# US Joint War Planning for Twentieth-Century Large-Scale Combat Operations: Case Studies and Implications for Current Joint Planners

A Monograph

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# Abstract

US Joint War Planning for Twentieth-Century Large-Scale Combat Operations: Case Studies and Implications for Current Joint Planners, by COL Brit K. Erslev, 65 pages.

The mid twentieth-century US military did not think in terms of campaigns to shape and deter war in the same way as today's Joint Force, but its planners navigated similar bureaucratic and civil-military obstacles. Historical planners worked within complex environments and operated under shifting, vague, or conflicting thoughts on national policy and strategy, causing them to make assumptions to adjust to actual or projected reality. They probed the boundaries of their roles as military advisors, embarking on intellectual journeys that elevated the role of the US military in shaping national security policy and strategy. The monograph will explore how past planners proposed courses of action to address great power competition and conflict. How, and how well, mid-century joint planners worked within constraints to craft realistic war plans for threats potentially leading to large-scale combat operations provides insight into how current planners can mitigate the bureaucratic and civil-military tensions of the Department of Defense and Executive Branch to provide contingency and campaign plans supporting the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's statutory responsibilities.

# Contents

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# Abbreviations

| | |
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| CA | Coordinating Authority |
| CCMD | Combatant Command |
| CCP | Combatant Command Campaign Plan |
| CCS | Combined Chiefs of Staff |
| CJCS | Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff |
| CNO | Chief of Naval Operations |
| CPG | Contingency Planning Guidance |
| DoD | Department of Defense |
| FY | Fiscal Year |
| GCP | Global Campaign Plan |
| JB | Joint Board |
| JCS | Joint Chiefs of Staff |
| JLRSE | Joint Long-Range Strategic Estimate |
| JPC | Joint Planning Committee |
| JPS | Joint Staff Planners |
| JS | Joint Staff |
| JSCP | Joint Strategic Capabilities or Campaign Plan |
| JSPC | Joint Strategic Plans Committee |
| JSOP | Joint Strategic Objectives Plan |
| JSPC | Joint Strategic Plans Committee |
| JSPG | Joint Strategic Plans Group |
| JSPS | Joint Strategic Planning System |
| JSSC | Joint Strategic Survey Committee |
| JUSSC | Joint US Strategic Committee |
| JWPC | Joint War Plans Committee |

| | |
|---|---|
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NDS | National Defense Strategy |
| NMS | National Military Strategy |
| NSC | National Security Council |
| NSS | National Security Strategy |
| OPD | Army Operations Division |
| PPBE | Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution |
| SAC | Strategic Air Command |
| SIOP | Single Integrated Operational Plan |
| SSA | Support for Strategic Analysis |
| SWNCC | State War Navy Coordinating Committee |
| UCP | Unified Command Plan |
| UMT | Universal Military Training |
| UN | United Nations |
| US | United States |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |

# Tables

# Introduction

In early 2017, Lieutenant Colonel Jim Cahill, an Army officer with planning experience at US European Command and Headquarters, Department of the Army, assessed the current state of deliberate war planning and suggested ways to make this planning more value-added to the national security enterprise. He addressed how participants need to be aware of and better navigate two tensions—bureaucratic and civil-military—in planning processes and outcomes. Bureaucratic tensions stem from inter-service, inter-command, and inter-agency rivalries and misunderstandings, while civil-military tensions arise from actual or perceived weak linkages between national strategic objectives and military strategy and operations. Acknowledging some of the tensions are difficult to impossible for the military to change, Cahill proposed a seven-part rubric for assessing the utility of a war plan in overcoming these challenges, including military and strategic validity, organizational learning, organizational networking, resourcing influence, flexibility, and clarity. Cahill concluded by encouraging further study of the past formulation and execution of war plans to validate his proposed framework.[1]

Much has changed regarding planning in the Department of Defense (DoD), even in the short time since Cahill published his article. The 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) introduced the idea of the United States being engaged in competition with other nations in the military, economic, and political realms. Concurrently, the Secretary of Defense, via Congressional changes to Title X, designated the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) the Global Integrator for military planning and execution in support of national strategy and policy guidance. Subsequent directives to the Joint Staff and Combatant Commands (CCMDs) introduced coordinating authorities (CA), with CCMDs designated as leads for integrating among their peer organizations the planning, execution, and assessment of problem sets identified in the NSS, National Defense Strategy (NDS), and National Military Strategy (NMS). The Joint Staff

[1] Jim Cahill, "Producing Strategic Value Through Deliberate War Planning," *Military Review* 97, no. 1 (January-February 2017), 25-33.

integrates the efforts of CCMDs supporting the CA for a given problem set, all within the framework of the Unified Command Plan (UCP), the bi-annually-updated document which lays out responsibilities for each CCMD. These planning efforts result in the production of campaign plans, which are reviewed up to the secretariat level. The Joint Staff, with CA assistance, produces Global Campaign Plans (GCPs) while CCMDs continue to write Combatant Command Campaign Plans (CCPs).[2]

So where do war plans fit into the current planning structure? The terms "war plans" and "contingency plans" have been used interchangeably over the last half of the twentieth century. "War plans," as in the "War Plans Divisions" of the Army and Navy staffs, was the common term prior to and during World War II. The term "contingency plan," with its broader connotation, has been increasingly used since and is formally defined in joint doctrine, although the latest joint planning reference still contains an allusion to "war plans" in one diagram. Joint Publication 5-0 (2017) defines contingency plans as "branches of campaign plans that are planned for potential threats, catastrophic events, and contingent missions without a crisis at-hand" in accordance with higher guidance.[3] CCMDs still write contingency plans as Cahill described, nested under CCPs, but the DoD has increasingly oriented more toward comprehensive, integrated campaign plans and their role in shaping US competition with identified challengers, particularly Russia and China. Campaign plans that adequately address steady-state operations and anticipate major problems mean in theory that there should be a reduced requirement for contingency plans.

The mid-twentieth century US military did not think in terms of campaigns to shape and deter war in the same way that the Joint Force does today, but its planners navigated similar bureaucratic and civil-military obstacles to the ones Cahill points out in his article. The type of

[2] US President, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The White House, 2017), 2-3; US Department of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3141.01F, *Management and Review of Campaign and Contingency Plans* (Washington, DC: Joint Staff, 2019), 2, A-3 to A-6. CCPs were formerly known as Theater Campaign Plans (TCPs).

[3] US Department of Defense, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), xviii, II-7. This monograph will refer to "war plans" and "war planning" when discussing historical examples, as these were the terms used through the 1950s.

environment in which these planners worked is not very different from that of today's joint planners. The historical planners operated under shifting, vague, or conflicting thoughts on national policy and strategy, causing them to make and re-make assumptions to adjust to actual or projected reality. The lack of guidance did not reflect bad intentions, but rather leader decision-making styles and a shared struggle to identify policy and strategy in radically changed and changing operational environments. To do their jobs, joint planners and their service chiefs probed the boundaries of their roles as military advisors, alternatively providing strategic options and lamenting their perceived lack of influence with political leaders. In spite of these frustrations, through war/contingency planning, joint planners at the national strategic level embarked on intellectual journeys that would elevate the stature of US military leaders as national security advisors and set in motion an evolution toward the primacy of the campaign in long-range planning.

How, and how well, mid-century joint planners worked within these constraints to craft realistic war plans for threats that may entail what the US Army now terms large-scale combat operations provides insight into how today's planners can mitigate and work within Cahill's identified tensions in the system to support both campaign and contingency planning. There are continuities as well as differences in the two major war-planning examples discussed. The Rainbow Plans that Army and Navy planners produced between 1939 and 1941 came about in an environment that featured a respectful civil-military relationship between the service chiefs, their planners, and the President of the United States, yet resulted in little clear policy guidance from which to conduct informed planning. Influenced by and participating in service disagreements, the planners ultimately adjusted well to the evolving internal and international situation, and their plans provided a solid basis for successful operational campaign planning during World War II. By contrast, immediately thereafter, during the early years of the Cold War, both political and military leaders and their planners struggled to articulate the extent of the Soviet threat and how to account for the advent of atomic warfare. Within a growing defense bureaucracy and

reinvigorated inter-service rivalries, joint planners and their service chiefs often communicated disagreement and a lack of military options through their early staff papers and contingency plans, and it was not until national policy and international alliance structures and purposes became clearer that the plans became more aligned to existing and predicted resources. In short, the challenges that joint planners faced between the 1930s and 1950s exist today, as Cahill argues, but are spread across a much larger community of strategic-level commands and staffs. All of these entities, along with the DoD civilian staff, constantly work with best intentions to coordinate and synchronize their planning efforts, particularly given the global integration mandate.[4]

A related question that strategic-level commanders and their planners are left with is, what is the usefulness of dedicated contingency planning in an age where the United States' national security establishment finds itself in constant competition and has accepted that the best way of addressing this environment is through continuously-assessed, globally-integrated campaign plans? More specifically, should contingency plans be considered as ebbs or spikes in long-standing relationships between the United States and other emerging global powers, i.e. when steady-state operations change for the worse because campaign plans fail to deter or compel certain behavior? How the US military and DoD policy makers continue to refine the concept of competition and the definition of war will inform how planners anticipate and adjust for changes in the operational and strategic environments that may result in a contingency response. The ensuing discussion will explore how past planners proposed courses of action to address great power competition and conflict, which is the focus of the most recent National Security Strategy and supporting documents. The planners in question thought in terms of global integration and disliked simple solutions, even if at times they struggled to conceptualize their ideas.

Since the mid-1950s up until the present, the DoD has undergone more restructuring, activating and deactivating numerous CCMDs (and their predecessors, the unified and specified

[4] Cahill, "Producing Strategic Value," 25, 31-33.

commands), enlarging and shrinking the Joint Staff, and further empowering, but in some cases limiting, the Secretary of Defense and the Chairman. The joint and service staffs gained equities in the defense budgeting process via their involvement in the Support for Strategic Analysis (SSA) process, which requires long-term predictions of the strategic environment to inform force structure, resourcing, and acquisitions. At the same time, the CCMDs took over the majority of contingency planning formerly done at Joint Staff level but focused more narrowly on their geographic or functional areas; a notable exception to this early on was Strategic Air Command (SAC), responsible for the anticipated strategic air offensive against the Soviet Union and later the Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP).[5] Thus the Joint Staff over the last half of the twentieth century participated more in the resource adjudication process between the services than in "traditional" war planning. Now, the Joint Staff has come full circle as it is again charged with integrating the efforts of theater-level and functional commanders, via Contingency Planning Guidance (CPG) and the Joint Strategic Campaign Plan (JSCP), within the Joint Strategic Planning System (JSPS), to ensure global strategic military efforts are synchronized in accordance with political guidance. While the J5's contingency plans assessment and oversight functions are not new, the latest evolution of the JSPS takes into account the recently added CJCS statutory responsibilities of comprehensive joint readiness and global military integration, giving greater weight to the tasks of aligning subordinate headquarters plans with the GCP and CPG.[6]

[5] On the SSA process and its relationship with contingency planning, see Michael J. Mazarr et. al., *The U.S. Department of Defense's Planning Process: Components and Challenges* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2019), 28-31. For a critical view of SAC's role in developing the SIOP, see David A. Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill: Nuclear Weapons and American Strategy, 1945-1960," *International Security* 7, no. 4 (Spring 1983): 3-71. A more recent example of a CCMD with global responsibility for contingency planning is United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), which was the lead for the Global War on Terrorism (see US Special Operations Command, *2007 Posture Statement* (Tampa, FL: USSOCOM, 2007), 1).

[6] US Department of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3100.01D, *Joint Strategic Planning System* (Washington, DC: Joint Staff, 2018), C-1-C-2, H-1; Office of the Law Revision Counsel, United States Code, Title 10, U.S.C. Chapter 5: Joint Chiefs of Staff, §153, accessed February 13, 2020, https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title10/subtitleA/part1/chapter5&edition=prelim.

# US Joint War Planning Organization and Functions Since 1900

The organizational structure supporting a formal joint war planning capability goes back to the establishment of the Joint Army-Navy Board (Joint Board, JB) in 1903. Given the recent Spanish-American War and new American territories, the Secretaries of War and Navy agreed that a "board of final review" would assist in adjudicating separate service plans and/or preparing joint plans.[7] Beyond commenting on plans, the Joint Board served as an advisory body for all military manners to the service secretaries and the President of the United States. Four officers from each service, including the service chiefs, comprised the board. The Joint Board, though, did not have its own staff until after World War I and the associated restructuring of the War and Navy department general staffs, but early on both the Navy and Army leveraged its War College students to assist with research and crafting war plans. In its first decade, the board considered plans for the defense of Panama and the new Panama Canal against Colombia as well as potential wars with Great Britain, Mexico, and even Germany. Two foundational planning concepts emerged during these early years of formal joint planning: prioritization of homeland defense and hemispheric interests in support of the Monroe Doctrine, and the assumption that the United States would respond to an attack and would not be the state initiating war. In addition, the Joint Board began the practice of assigning color codes to each potential enemy. Even though it considered unlikely scenarios such as conflict with Great Britain, the Joint Board, along with the war college students who assisted in planning, gained experience thinking more about when and how to defend new US possessions (Cuba and the Philippines) and practice planning on a global scale.[8]

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[7] Steven T. Ross, *American War Plans, 1890-1939* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), x, 28-29; thereafter cited as *AWP 1890-1939* to distinguish from several other works edited or written by Ross.

