, USSOCOM appealed to Congress for substantial funding increases to sustain its increased training costs, operational tempo, and additional requirements for weapons and supplies, including new technology. USSOCOM's emphasis on cutting-edge technology underpinned the command's primary value to the national command authority: its flexibility to apply its capabilities wherever required. As USSOCOM commander General Charles Holland noted in 2003, USSOCOM's pursuit of advanced technologies was "to guarantee our forces remain relevant to any fight."[70]

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[65] Bennett, 2009.

[66] Gates, 2009, p. 29.

[67] Harold Kennedy, "Special Operators Seeking a Technological Advantage," *National Defense*, Vol. 87, No. 594, May 2003, p. 20.

[68] Glenn W. Goodman, Jr., "Expanded Role for Elite Commandos; Rumsfeld Elevates Special Operations Command to the Counterterrorist Catbird Seat," *Armed Forces Journal,* February 2, 2003, p. 34.

[69] U.S. Department of Defense, *Major Force Program Budget Summary Sheet*, Washington, D.C., undated-a.

[70] Quoted in Kennedy, 2003, p. 20.

Figure A.5
Funding for U.S. Special Operations Command
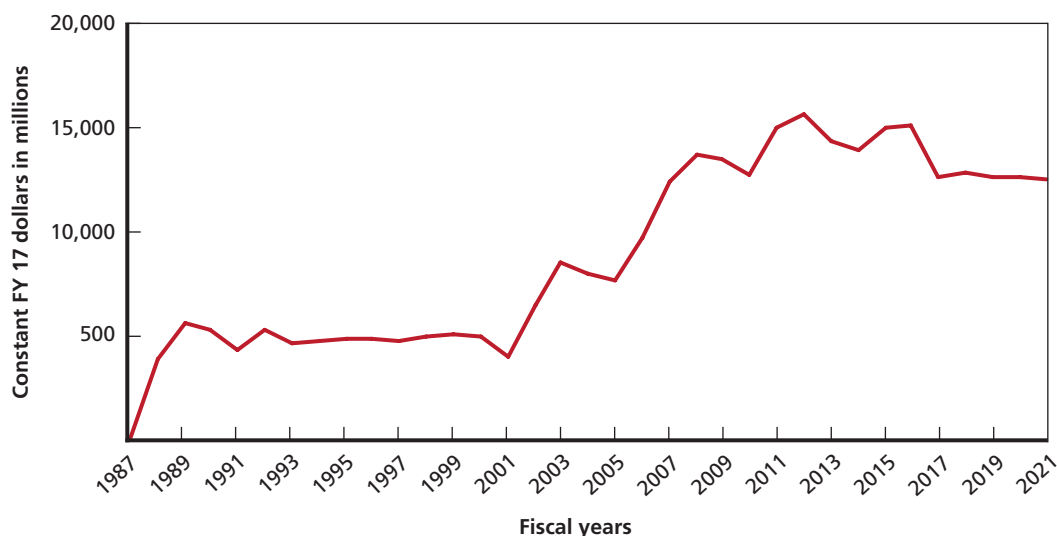
SOURCE: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), 2016.
RAND *RR2270-OSD-A.5*

In addition to resources gained through MFP-11 and OCO, USSOCOM's required support from each of the services' budgets increased as well. MFP-11 is designated only for SOF-peculiar requirements, or "equipment, material, supplies, and services required for special operations mission support for which there is no broad conventional force requirement."[71] In contrast, the services are expected to cover costs determined to be service common. Tension arises when the distinction between SOF peculiar and service common is not clear. The lack of clarity and consistent standards has led to issues with funding validated requirements.[72] While USSOCOM does not compete with the services the way that the services compete with each other, this service-common funding issue has agitated service-USSOCOM relationships, particularly as SOF operations frequently require substantial support with little advanced notice.[73]

The increased personnel and emphasis on SOF served as an indicator of a shift in strategic thinking required to defeat insurgencies throughout the armed forces. The pressing needs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan lay in COIN and unconventional warfare, which quickly became associated with SOF. However, as COIN became the

[71] Fran Machina, American Society of Military Comptrollers, Professional Development Institute, "Resourcing Special Operations," briefing at the U.S. Special Operations Command, May 30, 2014.