[8] Ross, *AWP 1890-1939*, 29-30, 31-38, 87-88; Henry G. Gole, *The Road to Rainbow: Army Planning for Global War, 1934-1940* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2003), 25. Homeland defense was always foremost in the services' minds since the birth of the republic, but was not planned coherently in a joint manner until the twentieth century.

Presidents William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson did not use the Joint Board very much due to their frustrations with inter-service squabbles, but after World War I the two service secretaries saw value in reviving and strengthening the activities of the organization. In addition to shrinking the Joint Board to six members, they created a subordinate Joint Planning Committee (JPC), composed of three full-time planners each from the Army and Navy, which passed plans to the Joint Board for adjudication before comment and approval by the service chiefs. There was little real threat to plan against in the 1920s, and in practice the service staffs continued planning in their respective spheres while the JPC gained more experience planning against a hypothetical enemy. Some plans were not completely far-fetched, given certain immediate concerns such as internal political dissent and a Philippine insurrection, and American commitments, even in a period of isolationism, forced the planners to think about smaller-scale contingencies. The limiting factor, as throughout most of US history, was budget; the Army, for example, would not have been able to execute its Special Plan Blue for emergency mobilization, based on the provisions of the 1920 National Defense Act, because the service never received the money to grow to the size allocated in the legislation. From then on, twentieth-century military planners would consistently grapple with the constraints of forces in being and near-term requirements versus drafting war plans, particularly against major powers, which would require significant mobilization and manpower increases.[9]

The Joint Board and Joint Planning Committee functions carried through World War II, with the JPC and the subordinate service War Plans Divisions growing in size and restructuring to meet the needs of General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, and Admiral Ernest J. King,

[9] Ross, *AWP 1890-1939*, 95-96, 98-99; Fred Greene, "The Military View of American National Policy, 1904-1940," *The American Historical Review 66*, no. 2 (January 1961): 358-359; "Table 1. - Strength of the United States Army: 1919-1941," in Mark S. Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations, United States Army in World War II* (Washington, DC: Historical Division, Department of the Army, 1950), 16. Congress authorized a 296,000-man regular army in 1920, part of which comprised a cadre system under mobilization for up to two million men. Plan Blue focused on this mobilization and baseline preparedness, but the authorized cadre units were short of ammunition, guns, aircraft, and tanks, while some existed only on paper. The Army fell to around 133,000 in 1927, while appropriations peaked at just under 119,000 in the middle of the same decade.

the Chief of Naval Operations. The Joint Board, with its nucleus of the service chiefs to include the Army Air Corps, transitioned in February 1942 into the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), an organization sponsored by President Franklin Roosevelt as his advisory body during the war; with the inclusion of the top British military leaders it was called the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS). Admiral William Leahy served as Roosevelt's top military advisor and a conduit for communication between the JCS and the President.[10] Also in 1942, the JCS established the Joint U.S. Strategic Committee (JUSSC), whose duties then split in 1943 into the Joint War Plans Committee (JWPC) and the Joint Strategic Survey Committee (JSSC). The JWPC, subordinate to the Joint Staff Planners (JPS), was responsible, along with its parent organization, for most of the strategic planning during the war, while the JSSC, subject to civilian concerns, functioned as a senior leader strategic think-tank for the JCS. The services also expanded their respective planning staffs, with the Army Operations Division (OPD) becoming a notable example of an influential wartime command post. The JCS was thus equipped with a robust planning system that, as the outcomes of the war became more apparent, postured itself to look at the next likely threat(s) to American interests.[11]

The National Security Act of 1947 finally authorized the JCS in law, including a chairman (in Leahy's old role) who represented the body on the new National Security Council, but the law gave each service chief equal advisory power to the President. The legislation also established the Joint Staff (JS) with three sections—the Joint Strategic Plans Group (assuming the war plans responsibility), the Joint Strategic Logistics Group, and the Joint Intelligence Group—under their respectively named committees and reporting to the Director of the Joint Staff. The

[10] Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Grand Alliance, and US Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 64-66. This JCS had command authority over the armed forces and operations, a situation that would change with subsequent legislation concerning the civilian secretaries and subordinate commands.

[11] Ray S. Cline, *Washington Command Post: The Operations Division, United States Army in World War II* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1951), 46, 103-104; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 66, 104-109; *Organizational Development of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 9-10.

three groups routinely coordinated with each other to refine and support their respective estimates and plans before passing their work to the committees. The JCS then commented on the documents, often sending them back for additional information or edits, before passing them to the service secretaries and if necessary, the president. As planning for the Cold War progressed, the Joint Strategic Plans Committee (JSPC), in conjunction with the Chairman, proposed a construct for a family of near, mid-term, and long-range plans under the Joint Program for Planning, which in 1968 became the JSPS. Approved in July 1952, these plans were the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP, short-term/next fiscal year), the Joint Strategic Objectives Plan (JSOP, three year horizon), and the Joint Long-Range Strategic Estimate (JLRSE, five year horizon). For various reasons, the JCS found it difficult to adhere to the given timelines and debated the purpose and scope of the plans for the next three years, revising the JSPS in 1955 and periodically thereafter.[12]

As the Cold War dragged on, President Dwight Eisenhower, unsatisfied with JCS coordination and integration, asked for legislation and issued directives to adjust DoD authorities and responsibilities along with a reorganization of the Joint Staff. The J5 Plans and Policy Directorate stood up after the passage of the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, assuming the responsibilities of the JSPC and its subordinate plans group. The directorate supported the Chairman's mandate to "prepare strategic plans and provide for the strategic direction of the armed forces," but some contingency planning, including the SIOP, fell to the unified and specified commands. For instance, United States Strike Command (1962), later

[12] Joint History Office, *Organizational Development of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1942-2013* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013), 16-21; Walter S. Poole, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. IV, 1950-1952* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, 1998), 90-91; Walter S. Poole, *Joint Chiefs of Staff Special Historical Study: The Evolution of the Joint Strategic Planning System, 1947-1989* (Washington, DC: Joint Staff, 1989), 2-3. The current instruction memorandum is CJCSI 3100.01D, *Joint Strategic Planning System* (see note 6); under this system, the Joint Staff updated the JSPS in 2015 and 2018.

renamed United States Readiness Command (1972), had as one of its primary missions planning for and executing worldwide contingency operations under the direction of the JCS.[13]

The 1950's-era family of plans similarly changed over time, as the Planning, Programming, Budgeting and Execution (PPBE) and SSA processes subsumed the original purpose of the JSOP with regards to projecting future forces for budget and procurement considerations. The Joint Staff participates in SSA through scenario development to help supported DoD agencies visualize the future strategic environment, but this remains a separate, although parallel, process from CCMD work on and Joint Staff oversight of contingency plans. The Joint Long-Range Strategic Estimate is gone, and the Joint Strategic *Capabilities* Plan was renamed the Joint Strategic *Campaign* Plan in 2018.[14] The J5 manages the JSCP, which is now "a 5-year global strategic plan (reviewed every 2 years) that operationalizes the National Military Strategy (NMS). It is the Chairman's primary document to guide and direct the preparation and integration of Joint Force campaign and contingency plans."[15] More broadly, the J5 manages all JSCP and CPG-tasked plans, campaign and contingency, submitted by the CCMDs to the Joint Staff for CJCS and Secretary of Defense review and approval. The directorate, far from being a mere plans manager, also controls the master planning calendar, prepares planning guidance, writes planning policy and doctrine, and conducts formal assessments of plans in conjunction with CCMDs. The language in Title X, going back to the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, therefore, remains true with regards to the Chairman's responsibility

[13] Edward Drea, et. al., *History of the Unified Command Plan, 1946-2012* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013), page 3-4, 23, 29; *Organizational Development of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 41-46.

[14] Poole, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, 3-22; Mazarr, *The U.S. Department of Defense's Planning Process*, 30. Poole's brief history of the JSPS touches on the lack of influence the JCS had with Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara with regards to the JSOP and budgeting matters. Secretaries of Defense starting with McNamara also required various types of memorandums to support PPBE (formerly PPB*S* for *System*) and other evolving DoD policy guidance documents. By the late 1980s, plans within the JSPS, to include those of CCMDs, better informed and were nested within Defense and Consolidated Guidance of that era.

[15] CJCSI 3100.01D, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, C-1.

for "providing for the preparation and review of contingency plans," even if the J5 is no longer writing contingency plans from scratch.[16]

## Interwar Planning, 1919-1941

Global tensions leading up to World War II and the period of the war before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor put US joint planning squarely on the path it still follows today, with continuous re-framing, inter-service and agency coordination, and assessment being the norm (in theory, if not perfectly in practice). World War II was the first US war for which planners anticipated and prepared for large-scale deployments to multiple theaters, to include the US homeland, supported by significant mobilization, training, and production timelines, while materially backing allies to keep their war efforts alive. The American domestic and political situation in the late 1930s, along with specific civil-military and bureaucratic tensions, however, hamstrung the planners and service chiefs' ability to plan for any kind of war adequately. With sporadic or little policy guidance from the State Department or a president who gradually tested the feasibility of US global diplomatic involvement, these officers made educated guesses and assumptions about national strategy and operations in the event of US involvement in a future global war. Army and Navy planners did not always agree about threat intentions or US military priorities, and therefore compromised while continuously revising and reworking their estimates. Many officers were fortunate to have the opportunity to practice for their future jobs during planning exercises at the Army and Navy War Colleges, which also instilled in them the habit of studying contemporary international diplomatic topics. Through their service chiefs, they often recommended strategic-level plans as part of their best military advice, but President Roosevelt, while valuing their input and not dissuading them from working on options, made clear he was in charge and often did not provide specific feedback or guidance. This state of affairs in the

[16] CJCSI 3141.01F, *Management and Review of Campaign and Contingency Plans,* D-1-D-3; *Organizational Development of the Joint Chiefs of Staff,* 63; Title 10, U.S.C. Chapter 5: Joint Chiefs of Staff, §153.

Executive Branch led to both frustration and opportunities for the joint planners as they attempted to prepare for what they anticipated could be a complex multi-year war. Nevertheless, after years of review and re-assessment, the joint planners produced well-informed blueprints that both guided and remained flexible enough to accommodate the US strategies and objectives during World War II.[17]

In the decades prior to 1939, joint planners were hard pressed to find large-scale threats to the homeland. The Navy, in conjunction with its traditional force projection missions, considered contingencies related to the United States' newest possessions in the western Pacific. The Army, meanwhile, faced its first experience mobilizing and deploying multiple divisions outside of North America and fighting in a coalition during World War I, and afterwards returned to primarily garrison duties. Thinking about and being exposed to these theater-strategic issues encouraged the joint planners to develop a series of plans that anticipated conflict with or in defense of certain countries. Dubbed the Color Plans for the color code assigned to each, twenty-two plans dealt with individual nations, some of which involved US intervention (China, the Azores, Iceland), and one addressed domestic insurrection (Plan White). The planners considered scenarios against Great Britain (Red) and the other Commonwealth members, along with most countries in mainland Europe, the USSR, Japan, Cuba, Brazil, and Mexico. Some plans reflected recent real-life concerns, such as ongoing governance issues and foreign meddling in Mexico. The plans were developed to various degrees of detail and revisited and revised over time. More importantly, the JPC and service planners did not act alone; the Army War College conducted its own Color planning between 1934 and 1940, and Naval War College students contributed ideas through war games to its Washington, DC staff. Often dismissed merely as time-filling exercises, constructing these plans provided the joint planners with valuable practice thinking about

[17] Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 31-32, 152, 158; Maurice Matloff, "The American Approach to War, 1919-1945," in *The Theory and Practice of War*, ed. Michael Howard (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), 231, 239; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 3.

potential adversaries on a global scale, and what type and amount of military power the United States could or should bring to bear in particular contingencies.[18]

Table 1. The Color Plans

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Blue | United States (versus other countries) | Ruby | Indian Empire |
| White | United States (internal/domestic) | Emerald | Ireland |
| Red | Great Britain | Olive | Spain |
| Orange | Japan | Lemon | Portugal |
| Black | Germany | Indigo | Iceland |
| Silver | Italy | Brown | Netherlands East Indies |
| Gold | France | Yellow | China |
| Purple | USSR | Violet | China Intervention |
| Green | Mexico | Citron | Brazil |
| Crimson | Canada | Tan | Cuba |
| Scarlet | Australia | Gray | Azores |
| Garnet | New Zealand | | |

Source: Steven T. Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Volume 3: Plans to Meet the Axis Threat, 1939-1940* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), xix.