[72] Elvira Loredo et al., *Authorities and Options for Funding USSOCOM Operations*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, RR-360-SOCOM, 2014.

[73] Workshop notes, p.m. session, January 9, 2017, RAND, Arlington, Va.; SO72, former special operations unit commander, January 12, 2017.

focus of the two wars, the demands were more than what USSOCOM could manage. Eventually, the other services adopted missions previously led by USSOCOM, such as training foreign militaries.[74] Nevertheless, SOF continues to be heavily leveraged for a variety of missions worldwide, causing some to argue that it has limitations and cannot provide the solution to all problems.[75]

Technological Advancements and Cyber Command

The budget increases and massive influx of OCO funding led to some degree of technological innovation after the initiation of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, but it was focused largely in those areas of direct benefit to the war on terror. At the same time, the services lamented being locked in a cycle of current operations, unable to modernize and prepare for the future. As part of the budget increases envisioned for the global war on terror, President George W. Bush and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld emphasized the need for equipment replacement and investment in high-technology tools such as precision-guided munitions, ballistic-missile defense, and UAVs. The policies of the George W. Bush administration appeared to continue the emphasis on the tenets of the RMA. However, some policy experts argue that the surge in resources did not invigorate research and development, which "stresses innovative activities," but rather "focused more on weapons development."[76]

One technological development that had substantial impacts on U.S. military operations and service competition was the modification of UAVs for attack in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other theaters of terrorist activity. Their dual capability for ISR and now strikes led to a reliance on UAVs for much of the global war on terror but also elicited a cautionary, and at times outright antagonistic, sentiment regarding their use.[77] In particular, SOF counterterrorism operations were greatly enabled by the often-controversial use of drones to find, track, and engage enemy targets.[78] The services used them as well; however, their control became a contested issue. While the Air Force associates itself with technological advances, UAVs threaten a key element of Air Force culture— namely, the fusion of human and machine in flight—so it resisted UAVs for a time.

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[74] Rick Maze, "Big Spec-Ops Boost May Not Be Enough," *Air Force Times*, April 14, 2003, p. 22.

[75] See Long, 2016a.

[76] Dan Steinbock, *The Challenges for America's Defense Innovation*, Washington, D.C.: Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, November 2014, p. 23.

[77] See George W. Bush, "Remarks at the United States Military Academy at West Point in West Point, New York," *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents*, Vol. 44, No. 49, December 15, 2008, pp. 1503–1508; Randy Roughton, "9/11 Technology," *Airman*, September 21, 2011; Daniel Brunstetter and Megan Braun, "The Implications of Drones on the Just War Tradition," *Ethics & International Affairs*, Vol. 25, No. 3, Fall 2011, pp. 347, 337–358; Alan W. Dowd, "Drone Wars: Risks and Warnings," *Parameters*, Vol. 42/43, No. 4, December 2013, pp. 7–16; and Mike Fowler, "The Strategy of Drone Warfare," *Journal of Strategic Security*, Vol. 7, No. 4, Winter 2014, pp. 108–119.

[78] See Kennedy, 2003, p. 20; and Dan Gettinger, "Diaries from the Shadows: Drones and Special Forces in the War on Terror," *Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College*, August 3, 2015.

However, once the Army and Navy began developing and flying their own UAVs, the Air Force argued it should control them through the Combined Air Operations Center.[79] Again, culturally, the Air Force tends to argue that only the Air Force can control air assets. As discussed in Chapter Four, the inclusion of unmanned aircraft within the ranks of the storied fighter pilots of the Air Force has been a challenge, but the service has recognized that its need to control air assets means making room for remotely piloted aircraft as well. DoD's reliance on UAVs further developed the emerging trend of the previous decade toward a lower tolerance for risk and combat casualties.

Technological advancements across the services also led to shifts in competitive outcomes between them. For example, the Navy continued its advancement of aerial technology, now sharing the Air Force's capabilities in precision bombing, in contrast to the circumstances during Operation Desert Storm. This, combined with the expeditionary benefits afforded by carrier-based forces, propelled the Navy to account for equal and greater numbers of sorties and precision munitions, respectively, in the first phase of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.[80]

As technology progressed, so too did U.S. defense vulnerabilities to attack in the cyber realm, and the need to defend the cyber domain became a priority. In particular, the Air Force viewed cyber as a natural extension of its responsibilities for the air and space domains. In December 2005, Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne and Air Force Chief of Staff General T. Michael Moseley published a letter to the Air Force outlining cyberspace as a new domain responsibility for the service. However, in 2009, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates directed USSTRATCOM to create a subunified command, USCYBERCOM.[81] U.S. defense officials insisted the move was not a "power grab" and that the military services would retain control over protecting their own networks.[82] As seen in its strategy documents, the Air Force continues to place great emphasis on the centrality of the cyber domain in how the service operates.[83]

Return to Great-Power Competition: Rise of China and Revanchist Russia, 2007–2017

The final period covered in this historical narrative concerns the strategic refocus of DoD from nonstate actors back to great powers. Even before the war in Iraq wound down and the war in Afghanistan lost primary focus within DoD, China

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[79] Weiner, 2009, pp. 113–114.

[80] Benjamin S. Lambeth, *American Carrier Air Power at the Dawn of a New Century*, Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-404-NAVY, 2005, p. 28.

[81] U.S. Strategic Command, "U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM)," September 30, 2016.

[82] Sean Gallagher, "Cyber-Overhaul," *C4ISR & Networks*, 2009.

[83] See Enterprise Capability Collaboration Team, *Air Superiority 2030 Flight Plan*, Washington, D.C.: U.S. Air Force, May 2016.

Figure A.6
Great-Power-Era Shocks

RAND *RR2270-OSD-A.6*
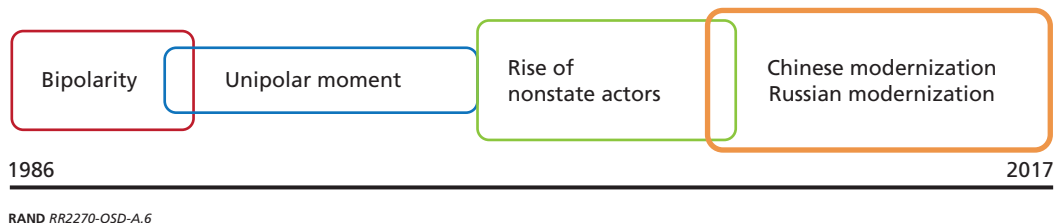
and Russia were engaged in rapid modernization of their militaries and began exerting more-aggressive foreign policy positions (see Figure A.6). Having grown used to domain dominance, particularly in air and sea, the United States is now faced with the first real possibility of contested domains in decades. In East Asia, China began asserting its claims to the South and East China Seas, clashing with other regional actors, such as the Philippines, Japan, and Vietnam, and with the United States as a security guarantor of some of these countries.[84] In Europe, Russia's invasions of Georgia in 2008 and eastern Ukraine in 2014 have unsettled NATO partners and raised concerns for continued Russian expansion westward, particularly toward the Baltic states. While new developments such as the rise of the Islamic State continue to engage U.S. forces against quasi- and nonstate actors, China's and Russia's displays of regional power and newly developed capabilities have captured the attention of the services that must plan for contingencies against these capable countries.

This period reflects altered competitor dynamics between the services resulting from the creation of two new concepts: ASB and the alleged "Third Offset," a strategy designed to preserve scarce resources in order to invest in innovation. While a future fight in the western Pacific region would favor air and naval forces over land, the emergence of the Third Offset, aimed at both Europe and East Asia, provides straightforward arguments for relevance and urgency for the Army, Air Force, and Navy. The greater dependency on the Marine Corps and USSOCOM born out of the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq afforded opportunities—and pressures—for these two entities to redefine their relevance within these new strategies.