During the 1920s and 1930s, joint and service planners completed several iterations of Plan Orange, which envisioned war between Japan and the United States. Planners adjusted the order and combinations of anticipated actions over the years, but the basic premise remained constant. Japan, a growing imperial power, felt threatened by US presence in the western Pacific and would seize the Philippines and Guam while moving aggressively against China and perhaps

[18] Matloff, "The American Approach to War," 215-218; Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, xix; Michael Vlahos, *The Blue Sword: The Naval War College and the American Mission, 1919-1941* (Newport: Naval War College Press, 1980), 143-146; Steven T. Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Volume 3: Plans to Meet the Axis Threat, 1939-1940* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), xix; thereafter, titles from Ross' multi-volume works are spelled out by volume. Later scholars like Gole had access to sources that Matloff did not regarding the role of the two war colleges in interwar planning.

even European Far East interests. The US military response involved a fleet concentration in Hawaii to establish a base for movement west, decisive battles against the Japanese fleet, seizure and re-seizure of territory as required, and ultimately an air and naval blockade of Japan proper.[19] Inherent to the feasibility of any versions of the plan were assumptions the planners made about the importance (or not) of the Philippines and other territories to the US government, and there was little policy guidance on this point. From a purely military standpoint, both the Army and Navy knew the Philippines could not be defended for long or at all unless there was a major increase in force posture. The Army had little in the way of additional troops and equipment to provide for garrisons, much less expeditionary forces. The Navy, which by virtue of Plan Orange's construct would be the lead in execution, benefitted from more funding in the interwar years but still had to figure out how to prioritize efforts between the Pacific and Atlantic. The United States still considered the Philippines valuable for a trade foothold in Asia, and some naval officers surmised, for various reasons—pride, a sense of paternalism toward Filipinos, and maintaining the Open Door—the United States would not let a nation such as Japan alter the existing equilibrium. In any event, the joint planners assumed the Japanese would quickly attack and capture the Philippines in order to secure lines of communication south toward the resource-rich Dutch East Indies, and the US Pacific Fleet would base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii to posture for an island-hopping campaign through the central Pacific to work its way back to Manila. Until the 1938 version, this scenario also assumed the US military would not be significantly committed elsewhere in the world. In fact, the only enemy coalition envisioned by the JPC prior to 1938 was a British-Japanese alliance (Plan Red-Orange); however unrealistic, the US still planned against the British Empire as the only other major military threat to the American

[19] Ross, *AWP 1890-1939*, 137-143; Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991), 3-4.

mainland and Western Hemisphere in the 1930s due to the still largely unchallenged strength of the Royal Navy.[20]

The main weakness with the 1938 (and last) version of Plan Orange was that it was a watered-down compromise between the services. For three years, the Army argued against holding the Philippines or embarking on an island-hopping offensive to destroy the Japanese fleet, advocating instead for defending the Alaska-Hawaii-Panama "strategic triangle" and applying economic pressure on Japan. The Navy, whose leadership was going through changes in thinking of their own, agreed to the "strategic triangle" concept and struck specific language regarding an early naval offensive west of Hawaii. The plan implied that help would come for the Philippines and its Army garrison but on no set timeline; the Navy would move into the western Pacific "as rapidly as is consonant with the maintenance of secure lines of communication."[21] For his part, President Roosevelt allowed the lead US Navy planner to begin talks on the Far East with the British, but differences in thinking between the president and the State Department regarding US overtures toward the declining European political situation confused the British and US military representatives alike. In the absence of concrete guidance, US joint planners therefore settled on the primacy of homeland defense while holding out a slim possibility of offensive naval operations in the Pacific and hedging bets for naval requirements in the Atlantic. In the words of one US Army historian, "[t]he Orange plan of 1938, a compromise between offensive and defensive strategy, reflected the contradictions and restrictions of national policy and public opinion under which the planners laboured [sic]."[22]

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[20] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 5-9; Ross, *AWP 1890-1939*, 145-152; Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 25-26. For the individual plans see Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Volume 2: Plans for War Against the British Empire and Japan: The Red, Orange, and Red-Orange Plans, 1923-1938* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992).

[21] Matloff, "The American Approach to War," 221-222; "Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan – Orange (1938)," in Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Vol. 2*, 223.

[22] Mark M. Lowenthal, "Roosevelt and the Coming of the War: The Search for United States Policy 1937-42, *Journal of Contemporary History* 16, no. 3 (July 1981): 415-417; Matloff, "The American Approach to War," 222.

The reduced size of the US military in the 1920s and 1930s, along with priority given to the Navy, made sense for a country that did not plan on being an aggressor, much less being involved in a war, but still needed to defend its borders, maintain an international presence, and control its far-flung territory. As the planners and Army and Navy service chiefs monitored events in the Far East and Europe during the late 1930s, however, they became increasingly concerned that the current military would be unprepared to deal with a situation in the eventuality the US suddenly found itself in a war in two theaters. Given the primacy of hemispheric defense and the greater feasibility of executing that mission in the short-term with existing forces, but also influenced by the Munich agreement, in November 1938 the Joint Board instructed the Joint Planning Committee to plan for a violation of the Monroe Doctrine by Germany, Italy, and/or Japan. Initial assumptions provided were that all three countries were allied and would support each other's actions, and that other democratic nations (i.e. Great Britain and France) would stay out of the conflict if their Western Hemisphere possessions were not threatened.[23]

By April 1939, the JPC completed a strategic estimate that envisioned an offensive in the Western Atlantic to protect the Panama Canal, Latin America, and South America against German and Italian forces. If Japan acted first, the US response would be similar to the Orange Plan; in the event all three countries were involved, the estimate assumed an initial defense in the western Pacific, followed by a counterattack against Japanese forces to regain the Philippines. Planners recommended an increase in the Marine Corps, the creation of an Army Expeditionary Corps to send to Brazil, and the construction of more ships to achieve a 5:3 ratio with the Japanese Navy for offensive operations, proposals that were still unlikely to be approved by Congress in 1939. The planners acknowledged that the German and Italian threat was unlikely at that time due to their naval limitations and the tense European situation, while they found it harder to predict what Japan might do, particularly its "wild-card" Navy, as its army was bogged

[23] "J.B. 325, Serial 634, Subject: Study of Joint Action in Event of Violation of Monroe Doctrine by Fascist Powers, November 12, 1938," in Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Vol. 3*, 3.

down in Manchuria and China. Of biggest concern was protecting the Panama Canal from the perceived threat of Fascist footholds and political influence in South America. The estimate also framed the conflict as a limited war, with no real conception of long-term operations. However, the study gave the JPC additional experience in identifying to the military chiefs and policy makers the pressing need for better intelligence, continued diplomatic engagement with South American nations, the dangers of a two-front war in a global conflict, and the future complexity of prioritizing and sequencing operations. It also demonstrated a continuing pivot in planners' thoughts toward European threats away from the original Plan Orange assumptions.[24]

When the Joint Board directed the Joint Planning Committee to write the estimate, its two ranking members, General Malin Craig, Army Chief of Staff, and Admiral Leahy, Chief of Naval Operations, were attempting to sit down more regularly with Secretary of State Cordell Hull to discuss how all three departments could better coordinate thoughts and advice for President Roosevelt regarding the developments in Europe and east Asia. Hull, in fact, recommended a standing Liaison Committee for senior military leaders and policy advisors to meet to discuss these matters, but it convened infrequently as State Department attendees complained of military planners taking over the discussion, while at least one military member lamented that they "frequently had to work in the dark with respect to what national policy is with respect to a specific problem, or what it may be expected to be."[25] Hull believed in a strict line between

[24] "Introduction" and "Joint Planning Committee Exploratory Studies in Accordance with J.B. 325 (Serial 634)," in Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Vol. 3*, xii, 10-11, 21, 31, 37, 58, 64-66; Ross, *AWP 1890-1939*, 166, 171-175; Lowenthal, "Roosevelt and the Coming of the War," 418-419. The planners put some thought into estimating the current number of ships, tonnage, and planes that each belligerent possessed along with projected production and requirements. For example, they estimated the Japanese had five aircraft carriers with two in production, so they recommended that the US have nine aircraft carriers in the Pacific theater for offensive operations and a minimum of two carriers for defensive operations. In the Atlantic, the planners did similar naval estimates but focused more on aircraft comparisons and combined German-Italian troop deployments, deciding on a 4:3 US force advantage; "Joint Planning Committee Exploratory Studies," in Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Vol. 3*, 32-33, 36, 53. For more on additional JPC studies on Brazil, Iceland, and other contingencies, see Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Volume 4: Coalition War Plans and Hemispheric Defense Plans, 1940-1941* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992).

[25] Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations*, 89-91; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 3, 15-16, 35, 64-65.

diplomacy and military planning and operations, and Roosevelt, ironically, increasingly sidelined him as time went on. Even before Germany invaded Poland, the President had started to rely on his military chiefs' advice more so than his Secretary of State. In July 1939, Roosevelt issued an executive order for the Joint Board to report directly to him, bypassing the two service secretaries and Hull and establishing "a true national strategy board with greatly increased powers and independence."[26] Shortly thereafter, General Marshall took over as Army Chief of Staff and Admiral Harold Stark as Chief of Naval Operations; Roosevelt and Marshall over time built a close rapport that lasted until the president's death. This close working relationship with the Joint Board, however, did not necessarily equate to clear policy or executive guidance.

The April 1939 strategic estimate provided a point of departure for the JPC's subsequent work on the Rainbow Plans. In May 1939, the Joint Board directed the JPC to flesh out four possible numbered scenarios. Rainbow 1 was the "traditional" defense of the Western Hemisphere, extending down to ten degrees south latitude (though Brazil), west to include Hawaii, Samoa and Wake Island, and east to include Greenland. Rainbow 2 was Rainbow 1 plus the western Pacific, and Rainbow 3 included all of South America in hemispheric defense. These first three plans assumed that European countries were neutral. Rainbow 4 was the only initial plan that placed the United States in an alliance with France and Great Britain against Germany and Italy. The JPC quickly came back to the Joint Board with the recommendation to pursue an additional course of action that considered a US alliance in the western Pacific against Japan. This idea became the new Rainbow 2, shifting the numbers of the remaining plans to five.[27]

The JPC completed Rainbow 1 and the president orally approved it in October 1939. After Germany invaded Scandinavia and then France in the spring of 1940, the planners dropped

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[26] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries,* 16, 64-65.

[27] "J.B. 325, Serial 642: Draft of Joint Board directives for Rainbow Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4," and "Enclosure (A) to Joint Planning Committee Report, J.B. 325 (Serial 642) (Serial 642-1) of 9 April 1940, Proposed Revision of Directives for Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plans, RAINBOW," in Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Vol. 3,* 70-72, 79-81; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries,* 20-21.

Rainbow 2 and moved Rainbow 4 to the top of the to-do list, anticipating a worst-case scenario of hemispheric defense and the possible Axis use of the former British and French fleets. The JPC was so concerned that it specifically recommended that the United States start full mobilization on the day of British and French surrender. Interestingly, it also assumed that US occupation of western European islands and colonies in the Atlantic for basing would trigger Axis aggression, but did not suggest that the United States demur from doing so in the interests of forward defense. Although Congress was taking steps with naval appropriations and a peacetime draft, the planners were doing what they could to make clear that the country needed to start preparing as soon as possible. Roosevelt approved the plan in August 1940.[28]

As the joint planners worked diligently on the Rainbow plans, Marshall and Stark pressed for concrete presidential guidance to assist their efforts. In May and June 1940, the chiefs submitted two proposals to the Commander-in-Chief, based on joint planner input. The first, "National Strategic Decisions," advocated a focus on hemispheric defense, within the US military's current capabilities, and asked for policy decisions to allow continued planning. The second paper, more stringently titled "Basis for Immediate Decisions Concerning the National Defense" in the aftermath of Germany's invasion of France, recommended transferring much of the US Navy to the Atlantic, introducing the draft, and redirecting aid to Britain in order to reinforce domestic war production. In both cases Roosevelt agreed with the Chiefs' threat analysis, but did not follow their recommendations (except for the draft) or provide specific approval, confident that Great Britain would survive, and in the near term committing to selling them old US Navy destroyers in return for select base leasing rights.[29]

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[28] "J.B. No. 325 (Serial 642-4), May 31, 1940, Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan – RAINBOW No. 4," in Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Vol. 3*, 187-188, 192; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 24-25. While the planners were writing Rainbow 4, President Roosevelt was working with Congress to introduce draft legislation which resulted in the Selective Service Act of 1940; see Note 34.

[29] Lowenthal, "Roosevelt and the Coming of War," 421-423; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 25-26; Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations*, 110-113.