Air-Sea Battle

In 2009, the Air Force and Navy developed the ASB concept at the direction of Secretary Gates. While not a strategy, ASB is designed to provide "a wide range of options to counter aggression from hostile actors" and address the issues inherent in

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[84] Hudson Lockett, "Timeline: South China Sea Dispute," *Financial Times*, July 12, 2016; and Council on Foreign Relations, "Timeline: China's Maritime Disputes," undated.

an A2/AD environment.[85] *Antiaccess* refers to a restriction of "movement to a theater," whereas *area denial* refers to a restriction of operations and "maneuver within a theater."[86]

> At its core, the Air-Sea Battle Concept is about reducing risk and maintaining U.S. freedom of action and reflects the services' most recent efforts to improve U.S. capabilities. . . . [ASB] seeks to better integrate the services in new and creative ways.[87]

ASB was seen as a watershed moment in the Air Force–Navy relationship, a way to revolutionize how the two services worked together.[88] Tom Ehrhard, special assistant to General Norton Schwartz, Air Force chief of staff, commented that the strategy pursued with the Navy under ASB would be similar to Air-Land Battle's attempts to foster greater integration between the Army and Air Force during the Cold War.[89] However, skepticism remained that the Air Force and Navy would go beyond lip service to true interoperability.[90] Gary Roughead, the CNO at the time, and General Schwartz signed a Memorandum of Agreement in late September 2009 to start the work. The group began with four airmen and four naval officers, all below the general or flag officer level. The eight set out for a research tour of theater commanders, asking the question, "How do we integrate Air Force and Navy capabilities to meet your needs?"[91] According to CNO Roughead, there was a heavy emphasis on making sure to include the thoughts of the CCMD commanders.

Arising as the boom years of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were drawing to a close, ASB created a crisis of relevance for the Army.[92] The noticeable exclusion from ASB is the lack of emphasis on landpower. As an example of the level of exclusion, the 15-person ASB office did not originally include anyone from the Army within

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[85] Air-Sea Battle Office, "Air-Sea Battle: Service Collaboration to Address Anti-Access & Aerial Denial Challenges," May 2013; Michael S. Choe, *Achieving Cross-Domain Synergy: Overcoming Service Barriers to Joint Force 2020*, Fort Leavenworth, Kan.: Army Command and General Staff College, 2014, p. 93; and Christopher Cavas, "USAF, Navy to Expand Cooperation," *Defense News*, November 9, 2009.

[86] Air-Sea Battle Office, 2013, p. 2.

[87] Air-Sea Battle Office, 2013, p. i.

[88] Peter Swartz and Karin Duggin, *U.S. Navy–U.S. Air Force Relationships: 1970–2010*, Alexandria, Va.: Center for Naval Analyses, MISCD0024022.A4/1Rev, June 2011; and Cavas, 2009.

[89] Cavas, 2009.

[90] Bruce Rolfsen, "The Challenge of Recasting Air Force-Navy Relationship," *Air Force Times*, 2010.

[91] Cavas, 2009.

[92] M. Perry, 2015.

its staff.[93] Indeed, the initial exclusion of the Army caused some backlash.[94] Army major Robert Chamberlain aptly summarized the Army's response in the *Armed Forces Journal*:

> As a service [the U.S. Army] with a limited presence in the air and on the sea, this is all a little nerve-wracking. How does an organization that projects land power contribute usefully to an off-shore doctrine and a defense focus on the waters around the Chinese coast? . . . It is land power, and land power alone that can bring America's Asia policy back to reality.[95]

The Army is not the only entity in the U.S. military with a stake in landpower. The Marine Corps and USSOCOM were also wary of ASB. Having learned from its positive experience with AirLand Battle that the Army prefers to originate joint concepts, in 2013, the Army chief of staff, the commandant of the Marine Corps, and the commander of USSOCOM released the white paper *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, which emphasized influencing "human activity and the environments in which that activity occurs"—what they term the "human domain," an area they argue falls on ground forces.[96] Others perceived these arguments as Army concerns that ASB threatened missions and shares of the budget.[97] Despite such joint ventures, competition within the landpower forces also reared its head. For example, a series of exercises landed Army helicopters on Navy ships, exhibiting a role for the Army in the littoral environment. However, storming the beaches traditionally fell to the Marines, and Army encroachment on this responsibility in the pursuit of attaining ASB relevance was not well received.[98]

Service leads in the ASB group put out an article in June 2012 to clarify a range of topics related to the concept, including the Army's participation. It stated,

> Perhaps the most troubling misperception is that ASB is only about air and naval forces, that it ignores the land component. To the contrary: It is an operating concept that seeks to assure, in the face of rising technological challenges, that all components of U.S. and allied forces can be brought to bear as deemed necessary.[99]

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[93] "In Reversal, Army to Get a Stake in AirSea Battle Office After All," *Inside the Army*, November 11, 2011.

[94] Choe, 2014, p. 93.

[95] Robert M. Chamberlain, "Back to Reality," *Armed Forces Journal*, May 1, 2013.

[96] Raymond T. Odierno, James F. Amos, and William H. McRaven, *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Special Operations Command, October 2013.

[97] Choe, 2014, pp. 94–95; Rickey Smith, "No Identity Crisis for U.S. Army," *Defense News*, May 14, 2012.

[98] M. Perry, 2015.

[99] Philip DuPree and Jordan Thomas, "Air-Sea Battle: Clearing the Fog," *Armed Forces Journal*, June 1, 2012.

In 2015, ASB underwent a "major rethink" to better incorporate inputs from "land services and combatant commanders." The service leads in the ASB group produced the Joint Concept for Access and Maneuver in the Global Commons. Navy captain Terry Morris, deputy director for ASB in the Pentagon, clarified that the concept was not intended to nullify ASB but rather build on it as the military's understanding of the environment has developed.[100]

Investing in Innovation

After fighting nonstate actors for over a decade, the United States began to appear as if it was losing its advantage in warfighting capability vis-à-vis traditional state militaries, specifically those of China and Russia. In late 2014, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel announced the Defense Innovation Initiative to "sustain and advance [U.S.] military superiority for the 21st century."[101] From this emerged the effort named the Third Offset, designed to reflect this reorientation. The Third Offset focuses on "conventional deterrence against great powers."[102] It emphasizes advanced technology—or leveraging existing technology in new ways—combined with human decisionmaking to face competitors with large forces and levels of technological capability similar to those of the United States. Focusing on acquisitions and transformation, many within DoD and on the Hill pushed for greater budgets and a repeal of the 2011 BCA, which limited defense spending. The absence of a clear sense of what precisely the Third Offset is has created space for the services to selectively interpret what they are offsetting and how, in ways that are often driven by core service preferences.

From a budget and historical standpoint, the Army has the lead in most potential wars in Europe. In 2014, President Barack Obama proposed the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI), which increased defense spending for European defense, including steps to reassure allies, deter Russian aggression, and increase U.S. capabilities in this theater. While the ERI did not meet the requirements to be designated for OCO funding, Congress did not object to President Obama's proposal to pull the funds from there.[103] In President Obama's FY 2017 budget proposal, he "more than quadrupled the amount" of OCO funds intended for the ERI, with $2.8 billion of his proposed $3.4 billion allocated to the Army.[104] Echoing Cold War strategies in Europe, Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work began calling the

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[100] Paul McLeary, "New US Concept Melds Air, Sea, Land," *Defense News*, January 26, 2015.

[101] Chuck Hagel, Secretary of Defense, "The Defense Innovation Initiative," memorandum, Washington, D.C., November 15, 2014.

[102] See Bob Work, "Reagan Defense Forum: The Third Offset Strategy," speech delivered at the Reagan Presidential Library, Simi Valley, Calif., November 7, 2015.

[103] Mark F. Cancian and Lisa Sawyer Samp, "The European Reassurance Initiative," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, February 9, 2016.

[104] Jen Judson and Aaron Mehta, "US Army Pivots to Europe," *Defense News*, February 14, 2016.

new joint strategy in theater "AirLand Battle 2.0," which emphasizes targeting "an adversary's command and control, reconnaissance, and targeting networks."[105] The Department of the Army not only is exploring how to embrace the Third Offset from a technological standpoint but has also discussed in a series of seminars how to structure the Army for this type of strategy.[106] While the continued use of OCO funds to support the ERI may have adequately served USEUCOM's purposes, it was short of ideal for the Army, as it was seeking a return to operational concepts that would drive force modernization and structure the way AirLand Battle had.[107] Instead, base budget modernization dollars will be principally driven toward the Air Force and Navy, and the Army will remain trapped in the eternal present of OCO dollars.