Concurrent with the JPC's adjustments to the changing operational environment and the Roosevelt Administration's growing level of assistance to the British, Admiral Stark advanced his own thoughts on national strategy and theater focus. He described national objectives as the "preservation of the territorial, economic, and ideological integrity of the United States" and Western Hemisphere.[30] In addition, he stated that the British Empire must not be disrupted and that Japanese offensive power must be reduced. Stark still believed in Plan Orange, but he considered the survival of Great Britain more important, and in his lengthy memo outlined four possibilities, culminating in a recommendation for his final course of action. This option, Plan D, called for a limited offensive against Japan, based on economic sanctions and blockade, while the US Army and Navy expanded and worked with the British to support them in all domains with an eye toward an eventual land offensive against the Axis. Stark's memo was originally intended for Roosevelt but the service secretaries co-opted it and the JPC adopted its wording almost entirely to produce a "National Defense Policy" document. Although the document did not make it past the secretaries to the president for formal endorsement, Roosevelt accepted Stark's proposal, concurred in by Marshall, to hold staff talks with the British in Washington, DC in early 1941.[31]

Roosevelt and his senior military advisors and planners were now in violent agreement regarding the importance of British survival to US national security, but well into 1941 disagreed over the means of assistance. As the president chose to send Great Britain and other nations more and more war materiel, first by individual request, then in the form of the Lend-Lease program, the service chiefs and planners fretted over the degree to which a large-scale US military build-up

[30] H.R. Stark, "Memorandum for the Secretary," November 12, 1940, in Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Vol. 3*, 227.

[31] Ibid.; "J.B. No. 325 (Serial 670), Study of the Immediate Problems Concerning Involvement in War: Draft Proposal of the Joint Planning Committee for a Memorandum for the President by the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy," December 10, 1940; and "Memorandum for The Secretary of the Joint Board, Subject: J.B. No. 325 (Serial 670) – National Defense Policy for the United States," February 18, 1941, in Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Vol. 3*, 240-241, 248, 250, 282-301; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 29-36. The ABC discussions leveraged existing relationships among senior British and American naval officers going back to the 1938 talks regarding the Far East.

would be adversely affected. General Marshall, on behalf of the Army Air Corps, stalled the transfer of five B-17s for three months because less than half of the airframes required for pilot training and projected operations were available, but the president essentially told him to plan on sending half of the new planes to the British. Attempts to limit the release of 75 mm guns in June 1940 met the same fate, even with a sarcastic young staff officer's observation to the president's military aide that if mobilization happened within the next two years and the Army did not have enough artillery, those privy to the agreement "might hope to be found hanging from a lamp post."[32] Lend-Lease also meant increased US proximity in north Atlantic waters to the German submarine fleet, which could compromise Roosevelt's gradualist policy and leave the US Navy hard-pressed to react when most of the fleet was still in the Pacific or dispersed elsewhere. Planners were also split on the proposed combined military strategy. Many feared that British requests for specific US naval and air support, along with the emphasis on the Far East and Mediterranean theaters, were cover for retaining its hegemonic empire at the expense of American men, materiel, and strategic goals. On a practical level, US planners in 1941 still had to remain non-committal while discussing strategy and operational approaches with the British so that they did not get ahead of presidential approval, a situation that annoyed many military leaders on both sides who felt it was just a matter of time before the United States entered the war, and who wanted to do their due diligence in preparation.[33]

Constant swings in personnel authorizations and manning, vice balanced increases across the services, also prevented the joint planners from outlining a responsible build up of forces synchronized with equipment production and mobilization plans, not to mention the war plans.

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[32] Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations*, 305-306, 312. The staff officer quoted is Major Walter Bedell Smith.

[33] Lowenthal, "Roosevelt and the Coming of War," 425-426; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 8-9, 28; Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942, The United States Army in World War II* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1953), 21-22. Watson goes into further detail in Chapter X of his book on President Roosevelt's direction of an "even-Stephen" bomber split to General Marshall, and the resulting angst for the Army War Plans Division and Army G-4.

The Navy at least possessed or had in progress most of its authorized ships along with sailors, but as late as 1940, the Army was in danger of downsizing after having just increased from 188,000 to 267,000 troops. Roosevelt asked for and Congress approved the Selective Training and Service Act in 1940, but because the legislation was only good for a year and no one could predict if it would get extended, Army planners had a very short timeframe within which to plan, resource, and execute training. As a result, the joint planners felt that they could only realistically plan for hemispheric defense based on congressionally-approved authorizations and forces-in-being as of early 1941. After Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, Army planners gradually came around to championing the importance of keeping the Russians in the war to buy time to build divisions. Again, the President agreed on Russian importance to the war effort, but chose to back the Soviet Union through Lend-Lease. In light of this decision, the President's refusal to expand the Army before early 1942, his disagreement about the use of force and timing of active American belligerency, and a perception that the public saw potential American participation as purely naval and air-based, Marshall admitted to keeping his temper barely at times in the final months of 1941.[34]

Additionally, the Roosevelt Administration pursued a course with Japan that, in some planners' minds, unnecessarily provoked conflict. The US took an increasingly hard diplomatic line against Japan with regards to her actions in Manchuria (1931) and China (1937), but Congress did not authorize the increase in forces the Navy requested for Far East interests. To complicate matters, the Navy was internally divided between the fleet planners, who advocated the aggressive stance of earlier Orange Plans, and the service leadership and joint staff planners, represented by Stark, which saw the need to prepare for a two-ocean war with an Atlantic emphasis. The Army, meanwhile, became increasingly critical of ground forces posture in the

[34] Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941-1942*, 21; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 55-57; Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations*, 16, 362. In late 1941, Congress renewed the Selective Service Act by one vote, another indicator of the reluctance of many in the United States to get involved in a war despite worldwide events.

Philippines, culminating in its protestations over the final version of Plan Orange. Neither Stark nor Marshall agreed with the president's decision in May 1940 to position the Pacific Fleet forward at Pearl Harbor as a deterrence measure, and resented Secretary Hull's advice to Roosevelt to keep it there vice San Diego or detaching a significant part to the Atlantic. The chiefs also advised Roosevelt against imposing early economic sanctions and including oil in the trade embargo of July 1941, fearing that Japan would become even more desperate and risk conflict against the United States.[35]

These planning issues were largely due to Roosevelt's leadership style and how he attempted to satisfy multiple demands and audiences. He refused to be forced by events to make snap decisions; in the words of one critic, the president "preferred expedient and often illogical compromises that offered everyone some immediate satisfaction and enabled him to keep numerous options available for as long as possible."[36] The decisions he made were often under the public radar, such as gradually increasing aid to the Allied Powers after his declared state of national emergency in September 1939. Until late 1940 and 1941, public opinion and domestic issues necessarily constrained the President as the United States slowly emerged from economic depression and reluctantly faced the possibility of getting involved in another world war. Military leaders and planners understood these political limitations, but were nevertheless frustrated with presidential "non-decisions." In a July 1940 memorandum to General Marshall, the Army War Plans Division members asserted, "civilian authorities should determine the "what" of national policy, and professional soldiers should control the "how," the planning and conduct of military operations."[37] Because they did not receive the "what" as clearly as they hoped, the planners made their own assumptions on national policy in order to plan for the "how."

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[35] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 6-7, 26-27, 41-42; Matloff and Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941*-1942, 65; Miller, *War Plan Orange*, 229-232.

[36] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 16.

[37] Cline, *Washington Command Post: The Operations Division*, 44.

The Americans and British began the "ABC" collaboration—the series of combined planning and strategy talks that also eventually included Canada and the Dutch government in exile—in January 1941. The non-binding agreements reached at these discussions, in conjunction with Stark's ideas, informed the JPC's iterative work on Rainbow 5 until the service chiefs approved the concept in November 1941. One major planning assumption was that the Associated Powers, of which the US would be a member if it found itself in the war, would "conduct the war in accord with ABC-1 and ABC-22," the named plans resulting from the Anglo-Canadian-American discussions. The objective of ABC-1, the combined war plan, was the defeat of Germany and the rest of the Axis powers, and it supported the respective national strategic defense policies; for the United States, this was prevention of "the extension in the Western Hemisphere of European or Asiatic political or Military power."[38] The plan identified the Euro-Atlantic area as the decisive theater where "principal United States Military effort will be exerted" and stipulated that if Japan entered the war, the Associated Powers would assume a defensive strategy in the Far East, allowing for US offensive operations only where they affected Japanese economic interests.[39] Rainbow 5's remaining planning assumptions defined the Associated and Axis powers, stated that the eventual entry of Japan, Indo-China, and Thailand into the war needed to be accounted for, depended on the United States being able to get logistic support in the Far East if needed, and expected Latin America to take care of any internal subversion but remain neutral unless directly attacked, and support US forces in hemispheric defense.[40] Although kept apprised of the ABC discussions and Rainbow 5, Roosevelt did not explicitly endorse the former or formally approve the latter before the US entered the war.

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[38] "J.B. No. 325 (Serial 642-5), Revision No. 1, Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan – Rainbow No. 5," November 19, 1941, in Steven T. Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Volume 5: Plans for Global War: Rainbow-5 and the Victory Program, 1941* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), 99. ABC-22 divided areas of hemispheric defense responsibility between the United States and Canada, including protection of shipping and sea lines of communication.

[39] Ibid., 100-101.

[40] Ibid., 98-99.

As the JPC worked on Rainbow 5 in the spring of 1941, Marshall tasked the Army War Plans Division with building an updated mobilization plan that considered not just hemispheric defense but expeditionary forces. In July 1941, Roosevelt requested a related estimate of domestic production needed to defeat Germany. The bulk of the work fell to Major Albert Wedemeyer, who had the unenviable task of estimating how many and what type of forces the US military would need, in an environment where he could not openly make queries that might concern external audiences or constrain the president's decision space. Consulting with Marshall and Army War Plans director Brigadier General Leonard Gerow, working from the base ABC-1 assumption of "Germany first" and drawing from Rainbow 5's strategic objectives, Wedemeyer produced the first draft of the Victory Plan in September 1941. In attacking such a large question, Wedemeyer first proposed a national strategy and operations necessary for victory, determined how many units were needed to accomplish the operations, and finally estimated the equipment required to outfit the formations.[41]

Before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, therefore, the JPC and service war planners had written or contributed to, with at least senior leader acknowledgement, three interrelated plans—ABC-1, Rainbow 5, and the Victory Plan—that contained a proposed national military strategy, operational concepts, division of responsibility among the services and combined powers, resources required, and sequencing of actions for war against the Axis Powers, which might or might not include Japan. Rainbow 5 and the other Rainbow options were the first comprehensive and realistic US joint plans to address global, and in some cases, multi-theater war.[42] None of these plans materialized overnight, although the initial Victory Plan was produced

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[41] Charles E. Kirkpatrick, *An Unknown Future and a Doubtful Present: Writing the Victory Plan of 1941* (Washington, DC: US Army Center of Military History, 1992), 50-53, 58-66, 71-79; Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations*, 352-354. Subsequent chapters in Kirkpatrick's book outline the detailed planning that helped Wedemeyer and his assistants arrive at numbers of Army divisions. See also "My dear Mr. Secretary," July 9, 1941, and "Memorandum For the Chief of Staff: Subject: Ultimate Requirements," September 10, 1941, in Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Vol. 5*, 146-147, 156-157.

[42] Matloff, "The American Approach to War," 231.

on a tight timeline. The documents were born out of iterative planning exercises during the 1930s, with strategically-thoughtful and active military chiefs overseeing their formulation, and in a delicate strategic environment in which the United States hedged its bets on involvement in a European war, despite lingering concerns about the Far East.

Despite close access and a strong working relationship, the Joint Chiefs and their planners consistently operated under little direct guidance from President Roosevelt when crafting the Color and Rainbow Plans. The Commander-in-Chief retained "an independent role in coalition policy and strategy," keeping options open and often agreeing with his British counterpart more than his own senior military advisors.[43] Even when the president directly provided military guidance, he maintained flexibility for himself. For example, he reviewed the JPC's proposed agenda and discussion points for the ABC staff talks and made very pointed changes. He designated the US and British Commonwealth as future "associates" instead of "allies," and placed the United States in the passive and reluctant role of being "compelled to resort to war" vice deciding to enter the war.[44] The same month (January 1941), Roosevelt provided direct but still general guidance to the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy, and Marshall and Stark. The US Navy would "stand on the defensive in the Pacific with the fleet based on Hawaii" and "be prepared to convoy shipping in the Atlantic to England" while the Army would act conservatively, perhaps helping in Latin America but otherwise husbanding its strength. He additionally directed the continuance of aid to Great Britain to frustrate Hitler's design of "involving us in a war at this particular time."[45]

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[43] Matloff, "The American Approach to War," 237, 239.

[44] "J.B. No. 325 (Serial 674), Subject: Joint Instructions for Army and Navy Representatives for Holding Staff Conversations with the British, Including an Agenda for the Conversations; Appendix II to Enclosure (A): Statement by the Chief of Naval Operations and the Chief of Staff," January 21, 1941, and "Memorandum for the Secretary of the Navy," January 26, 1941, in Ross, ed., *American War Plans, 1919-1941, Vol.* 3, 315, 322.