For the Navy, the rise in Chinese capabilities posed a significant threat to the service's command of the seas, challenging for the first time since the Cold War the presumption of uncontested sea control from the outset of any conflict.[108] In response, the Navy began developing technology such as unmanned underwater vehicles, cyber capabilities, and electronic-warfare applications. While these technological and warfighting initiatives typify efforts envisioned by the Third Offset, they predate the effort by several years. They represent official Navy contributions to the Pentagon's new concept, but the Navy would have likely pursued them even if the Third Offset were never articulated.[109]

This emphasis on innovation continued to cater to the cultural core of the Air Force, and as a result, the service saw its role as key to the new defense strategy.[110] Many see a need for greater agility within the service to "operate effectively in the dynamic, ever-changing worldwide environment today—and tomorrow," and the Third Offset concept provides a means to accomplish this.[111] Senate Armed Services Committee chairman Senator John McCain published in January 2017 a set of recommendations for the FY 2018–FY 2022 defense budget that included a hike in Air Force modernization spending by $55 billion, arguing, "U.S. air dominance is no longer assured by

[105] Tony Bertuca, "Work Envisions Third Offset Strategy Supported by 'AirLand Battle 2.0,'" *Inside Defense*, April 8, 2015.

[106] David Vergun, "Army Seeking '3rd Offset Strategy' to Dominate Enemy," *U.S. Army*, February 22, 2016.

[107] OS02, defense civilian, March 7, 2017.

[108] Ronald O'Rourke, *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress*, Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, RL33153, May 31, 2016.

[109] Justin Doubleday, "Chief of Naval Research Outlines Service's Contributions to Third Offset Strategy," *Inside Defense*, January 28, 2016.

[110] Stacey Geiger, "AFMC Strategic Plan to Help Carry Air Force to Third Offset," US Fed News Service, including US State News, March 15, 2016.

[111] Statement from Gen. Ellen Pawlikowski, Air Force material commander, in Geiger, 2016.

2025."[112] General Ellen Pawlikowski, chief of Air Force Materiel Command, announced that within its FY 2017 budget, the Air Force parsed $2 billion across future defense programs to align the service with the ideals of the Third Offset.[113]

Even before the reduction in U.S. commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Marine Corps began focusing on a return to its naval and expeditionary roots. Seeking to avoid a perception that it is simply a second land army, the Marine Corps began to focus its development efforts specifically on China in addition to Russia. To assist with concerns over potential conflict with China, the Marines have developed a concept they are calling "expeditionary advanced bases," involving the employment of High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems in an antiship capacity, complemented by air defenses, unmanned aerial systems to provide ISR, and infantry to provide security against raids.[114] The current commandant of the Marine Corps, General Robert Neller, places a high priority on the development of the Marines' information warfare capabilities. *Information warfare* is a DoN term that encompasses information operations, electronic warfare, and signals intelligence, areas in which Russia is known to have very mature capabilities.

Despite DoD leadership's stipulating the conventional aspects of the Third Offset, USSOCOM searched for ways to remain relevant in today's conflicts.[115] Beginning in 2011, then–USSOCOM commander Admiral William McRaven led a series of initiatives designed to increase USSOCOM's ability to respond quickly to contingencies around the world and position more of its forces forward. Additionally, as explained in Chapter Six, in 2016 USSOCOM gained a new role as the lead on the CWMD mission from USSTRATCOM. While not attaining new authorities, USSOCOM now can exert greater influence in an area it has long counted as a core activity.[116]

Conclusion

Major exogenous shocks such as the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the end of the Cold War, the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the aggressive policies of the Chinese and Russian governments molded the environment in which the services were called on to react and prepare for a newly defined future. How the services responded to these shocks

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[112] John McCain, *Restoring American Power: Recommendations for the FY 2018–FY 2022 Defense Budget*, January 16, 2017, p. 12.

[113] Courtney Albon, "Air Force Five-Year Budget Includes $2 Billion for 'Third Offset,'" *Inside Defense*, February 26, 2016.

[114] James Hasik, "Howitzers and HIMARS in the South China Sea?" *RealClearDefense*, June 7, 2016.

[115] See Joint Special Operations University, *Special Operations Research Topics 2016*, MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.: Joint Special Operations University Press, 2015.