[45] Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations*, 124-125; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 35-36.

While acknowledging their limited influence in providing military advice and working without a coherent national policy or strategy, the joint planners continued planning anyway, producing products that provided remarkably clear outlines of the future Allied strategy and operational objectives. They used their own knowledge and beliefs of what was important to America and its leaders, including public pronouncements and long-standing concepts as the Monroe Doctrine, and closely monitored international developments through the press and official channels. Many planners had tackled similar strategic problems at the Army and Navy War Colleges; the Rainbow Plans were not the first time that they considered global or coalition war. Previous exercises provided them with an appreciation for the level of detail and data required to plan for feasible solutions. The documents demonstrated a realistic view that the United States, with allies, could not conduct major offensive operations on the European continent before, at the earliest, 1943. The lack of or limited guidance also allowed the planners the freedom and leeway to explore options, and each service had a chief of staff who encouraged them to do so and provided cover for and consistent comments on their work.[46]

Inter-service friction, however, often threatened to derail the planners' work due to the Army's and Navy's historically different missions, peacetime size, and approaches to strategy. Illustrative of the situation was General Thomas T. Handy's experience in Army plans positions and as Marshall's deputy at the end of World War II. A graduate of both the Army and Navy War Colleges during the 1930's golden era of planning and wargaming, he recalled, "We didn't have really any Army. The Navy had a Navy all the time…You'd call a thing a division, it would be like the 1st Division scattered all over the Northeast and they never saw each other."[47] The Army of the 1930s confronted the modern planners' dilemma of choosing between resources and threat-based planning; built for peacetime, for the first time it was saying it had to grow to meet an

[46] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 3; Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, xix, 134-135; Kirkpatrick, *An Unknown Future*, 47-50.

[47] Gole, *The Road To Rainbow*, 135.

emerging global threat. If the Army could not grow, it needed to focus on homeland defense in North America first, then in the rest of the Western Hemisphere, hence the disinterest in the Philippines. Joint planners ultimately reconciled the dilemma through iterative work to communicate and set expectations for readiness, but the Army was still barely ready to fight in large formations against a seasoned enemy force in late 1942.[48]

By contrast, most Navy planners held on to the ideas of Plan Orange and the primacy of their service in national defense until 1938, when senior leadership started to shape a more global outlook and identify the resulting lack of flexibility with the fleet and elusiveness of the decisive battle. As the heads of their respective services, General Marshall and Admiral Stark found themselves largely in agreement as war inched closer, but a last-minute Army change of heart almost upset this when, in the summer of 1941, Marshall and his planners changed their minds about building Army combat power, based on the B-17, in the Philippines. The Army hoped that, given Roosevelt's imposition of the embargo, the bombers would act as a deterrent against Japanese aggression and be conveniently poised for offensive operations. Stark went along with the plan and the British even helped by increasing their naval forces in the Far East. When American-Japanese diplomacy reached an all-time low in November, the Chiefs backpedaled, asking Hull to buy about three months' time, but he and Roosevelt agreed instead to an ultimatum to Japan on November 26, 1941. On December 7 and 8, 1941, most of the B-17s were destroyed during the Japanese attack.[49]

As the planners made assumptions about national and military strategy and operations, most of which turned out to be correct, they gained confidence in their products. Working with the British staff may have helped; Great Britain was, after all, already at war in 1940 with a strategy and an established senior staff structure used to providing military advice to the country's

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[48] Mazarr, *The U.S. Department of Defense's Planning Process*, 8-16. Mazarr and his co-authors discuss supply-based (resources) versus demand-based (capabilities and threats) planning, and the advantages and disadvantages of applying one or the other or both.

[49] Vlahos, *The Blue Sword*, 59, 121, 148; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 58-61.

leadership. With the British model at hand and strong senior military leadership from the likes of Marshall and the talented officers who led the planning staffs, the joint planners became more versed at crafting and revising plans and working in a coalition as a true allied partner.[50]

Additionally, the planners and their chiefs quickly realized within the context of Roosevelt's preferred leadership style that they could help fill the policy vacuum left by the State Department. As Mark Stoler notes, "for many years before Pearl Harbor they had been requesting [politico-military] coordination and had been making political assessments on their own as a necessary adjunct to their strategic planning."[51] Those who had reservations wading into the strategy realm got used to this reality of the bureaucracy within which they worked at that time. However, Roosevelt and Hull periodically reminded the military, first, of who was in charge, and second, that their best military advice did not necessarily support the administration's domestic or external agenda, as Stark found out in 1941 as he voiced his concerns about the dispersion of the fleet. Nevertheless, civilian leaders respected the service chiefs and their planners, and the policy and strategy formulations that the unofficial joint staff performed before and throughout World War II directly contributed to its 1947 institutionalization in law along with the corporate Joint Chiefs of Staff as part of a new national security construct.[52]

## Early Cold War Planning, 1945-1955

Throughout 1945, the Joint Staff Planners and their service counterparts faced a multitude of planning tasks, not the least of which was demobilization of millions of men and women, along with the occupation of Germany, Japan, and Korea. They kept their eye on numerous potential political developments as a result of the waning influence of Great Britain, France, and other colonial powers, and contemplated the United States' role in the United Nations

[50] Lowenthal, "Roosevelt and the Coming of the War," 426.

[51] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, xi.

[52] Ibid., ix, 62.

(UN). The JPS's most complex problem, however, shared with the civilian leadership of the new Truman Administration, was shaping military strategy vis à vis the Soviet Union, which was increasingly viewed as a threat to the post-war world order, based on the United States taking the lead in opposing its erstwhile ally.[53]

Over the course of ten years, as the national security structure that is recognized today was formalized, the joint planners and the JCS went through a learning process, adjusting their definition of the strategic problem along with the proposed military ends, ways and means to assist civilian leadership. As before World War II, they initially identified their own version of national strategy and objectives in order to continue planning, since the first civil-military synchronization of policy and war planning did not occur until November 1948 with the publication of NSC 20/4 by the National Security Council. JPS estimates and the first Cold War-era war plans demonstrate that the planners were well informed on many issues but struggled to articulate more detailed military objectives and most likely follow-on or concurrent operations in the event of a shooting war. Inter-service bureaucratic squabbles emerged again, as the Army and Navy advocated a hybrid conventional/atomic approach to war as opposed to the now-independent Air Force's advocacy of strategic bombing as the primary method of bringing the Soviets to the negotiating table. These disagreements overlapped with two presidents' evolving and different approaches to national security, and were influenced by events on the Korean Peninsula and US membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The JPS and JCS correctly assumed that the USSR did not seek military conflict with the West in the immediate post-war years, but what they never questioned was that the United States required contingency and mobilization plans for war against the Soviet Union, preferably far removed from the Western Hemisphere. The planners did what had worked for them so well in the previous decade: they closely monitored world events, worked with adjacent staff sections,

[53] James F. Schnabel, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. I: 1945-1947* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1996), 27, 91-97; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 262-263.

sought guidance from the State Department (and National Security Council), and leveraged the now-permanent JCS to advance service equities and seek decisions from the president to continue their iterative studies and best posture the United States for great power conflict. In a foreshadowing of future emphasis on campaign plans, the joint planners also started to conceptualize war horizons—near, mid, and long-term—and differentiate between the detail and resources needed to prepare for each, linked to necessary intelligence and mobilization timelines.[54]

As early as 1942, American planners and military leadership were suspicious of post-war Soviet intentions, but recognized the political need to support the USSR to keep it in the war. The "cooperative" and "confrontational" camps emerged among the joint planners regarding what approach to take with the Soviets as they discerned that Premier Joseph Stalin would seek to influence the post-war territorial and political settlement. With an eye to this concern, and to make clear to the president what the military thought should be important national security considerations after the end of World War II, the JSSC authored a study in March 1943 that recommended that the JCS be a part of every post-war political and economic planning effort, for these were inseparable from military matters. The US military required air bases across the globe, for both civil and international military purposes, to uphold the tenets of the Monroe Doctrine. National defense should be the priority, the senior officers argued, because a future international policing organization would take time to stand up and would likely not carry enough authority to prevent wars. Roosevelt approved the majority of the recommendations, and in doing so

[54] Steven T. Ross, *American War Plans, 1945-1950* (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 1996), 3-11, 19-20 (hereafter cited as *AWP 1945-1950*); Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. I*, 64-70; Kenneth W. Condit, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II: 1947-1949* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1996), 123, 160-161; Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," 9-14.

established the basis for future JCS participation in national security deliberations, along with providing a supportive atmosphere for continued post-war planning through August 1945.[55]

Despite the encouraging work environment for planners, the US strategic outlook continued to shift with the death of Roosevelt, Germany's defeat, Stalin's flouting of the Yalta agreements, and President Harry Truman's decision to use the atomic bomb. As Steven Ross notes, Truman and his advisors had many strategic options to choose from as of August 1945, but it was not clear which would take precedence. In the midst of demobilization and growing Soviet influence in eastern Europe, "the Joint Chiefs of Staff lacked a definitive expression of American policy to use as a basis for strategic planning."[56] The joint staff groups and planners produced various studies and estimates through the fall of 1945 regarding the projected size of a peacetime Soviet military and status of the country's economic recovery. Along with the JCS, the planners concluded that, with up to an estimated 4.4 million personnel still in uniform, the USSR had the capability to conduct a successful ground invasion of Western Europe, Turkey, and Iran, but not the will or reason to do so in the near future. The Soviets were aggressive and wanted to expand, but with a weak strategic air force, navy, no atomic weapons (yet), and its economy in shambles, the USSR would seek other ways to influence and reach its desired ends short of major war.[57]

A JPS study from mid-September 1945 illustrates the various strategic issues that the planners, backed by the JCS, suggested were of national interest to the United States and were within their purview to provide advice. The "Strategic Concept and Plan for the Employment of United States Armed Forces" established the ascendency of the United States and the Soviet Union as the two "preeminent" world powers, noting that there was no remaining immediate threat to the USSR from Germany, Japan, or Italy, and that the British Empire would not return to

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[55] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 124-126, 132-135, 138-140, 160-161; Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. I*, 63-64.

[56] Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 3.

[57] Ibid., 4-7.

its former status. Because of this fact, the planners did not consider the atomic bomb, in existence or in development, to affect this balance of power significantly between the two nations. They noted, "U.S. military policies and strategic concepts must, however, be continuously reviewed in the light of new weapons and changing military capabilities."[58] The study recognized that "instability and unrest will mark the period of liquidation of the war" and the UN's initial organization.[59] The study identified eight situations of potential conflict, including "the temptation offered to foreign intervention by political disunity in China," tensions over British and French efforts to restore or recover their colonial possessions, and "social upheavals arising out of popular demands for a redistribution of wealth and political power."[60] In light of these various challenges, the best course of action was to maintain a "stable peace" between Great Britain, the United States, and Russia, as the UN probably would not be able to resolve a "major conflict of interest" between these three powers.[61]

In one of its earliest attempts to describe US posture in the atomic age, the JPS opined that the use of the new weapons meant that America needed to keep its potential enemies away and establish forward bases far removed from the homeland for projection of both nuclear and conventional means. "The over-all effect," stated the JPS, "is to enlarge our strategic frontier."[62] The study went on to outline six aspects of the strategic concept—in short, responsibilities to existing security agreements, homeland defense, and contingency planning for World War III between the United States and the Soviet Union. Supporting what became a baseline assumption of future war plans, the joint planners assumed that the Soviets would start the war, likely with an

[58] JCS 1518, "Strategic Concept and Plan for the Employment of United States Armed Forces," September 19, 1945, 3-4, NND 943011, Joint Chiefs of Staff Central Decimal File 1942-45, CCS 381 (5-13-45), Box 299, Sec 2, RG 218, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[59] Ibid., 4.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., 4-5.

[62] Ibid., 5-6.

intent to invade western Europe or China. The remainder of the document contained general recommendations for the three military services, basing, security, maintenance, logistics, and intelligence, both at home and abroad, along with a general scheme of escalation of force and combat operations if provoked.[63] The joint planners further developed draft military policy in a supporting appendix, advising the Joint Chiefs to impress upon the civilian leadership that at the first warning sign of enemy aggression, "our government, under such conditions, should press the issue to a prompt political decision, while making all preparations to strike the first blow if necessary."[64]

The JPS's September 1945 product, which followed a separate August military policy draft with the same ideas, contained both continuities from earlier planning and new thoughts. It reaffirmed the primacy of homeland defense along with those to whom the United States was committed, now expanded beyond the Western Hemisphere and the Philippines to the diligent enforcement of recent peace agreements. It repeated ideas from the 1943 JSSC estimate about the importance of forward basing, demonstrated that planners were still highly engaged with world events, and provided insight into their thoughts on the importance of atomic weapons to modern warfare. Significantly, it assumed Soviet conventional aggression, in the absence of atomic capability, would start the war, but advocated a US first strike option, an idea that would make civilians and military alike uncomfortable in the years ahead until the planners abandoned it for both moral and political reasons. Both the policy and strategic concept papers stayed within the War and Navy Departments and on the agenda of the State War Navy Coordinating Committee (SWNCC), where State Department personnel criticized the proposed policy for its largely unilateral outlook that lacked emphasis on alliances and working within the UN framework.

[63] JCS 1518, "Strategic Concept and Plan," 6-11.

[64] Ibid., 12.

Although these papers did not get to the president's desk, they served as thought pieces for subsequent recommendations the JCS would provide to Truman in the months ahead.[65]

As the planners started to outline the beginnings of a war plan, they attempted to reconcile the lack of manpower and equipment with their call to establish forward presence and police the vanquished Axis powers, while also defending US territory and possessions with trained and ready forces. The Army and Army Air Forces fell from 1.8 million persons in 1946 to 940,000 in 1948; the Navy reduced from 983,000 to 419,000, and the US Marines from 155,000 to 84,000. Aircraft and ship numbers declined respectively. Initially, the only realistic answer for the joint planners was reliance on strategic nuclear weapons to offset Soviet conventional aggression in the beginning stages of a major war, but this option was also unsatisfactory. As of 1947, there were only thirteen atomic bombs in the US inventory, and they required specially-trained teams, of which there were only a few, to arm and load the ordinance on the B-29, the only delivery system. The aircraft themselves did not yet have the range to fly to targets from the continental United States, and forward bases that the US Air Force planned on using did not have the specialty bomb bays to prepare for missions. Training was done over terrain different from the Soviet Union, and the military had outdated maps and imagery of proposed targets and the approach routes. Finally, the JCS and the Executive Branch had yet to figure out the sequence of events for employing nuclear weapons in the event of a Soviet attack, and the atomic program was still highly compartmentalized, making detailed planning for employment nearly impossible.[66]

The other problem related to atomic warfare was its unknown ability, outside of the specific Japanese context, to compel the targeted country to stop fighting. The JSSC, at General Marshall's request, studied the implications of the bomb for US force composition and warfare in

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[65] Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. I*, 65-70; Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 10-11.

[66] Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 11-13; Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," 14-15.

general, and submitted its findings in late October 1945. The senior officers made similar conclusions about military policy to the planners, and added that the United States was at a disadvantage in an atomic strike because of higher population and infrastructure concentrations relative to the Soviet Union. One of the most important observations they made, which was to later cause major inter-service and civil-military disagreements, was the enduring need for sizeable conventional ground forces to seize, defend, and deny terrain, along with transport and escorts for troops, bombers, and air defense. After several revisions, the JCS approved the document in March 1946. The final version advocated international limitations on atomic weapons, but still stressed the new vulnerability of the North American continent and called for "balanced combat-ready forces, capable of immediate retaliation and buttressed by well-trained reserves."[67]

Concurrently, the JPS and JWPC began to articulate what the first twelve to eighteen months of World War III would look like. They produced the Pincher family of studies through mid-1947, working from a concept of operations in March 1946 to a "joint outline war plan" in April, plus a series of revisions in June and July followed by more specific regional or country studies. The JPS envisioned Pincher, the first code-named plan of the Cold War, as a prudent exercise in identifying a general scheme of operations, especially given Stalin's recent aggressive rhetoric toward Turkey and Iran. The concept was purposely broad, given the many unknowns, and meant to be a starting point for subordinate Army and Navy war plans. Pincher outlined a scenario wherein the Soviet Union caused a crisis in the Middle East to which Great Britain and the United States felt compelled to respond. The favored trigger was Soviet seizure of the Dardanelles, but the other concern was the vulnerability of the USSR's southern flank to allied air offensives from eastern Mediterranean and Iranian bases, so the planners assumed that the Soviets would act to mitigate one or both of these issues. As the British and Americans responded to this

[67] Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 14-15, 17-18; Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. I*, 127-130.

regional threat, the Soviets would launch a supporting operation to "overrun" (the favored planner term) Western Europe. The joint planners assumed a near total-withdrawal of US and British occupation forces—at least the ones who survived the initial attack—to the French coast or, worst case, the Iberian Peninsula. Homeland defense was the priority task, followed closely by an air offensive against Soviet cities and industrial centers, while the United States and Great Britain mobilized and built combat power. Through strategic bombing the planners hoped to offset the strength of the Soviet ground forces, but they (correctly) assumed they would not have enough nuclear weapons for the operation and would use conventional ordnance. Rather than a repeat of Operation Overlord (1944), the JWPC proposed that the eventual joint and combined counterattack take place through the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East. The recovery of Western Europe and the Middle East would become the focus at the expense of military operations in the Pacific, where the United States would likely evacuate forces from China and the Korean peninsula to Japan and the Philippines.[68] The overall mission, as outlined in April 1946, was "by military action, in conjunction with our allies, [to] impose upon the U.S.S.R. peace terms acceptable to the United States and her allies."[69]

The joint planners still did not believe that the Soviet Union wanted to go to war with the United States, but that Stalin wanted to expand his "protective barrier" of countries against the West. A Middle East spark would force America to back up its ally Great Britain, whose survival, as during the last war, was deemed vital to US national interests. If war with the USSR occurred, it would be total and require full economic and military mobilization. As they refined their

[68] JPS 789, "Concept of Operations for "Pincher," March 2, 1946, and JWPC 432/3, "Joint Basic Outline War Plan, Short Title: "Pincher,"" April 27, 1946, in Steven T. Ross and David Alan Rosenberg, eds., *American Plans for War Against the Soviet Union, 1945-1950, Volume 2: Design for Global War: The Pincher Plans* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989); Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 25-34; Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. I*, 70-72, 74-75. The pages in the Ross/Rosenberg edited volumes are not numbered like the Ross Rainbow Plan series; where quoted, page numbers cited are from the individually reproduced original documents as available.

[69] "Joint Basic Outline War Plan, Short Title: "Pincher,"" April 27, 1946, in Ross and Rosenberg, eds., *American Plans for War Against the Soviet Union, 1945-1950, Vol. 2*, 3. As the joint planning system evolved, the Joint Staff used the term "Joint Outline War Plan" (JOWP) for mid-range plans, and "Joint Outline Emergency War Plan" (JOEWP) for short-range plans.

Pincher studies, the joint planners changed the timing of US entry into the war from six months to almost immediately after the first Soviet attack, likely to communicate the urgency of the situation and to answer the valid question of how the United States could remain neutral if its occupation forces were captured or pushed out of Europe. In associated studies, they explored the political and economic context of certain countries, guessed at the political tendencies of France and other countries with sizeable Communist parties, and ultimately concluded the issue of popular support during a Russo-American war could go either way.[70]

Planners across the joint force critiqued Pincher during its short lifetime. Annotations on the surviving documents question many of the JWPC's assumptions. In one instance, the head of Army War Plans said that an accompanying study of western and northern Europe was not sufficiently strategic in nature, and noted, among other issues, the lack of psychological warfare considerations for either belligerent.[71] The authors also did not define what they meant by "acceptable" peace terms, and left vague the role of the atomic bomb. If the joint planning community agreed that the Soviet Union was unlikely to attack the West in the late 1940s, why go to such lengths to craft this initial war plan? The short answer is that no one in the US national security establishment was certain what the USSR would do, and while a Nazi Germany-style takeover of Western Europe seemed a long shot, the Soviets still had formidable military capability that, coupled with the US interpretation of their ideological imperative, encouraged prudence in having a contingency plan on the books. Having just defeated two totalitarian regimes, the United States could not allow another one to threaten national and global security.

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[70] JPS 789, "Concept of Operations for "Pincher," March 2, 1946, in Ross and Rosenberg, eds., *American Plans for War Against the Soviet Union, 1945-1950, Vol. 2*, 4-7, 23; Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 25, 27-29; Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. I*, 71. The planners estimated by July 1947 that the USSR would have a total of 1.5 million troops in 113 divisions and corps, augmented by eighty-four divisions from satellite countries. Allowing for fluctuations in intelligence estimates, errors, and refinement over the next couple of years, these numbers were still at first glance formidable compared to one US division and ten regimental combat teams in western Europe in 1946.

[71] G.A. Lincoln, "Strategic Study of Western and Northern Europe—JWPC 474/1," June 20, 1947, in Steven T. Ross and David Alan Rosenberg, eds., *America's Plans for War Against the Soviet Union, 1945-1950, Volume 3: Pincher: Campaign Plans, Part 1* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989).

The other purpose that Pincher served, like the Color plans before it, was to give the planning staffs baseline assumptions from which to continue planning, along with more practice thinking about the strategic problems faced by the United States now that it had assumed a lead role in maintaining the international world order.[72]

Indeed, Truman and his senior advisors worked hard in the late 1940s to shape the United States' international role, colored by their experiences after World War I and the simple fact that America was in the best shape financially, technologically, and militarily of all of the former belligerents. Even the Soviet Union could not match the United States in all of these areas in August 1945. US political leaders' fear, along with the military planners, was losing the American edge as Stalin took advantage of weakened structural systems in Eastern Europe and the French and British colonies. US civilian and military leadership shared the belief that in a geopolitical context, "power was defined in terms of the control of resources, industrial infrastructure, and overseas bases."[73] Should the USSR gain control of areas that provided them with comparative strengths that could be leveraged, for example, for the development of nuclear weapons, US relative power would decrease. Worse, Soviet control of resource-rich areas of western Europe or the Middle East would cause the United States to adjust its economic practices based on trade reduction and competition with a global Communist system, with ramifications for spending and, ultimately, cherished freedoms. These specific concerns, along with the desire to create an integrated international economy, eventually drove the Truman Administration's decision to invest so heavily in the European Recovery Program (Marshall Plan), the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund.[74]

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[72] Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 28; David Kaiser, "US Objectives and Plans for War with the Soviet Union, 1946-54," in *The Fog of Peace and War Planning: Military and Strategic Planning Under Uncertainty*, ed. Talbot C. Imlay and Monica Duffy Toft (London: Routledge, 2006), 220-221.

[73] Melvyn P. Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power: National Security, the Truman Administration, and the Cold War* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 12.

[74] Ibid., 10-17.

What worked against the new president, prior to the passage of the National Security Act of 1947, was the lack of an overarching national security body to coordinate cabinet-level efforts and advise him on these concerns. The JCS was the closest to fulfilling this role, but as noted before, was an ad-hoc organization serving at the president's pleasure and in practice reported directly to him without consulting the service or other cabinet secretaries. As noted US foreign policy historian Melvyn Leffler writes, "Orderly procedures for studying options and integrating economic, political, and strategic recommendations did not exist," and Truman, who had little foreign policy experience or Roosevelt's confidence, received piecemeal advice, which led to many snap decisions during the first year of his presidency. To help fill the gap, the joint planning community and JCS worked early and often to better integrate their efforts with the State Department. The SWNCC, which first met in December 1944 under new Secretary of State Edward Stettinius and continued under his successor, James F. Byrnes, served as one venue for coordination with both military and civilian representation from the Army and the Navy.[75] The planners monitored Truman's public statements and the administration's meetings with Soviet counterparts as they worked on Pincher and other estimates. Based on the State Department's December 1945 articulation of a "firm and friendly attitude" toward the USSR, the JCS advocated that this declaration be backed with sufficient military forces, to which State agreed in April 1946. The JCS also requested an estimate from the State Department on Soviet political policy.[76] This set the stage for JCS advice to Truman, prepared by the JPS and JWPC, in which the military chiefs attempted to convey the urgency of the Soviet military threat to American long-term security.

The first estimate on April 1946 summarized JCS and State concurrence on the Soviet reluctance to get involved in another major war, but again emphasized the USSR's capability to

[75] Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 30; Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. I*, 4-5.

[76] Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. I*, 37, 42-44.

militarily "overrun" the majority of Western Europe. It flatly stated that the Soviets would have the initiative for a good period of time and that US occupation forces in Europe and Korea would withdraw, although acknowledging that holding a lodgment in Europe would be preferable to complete evacuation. All efforts must be made now, the planners argued, to secure friendly relations and/or guarantee neutrality of nations in the proposed operational area to keep them from falling into the Soviet orbit. They did not develop ideas on the Pacific beyond staying in Japan, considering actions in that area unpredictable, but recommended continued support to Chinese nationalists. The JCS planners ominously concluded, "The tempo of events would far exceed that of U.S. experience in any war to date," calling for an accelerated mobilization.[77]

The JCS submitted additional comments in July 1946, at the request of one of Truman's advisors, that expanded the initial discussion of what the Soviet Union was capable of doing in its quest for world domination. Largely a JSSC-led effort, the paper declared that the USSR could not peacefully co-exist with capitalist nations and that the two nations were essentially already at war. In language that echoes the 2018 National Security Strategy, the JCS described the actions that Stalin was taking short of a shooting war to leverage opportunities and exploit political, economic, and religious weaknesses of ethnic groups and nations alike. The Soviet Union was actively working to increase its own and its satellites' military capabilities to defeat Western powers, and using subversion via Communist parties in those same nations to infiltrate political systems. Upon reading the document, Truman declared it too "hot" to talk about and put it aside, hoping that he could still reach some accommodation with Stalin.[78]

Coincidental or not, the passage of the National Security Act in July 1947 coincided with changes in how the joint planners approached their work. The JWPC, now the Joint Strategic

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[77] JCS 1641/5, "Estimate Based on Assumption of Occurrence of Major Hostilities," April 11, 1946, NND 943011, Joint Chiefs of Staff Geographical File 1946-47, CCS 092 USSR (3-27-45), Box 53, Sec 6, RG 218, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol.1*, 72-73.