[116] Feickert, 2017.

influenced their culture and was also influenced by their culture. These responses also impacted how the services competed with each other in the four arenas of competition: resources, personnel, current roles and missions, and future institutional security. This historical narrative provides a brief overview of the shocks and milestone trends that resulted in some of the most substantial developments in the services' cultures and methods of competition. The preceding chapters in this report provide additional details on the specific developments of the services and USSOCOM.

Interview Protocol

Central Ethos

- CE1. What is the ideal [soldier, sailor, airman, marine, special operator] for this service?
- CE2. What key values are associated with [service] today?
  Probe: Do these differ from in the past?
- CE3. How do these key values differ from those of other services?
- CE4. Are there any events that are particularly revealing of [service] institutional personality or ethos? Can you describe them?
- CE5. What is the enduring mission of [service]?
- CE6. How does [service] accomplish that mission?
- CE7. In 1989, Carl Builder described the [service] ethos as [insert short description here]. How true is this today?

Tendency for Institutional Measurement

- SM1. What is the most important unit of measurement for the [service's] ability to accomplish its overall mission?
- SM2. How has that "optimal" measurement fluctuated over time?
- SM3. Which is more important to [service]: size, modernization, or another attribute? Why?
  Probe: How does this preference for size, modernization, or [other attribute] compare to other services?

Skills Versus Technology (Versus Something Else)

- SE1. For [service], which is more important to the success of warfare: the skills of its people, or the technology with which they are equipped? Is there some new factor beyond this "art versus science" divide, or is that still the right one?
- SE2. How has the importance of these factors fluctuated over time?

Degrees and Extent of Intraservice or Branch Distinctions

- BD1. Is there a hierarchy among different specializations within [service]? What does that look like?
  Probe: Based on branches? Platforms? Something else?
- BD2. To what extent do these distinctions impact career opportunities? Advancement?
  Probe: Are there job categories that can or cannot become service chief?

Service Legitimacy and Relevance

- SL1. In what domain will modern warfare be decided?
- SL2. Is the mission of [service] as vital to U.S. national security as it was a decade ago? Several decades ago? How so?
- SL3. Paint a picture of what America's next war looks like: How does it begin? How is it fought? How does it end? *Clarification: If you were making a movie of America's next war, how would it go?*

Changing Modalities of Competition (Character, Locus, and Goals)

- CM1. Why does [service] compete today?
- CM2. With what entities does [service] compete today?
- CM3. What are the types of things [service] competes over?
- CM4. In what arenas does [service] compete today? *Clarification: Services can compete in a lot of different arenas. Some may be internal, like competition at the DMAG, or in defense planning processes and execute orders. Others may be external, as with battles for congressional authorities, interagency personnel assignments, or engagement directly with the National Security Council and White House. Where does [service] compete?*
- CM5. How have CCMDs (regional and geographic) changed [service's] role in U.S. national security?
- CM6. Are there ways in which organizational competition inside the military is different today from in the past?
  Probe: What are the major factors that account for that change?

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https://insidedefense.com/daily-news/air-force-five-year-budget-includes-2-billion-third-offset

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This report analyzes the current character of competition between the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) and examines how culture impacts the ways the services posture themselves to gain resources, authorities, access, and influence. The report identifies cultural characteristics, primary goals, and competitive strategies exhibited by the military services and USSOCOM. Further, it explores the current modalities of competition and tactics of competition employed by each service. The authors evaluate whether the cultures of the services have changed substantively over time and whether the services wield as much influence as they did before the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. Finally, the authors assess how each service might adapt and respond if it faced major policy shifts in the future, focusing specifically on contingencies in China and North Korea. The authors make three essential arguments: First, service personalities are alive and well. They endure, but they also evolve slowly to allow adaptation to the present environment. Second, post–Goldwater-Nichols, services remain the most powerful organizational actors in national defense. However, their relative edge over the Office of the Secretary of Defense, combatant commands, and the Joint Staff has decreased, leading to a more complex field of competition. Third, this complexity introduced by Goldwater-Nichols has created changes to the character of competition in the national security arena. The relevant actors have expanded to include elevated roles for the Marine Corps and USSOCOM, and the tactics and arenas of competition have changed.

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