[78] Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 10; Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol 1*, 48-50.

Plans Group (JSPG), decided to turn Pincher into the short-range war plan Broiler. Broiler was the first joint war plan to assume use of atomic weapons explicitly against the Soviet Union, via strategic bombing from bases in the United Kingdom, Okinawa, and Egypt or Pakistan. The plan still assumed the initial loss of Western Europe and potentially the Middle East. Based on available forces, the United States would not be able to mount a ground offensive before D-Day plus ten months. By November 1947, the Joint Strategic Plans Committee (JSPC, formerly JPS) directed the JSPG to also write a joint outline plan for war with the USSR in 1955. This work resulted in Charioteer, the first long-range planning effort by the Joint Staff, which was intended to assist with building mobilization plans and identifying resource requirements. The JSPG also took it upon itself to develop a mid-range plan, Bushwacker, for war beginning in 1952. The planners were starting to understand the utility of separating out planning horizons to help allocate limited conventional forces-in-being and project future requirements, although they still deferred much of the detailed work until a later date. The JCS approved Charioteer but ignored Bushwacker, and focused on Broiler as the plan with immediate implications.[79]

Despite earlier understandings with the State Department, the planners worked on Broiler in the absence of specific guidance on US national strategy in the event of war. Getting more specific than in Pincher, the JSPG assumed that US objectives would be to "compel Soviet withdrawal at least to the 1939 boundaries and to ensure that the Soviet Union would abandon its policies of political and military aggression."[80] Admiral Louis Denfeld, the Chief of Naval Operations, questioned how the United States could politically abandon Western Europe without a fight. He also regarded the air campaign as infeasible as presented, because it involved operations executed over great distances, and Soviet reciprocity would likely result in the loss of too many European resources and allies up front. He referred to a nascent European defense

[79] Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II*, 153-154; Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 59-63.With amendments in early 1948, Broiler was also known as Frolic.

[80] Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II*, 154.

alliance then developing, and his peers agreed to withhold approval and send the document back to the planners.[81]

Within two months, the JSPC submitted the latest short-range war plan draft, Halfmoon, to the JCS, which took into account aircraft basing discussions from a recent combined planning conference with Great Britain and Canada. The JCS again declined to approve Halfmoon formally as a war plan but issued guidance in July 1948 that it could be used by the services for planning purposes. Next appearing as Fleetwood, the plan further developed alliance roles and responsibilities in all three domains, including combined US-Canadian homeland defense, and introduced the possibility that the USSR might retaliate with nuclear weapons of its own. The next incarnation, Trojan (approved by the JCS in January 1949), was the first to include a target list for the strategic atomic offensive.[82]

Every outline plan from Broiler to Trojan ran into the same issue—the planners could only plan out about one year due to lack of military capability to execute the proposed operations, particularly in support of western European allies. Joint Staff logistics planners and the DoD's Munitions Board served as the honest brokers, continually pointing out shipping and resource shortfalls. Acting on their new responsibilities, the individual JCS members became more involved contributing input to fiscal year (FY) service budgets in order to meet planning projections. Even after the National Security Act was passed and signed, the services bickered for over six months about roles and responsibilities until Secretary of Defense James Forrestal forced them to agree on language for a revised Executive Order at Key West in March 1948. War plans were the second major battleground for what have since become yearly and sometimes infamous inter-service disputes. One reason that the JCS did not approve short-range war plan Halfmoon

[81] Ibid., 155; Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 72-73.

[82] Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II*, 156-58; Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 90-98, 108-109. After the United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands signed the Treaty of Brussels in March 1948, the JCS and joint planners began to think more about how to integrate these countries' militaries into plans for the defense of Europe. The signatories of the Brussels treaty formed the Western Union, later Western European Union, which was the precursor to NATO.

for use beyond general planning guidance was because of its emphasis on nuclear weapons, which became the next topic of conversation after the Key West agreement. In September 1948, President Truman indicated that, if necessary, he would approve the use of atomic weapons in military operations, so the planners started to integrate the capability into follow-on plans. This exacerbated an already festering debate between the Air Force and Navy on control of delivery of nuclear weapons as well as the use of carrier-based aircraft in Halfmoon and subsequent plans.[83]

In August 1948, the JCS members agreed to place control of the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project temporarily under the Air Force pending further study and a final recommendation. That fall, Forrestal and the JCS commissioned two separate studies on the feasibility of the strategic air offensive as outlined in existing war plans with the current force structure. The two documents came to different conclusions. Forrestal's request, completed by the Air Force planners using his given assumptions of atomic weapon use and simultaneous execution of the Berlin Airlift, concluded that the strategic air offensive against Soviet industrial war capacity could be accomplished according to plan. It projected major economic disruption and a significant decrease in Soviet offensive and defensive capabilities. Not surprisingly, the CNO disagreed with the findings and called for further evaluation by the Joint Intelligence staff.[84]

The JCS-commissioned study, on the other hand, was more circumspect. Submitted in May 1949 by a committee led by Air Force Lieutenant General H.R. Harmon, the report concluded that even if all of the bombs outlined in Trojan hit their designated targets, that success

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[83] Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 70-71; Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 225-226; Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II*, 96, 156, 159, 164-66; Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," 13. Among other issues, the Joint Logistics Plans Group noted shortfalls in different types of engineer units, war reserve stocks for US and allied forces, and available shipping. As Condit summarizes, Short-Range Emergency Plan Cogwheel, developed in mid-1948 to accompany Halfmoon, was the Joint Staff's first real attempt to address mobilization requirements looking two years out, but the Munitions Committee still found many flaws in its assumptions regarding trained manpower and industrial output.

[84] Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II*, 97-98; JCS 1952/1, "Evaluation of Current Strategic Air Offensive Plans," December 21, 1948, in Steven T. Ross and David Alan Rosenberg, eds., *America's Plans for War Against the Soviet Union, 1945-1950, Volume 9: The Atomic Bomb and War Planning: Concepts and Capabilities* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), 4, 24.

would not on its own merits "bring about capitulation, destroy the roots of Communism, or critically weaken the power of Soviet leadership to dominate the people."[85] Given what the committee estimated to be a thirty to forty percent degradation of Soviet industrial capacity on the first run, SAC would need to conduct follow-on attacks. Even so, the report concluded that early offensive use of atomic weapons by the United States was the best way to inflict the most damage to the USSR that would ultimately support strategic objectives. The other services seized on the study as proof of their concerns about the efficacy of strategic bombing, but the Harmon Report also prompted the expansion, with Truman's approval, of the US nuclear stockpile and integration of atomic weapons into plans for the defense of Western Europe, with SAC given the lead for detailed planning.[86]

Meanwhile, when selective service ended, the services struggled to meet manpower objectives that fulfilled the budding war plans. An advocate of Universal Military Training (UMT), Truman did not get the defense budget he asked for from Congress for FY48 nor the authorization for UMT. The Army and Navy took the biggest losses in manpower while the Air Force managed to remain at a relatively steady state and increased the number of groups. Upon the President's appeal, Congress reinstituted the draft, and Truman entertained a $3 billion supplement to the FY49 defense budget, to which the JCS agreed but still did not meet service requirements. For FY50 and the first unified military budget, Truman capped the authorization request at $15 billion ($1 billion less than Congress approved for FY49). With the figure closer to $14.4 billion for the military proper once stockpiles were considered, the JCS and Forrestal, after weeks of disagreement, countered with a $16.9 billion request, but Truman stayed firm. In the end, Congress, listening to Air Force appeals, authorized $500 million more than Truman requested with the most money going to the Air Force, but the President declined to spend $735 million of the sum. With other requirements to fund, Truman did not want to engage in deficit

[85] Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," 16.

[86] Ibid., 16, 20, 22.

spending. He continued this tendency with a $13 billion cap for FY51, although he was swayed enough by the NSC and Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson (who took over from an ailing Forrestal in 1949) to accept Congress' $15.6 billion appropriation. By FY53, even considering increased service budgets due to the Korean War, the Air Force was clearly the favored service, in line with the ascendancy of SAC's role in strategic bombing operational planning and execution, with over forty percent of the defense budget. The JCS and the joint planners were thus faced with a mismatch of funds and military strategy—partially resulting from an inability to agree within themselves about priorities—that they would continually struggle to rectify as they drafted war plans beyond the short-range emergency timeframe.[87]

In July 1948, in the midst of the iterative short-range war planning and early budget battles, Forrestal formally requested policy guidance from the National Security Council (NSC) and President Truman. With the United States now financially committed to the Marshall Plan and working more closely with allies, Forrestal saw the need for an overarching national security document that could also aid the defense establishment with budgeting and prioritization of resources. Together with State Department input led by George Kennan, the top Soviet expert in US government, these ideas coalesced by November 1948 into NSC 20/4.[88] The document, titled "U.S. Objectives with Respect to the USSR to Counter Soviet Threats to U.S. Security," identified said objectives as "reduc[ing] the power and influence of the USSR to limits which no longer constitute a threat to the peace, national independence and stability of the world family of nations," and "bring[ing] about a basic change in the conduct of international relations by the government in power in Russia, to conform with the purposes and principles set forth in the UN

[87] Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II*, 99-101, 113-15, 135-136, 146; Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," 22; Walter S. Poole, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. IV: 1950-1952* (Washington, DC: Office of Joint History, 1998), 11-13. The final FY50 Congressional authorizations were: Army $4.42 billion; Navy $4.18 billion; Air Force $5.31 billion.

[88] Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II*, 113-16.

charter."[89] In addition to outlining ways to use soft power to persuade people within and outside the Soviet orbit from falling prey to communism, the document advocated developing "a level of military readiness which can be maintained as long as necessary as a deterrent to Soviet aggression" that would also provide a more robust mobilization base and a "source of encouragement" to allies.[90] While NSC 20/4 specifically stated that military and other operations should ideally create conditions that permitted "satisfactory accomplishment of U.S. objectives without a predetermined requirement for unconditional surrender," it then went on to propose several war aims, including making sure any remnant Bolshevik regime had no military-industrial capacity to wage further war on "comparable terms" with any other competitor for Russian governance.[91]

NSC 20/4, along with the FY50 budget authorizations, gave the JCS and their planners the impetus and direction they needed to refine Trojan, and for the next two years they explicitly cited the document's policy objectives in outlines for war plans. General Eisenhower, as acting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff after Admiral Leahy's retirement, provided specific guidance to the Joint Staff planners and operations chiefs in January 1949. The ensuing months' work resulted in Offtackle (approved by the JCS in December 1949), the first joint short-range emergency war plan informed by NSC 20/4. Offtackle attempted to close the gap between desired objectives and available forces in relation to the defense of Western Europe, using FY50 defense authorizations. Eisenhower recognized that US and allied forces would still struggle to stop the Soviets at the Rhine, but in conjunction with US coordination with the Western European Union defense coalition, emphasized the need to hold a bridgehead on the continent to posture for the earliest possible return of forces for the counterattack. The resulting plan was more ambitious

[89] "Report to the President by the National Security Council (NSC 20/4)," *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948, General; the United Nations, Volume I, Part 2, eds. Neal H. Petersen, Ralph R. Goodwin, Marvin W. Kranz, and William Z. Slany (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1976), Document 60, accessed February 4, 2020, https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1948v01p2/d60.

[90] "NSC 20/4," *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1948.

[91] Ibid.

than Trojan in calling for destruction of specific Soviet war industries and supporting energy and transportation infrastructure in order to slow the attack across Europe and negatively affect Soviet morale. Offtackle also assumed the use of atomic bombs by both sides, making the defense of Great Britain for basing even more important than before. The supporting US Air Force-developed target list called for 292 atomic bombs and over 17,000 tons of conventional ordnance in the first three months, with a generous estimated eighty-five percent success rate. After talks with allies, the joint planners adjusted basing of US bombers to the United Kingdom, leaving the British to defend the Cairo-Suez area, and committed to refining ground force posture in western Europe. While acknowledging Eisenhower's guidance, the best the planners could do was to identify the Pyrenees as the desired bridgehead; they did not expect to be able to initiate an allied ground counteroffensive until D+24 months.[92]

In Offtackle, the planners took pains to outline the risks associated with the lack of adequate ground forces. However, it was the first US plan to emphasize that an allied effort should attempt to hold Western Europe, for by the time the JCS approved Offtackle, the United States was committed to NATO and regularly coordinating with Great Britain and the signatory countries. "Europe's security," Ross notes, "was no longer a by-product of Soviet defeat on other fronts—it was by late 1949 the primary focus of American strategic planning;" the Middle East was now less important (but still covered by Great Britain), and the United States would continue on the strategic defensive in the Pacific.[93] The planners continued to revise Offtackle through 1951, noting that due to Korean War requirements, their basic assumptions and concerns about correlation of forces in Europe remained unchanged.[94]

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[92] Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II*, 159-163; Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 110-119.

[93] Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 111, 118.

[94] Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. IV*, 83-84.

The commitment to European defense prompted the JCS to appoint an ad-hoc planning committee to update long-range plan Charioteer into Dropshot (January-December 1949), a comprehensive requirements study for conflict starting on January 1, 1957. Developed in coordination with the entire Joint Staff and informed by Offtackle and the emerging budget battles, Dropshot advocated using ten percent of the national income ($20-22 billion) to build the forces required to successfully execute the plan. A good portion of the money allocated would be in the form of military aid to allies, including the formation of a West German constabulary, and the DoD would undertake more planning and operations in psychological, economic, and underground warfare.[95] Writing six months before the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, the committee concluded, "Our government and our people must accept the continuing cost essential to our security which will, as a minimum, provide a deterrent force against war; and should the threat of armed conflict become high, they must be prepared to accept the increased cost necessary to prepare for war."[96] Indeed, the planners proposed shockingly large amounts of atomic and conventional ordnance to be dropped in the first months of the war, and elaborated on (in modern US doctrinal terms) Phase II operations with three alternatives for the joint combined counterattack across Europe, along with outlining considerations for Phase III and IV operations. The JCS never approved Dropshot and it fell off the planning agenda in early 1951, but it demonstrated the continued evolution of the joint planners' thinking. The plan explicitly

[95] JCS 1920/5, "Long-Range Plans for War with the USSR, Development of a Joint Outline Plan for Use in the Event of a War in 1957: Short Title: "Dropshot"," December 19, 1949, in Steven T. Ross and David Alan Rosenberg, eds., *America's Plans for War Against the Soviet Union, 1945-1950, Volume 14: Long Range Planning: Dropshot* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1989), 227-28, 230-32.

[96] Ibid., 243.

identified containment of Soviet expansion as its objective and fleshed out subsequent campaign phases more than in previous planning efforts.[97]

Of greater significance to the JCS was developing a new mid-range war plan to inform budget input for FY52, NATO, and revised mobilization planning. Reaper, developed during 1950 and approved by the JCS that November, was built for war in July 1954, took its cues from NSC-68, and echoed many ideas from Dropshot. The JSPC, encouraged by increased defense spending for the Korean War and NATO, more confidently assumed that the US and its allies could defend the Rhine, western Scandinavia, and key Middle Eastern oil infrastructure from Soviet attacks. Reaper assumed each side would use atomic bombs at the start of the conflict, and that the USSR would not hesitate to use its 235 atomic bombs against North American and British industries, with an unspecified amount of resulting damage. Accordingly, SAC would initially target and destroy Soviet strategic air assets. Despite the defensive stand in Western Europe, and even with best-case scenario force build-up, the planners did not think major offensive operations could occur until two years after D-Day.[98]

Reaper was the last war plan written before the JCS adopted the construct for the short-, mid-, and long-range family of plans. As outlined by the JSPC, the Joint Program for Planning would better streamline JCS guidance to the services and, more significantly, attempt to

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[97] Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 127-131; JCS 1920/5, "Short Title: "Dropshot"," December 19, 1949, in Ross and Rosenberg, eds., *America's Plans for War Against the Soviet Union, 1945-1950, Vol. 14*, 253, 323, 470-73. The initial estimate for Dropshot's overall strategic air requirements out to D+4 months was 453 atomic bombs and nearly 22,000 high explosive rounds. The modern US joint phasing construct consists of six numbered phases: Phase 0, Shape; Phase I, Deter; Phase II, Seize the Initiative; Phase III, Dominate; Phase IV, Stabilize; and Phase V, Enable Civil Authority. Most of the activities that early Cold War planners considered did not go past what today's Joint Force would consider Phase III, and the first short-range plans only accounted for operations up through Phase II due to their inherent purpose and lack of available forces. For more detail see Figure 1-3, "Notional large-scale combat joint phasing model," in Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 1-12.

[98] JCS 2143, "Joint Outline War Plan For a War Beginning 1 July 1954, "Reaper," July 7, 1950, NND 943011, Joint Chiefs of Staff Central Decimal File 1948-50, CCS 381 (1-26-50), Box 195, Sec 3, RG 218, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD; Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. IV*, 88; Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 142-145.

"eliminate piecemeal and crisis planning."[99] Unfortunately, this action did not mitigate continued inter-service disputes over military strategy and task priority, with the planners themselves sometimes as divided as the JCS members. The JSPC even tried to come to a consensus about the major tasks in Reaper to provide a list to the JCS for adjudication. The Air Force argued that the SAC offensive against Soviet atomic power was the most important task and only viable option in lieu of other defense shortages, while the Navy and Army maintained that all essential tasks in the plan were equally important to its success. Reaper remained in its original form until the planners commenced work on the first JSOP in August 1952 mainly because the services could not agree on how to modify the plan to everyone's satisfaction.[100]

With the election of General Eisenhower to the US presidency, the JCS and Joint Staff planners received more frequent national security policy guidance, but in some ways felt more constrained than before in their ability to carry out the guidance. Before Truman left office, the JCS recommended continued increases in defense expenditures and warned that existing forces were inadequate, a state of affairs they hoped would be fixed by the recently-submitted FY54 budget. President Eisenhower entered office with a specific vision for America that balanced "security" and "solvency." He expected the Department of Defense to operate in a unified manner, per its mandate, and rejected the idea of building up the military to a specific force level by a hypothetical date.[101] Eisenhower's first articulation of national security strategy, NSC 153/1, stated as its first two policy objectives the need to "create and maintain sufficient strength, both

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[99] Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. IV*, 90; see also Poole, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, 1-3.

[100] Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. IV*, 88-90; Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 145-146.

[101] Robert J. Watson, *History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. V: 1953-1954* (Washington, DC: Historical Division, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1986), 2-4, 8-9. Eisenhower believed that military strength rested on economic strength, and that streamlining planning and procurement processes within the Department of Defense, along with better coordination and cooperation with allies, would contribute to fiscal savings. Ultimately this idea would translate into greater reliance during his presidency on nuclear deterrence and a combined NATO military force to help reduce US conventional military expenditures.

military and nonmilitary, to provide for the security of the United States" and "to maintain a sound and strong US economy based on free enterprise."[102]

One significant change Eisenhower instituted was the transfer of a major portion of the nuclear stockpile from civilian to military control, which, despite SAC's growing influence, Truman had never seriously contemplated. Having been both the temporary CJCS and the first Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, Eisenhower was already very familiar with the status of the US and allied war plans and inclusion of atomic targets.[103] NSC 162/2, the maturation of thoughts embodied in NSC 153/1 combined with presidential direction, dictated that national security required "a strong military posture, with emphasis on the capability of inflicting massive retaliatory damage by offensive striking power," "U.S. and allied forces in readiness to move rapidly initially to counter aggression by Soviet bloc forces and to hold vital areas and lines of communication," and "a mobilization base, and its protection against crippling damage, adequate to insure victory in the event of general war."[104] In line with Eisenhower's priorities, the second tenet focused on the strength of the economy that would have to support the previous security objectives; the document also noted the $9.4 billion budget deficit for FY53 and broad guidance for how the government would mitigate it. The JCS, with service input, mirrored NSC 162/2's guidance by issuing a three-year military strategy with the priorities of offensive striking power, tactical nuclear weapons, and nuclear attack defense.[105]

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[102] "Statement of Policy by the National Security Council (NSC 153/1)," *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1952-1954, National Security Affairs, Volume II, Part 1, eds. Lisle A. Rose and Neal H. Petersen (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1984), 381, accessed February 4, 2020, https://history.state.gov/ historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/pg_381.

[103] Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," 27.

[104] "Statement of Policy by the National Security Council (NSC 162/2)," *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1952-1954, National Security Affairs, Volume II, Part 1*, eds. Lisle A. Rose and Neal H. Petersen (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1984), 582, accessed February 4, 2020, https://history.state.gov/ historicaldocuments/frus1952-54v02p1/d101.

[105] Ibid., 582, 588; Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," 29-32; Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. V*, 26-32.

In the meantime, the JSPG began work on the JSCP and JSOP, which were due March 1 and January 1, 1953, respectively, but encountered inter-service conflict yet again. The JSCP's D-Day was July 1, 1953, yet the JSPC was still arguing over aspects of the plan in August 1953. The Air Force believed that it could accomplish US strategic objectives in the first six months, with the other services (now including the Marine Corps) insisting that strategic bombing was not enough. All services agreed that conventional ground forces would be necessary thereafter but differed on timing and sequence of employment. Continuing a pattern started with Reaper, the planners presented competing service statements in certain sections of the plan, including force tabs, for JCS adjudication, offering no consensus recommendation. By October 1953, the JCS and planners were questioning the Joint Program for Planning construct and temporarily tabled the JSCP. The JSOP, subject to the same strategic arguments, fared no better, and the first JLRSE foundered due to its vague mandate, causing the JSPC to redefine what it expected from the document.[106]

NSC 162/2 provided enough leeway in its language that it finally forced a JCS decision along with guidance to the joint planners. In sum, the Joint Chiefs agreed to soften the Air Force-centric language and place emphasis on the "strategic flexibility required to meet the broad retaliatory and counter offensive demands associated with a general war as well as the varied and recurrent military requirements short of a war."[107] As with Plan Orange, the JCS and joint planners diluted the language throughout the JSCP to achieve consensus; the resulting guidance was slightly more favorable to the Army, Navy, and Marines. In April 1954, the services finally received the approved JSCP. The planners followed this with a mid-range plan (replacing the JSOP) approved in April 1955. The next JSCP encountered more service disputes but was ultimately approved more quickly than the first and before its effective date of June 1, 1955. After initial budget cuts, as the President sought to reduce the deficit, the Air Force, in accordance with

[106] Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. V*, 93-98.

[107] Ibid., 100.

NSC 162/2 and DoD priorities, received an average of forty-seven percent of the defense budget between 1954 and 1957, with the Army and Navy at roughly twenty-two and twenty-nine percent respectively.[108]

Once the joint planners finally completed updated short and mid-range plans to provide the services with guidance, they returned to addressing the process, and issued a revision of the Joint Program for Planning in July 1955. The JCS retained the same three planning documents and adjusted preparation and approval timelines to reflect what the Joint Staff had learned about the amount of time needed for staff coordination and revision as well as synchronization with the budget process. The JLRSE, formerly containing both broad strategic ideas and detailed technological options, now focused exclusively on the former, and was to be approved eight years before its start date, looking out four years (in the first estimate's case, January 1964-1968).[109] The JSOP's purpose was to "translate the national objectives and policies of the United States into terms of military objectives, military strategy, and basic military undertakings, which are considered to be *reasonably attainable*, during the mid-range period," for conditions of "Cold war or military conflict short of general war," and "General war."[110] The wording of this section emphasized how the planners were starting to consider scenarios short of general war and further linking the mid-range plan to requirements and budgets, but the "reasonably attainable" language highlighted the root causes of inter-service disagreements. Each JSOP would take effect four years after approval for a three-year timeframe. Lastly, the JSCP was largely unchanged, but like the JSOP would also be annually updated for both kinds of war. Its purpose was the same as the

[108] Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. V*, 101-103; Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," 29.

[109] JCS Policy Memo 84 (1st Revision), "Joint Program for Planning," July 27, 1955, NND 943011, Joint Chiefs of Staff Central Decimal File 1954-56, CCS 381 (11-29-49), Box 117, Sec 24, RG 218, Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

[110] Ibid. Italics are monograph author's emphasis.

mid-range plan but "in consonance with actual U.S. military capabilities" and applicable for two years.[111]

The first ten years after the end of World War II were busy ones for the joint planners and were not exactly peaceful. Crises in Czechoslovakia and China received attention, as did Berlin and Korea. The majority of planners came out of the war fully alarmed that the Soviet Union was intent on dominating Eurasia and beyond, despite the general agreement that the USSR would not attack Western Europe or the Middle East at any point in the near future. This mindset was certainly influenced by their recent experience; the Joint Staff and JCS often reverted to viewing the USSR's goals in relation to an economically devastated Europe as akin to those of Nazi Germany in the 1930s, and were determined to make preparations to stop Stalin and his military from unleashing yet another ruthless totalitarian regime on the world. In a position of economic and military dominance, the United States should have felt relatively secure. Joint planners and their leaders, however, felt that advantage slipping away with demobilization and what they and many State Department personnel agreed were competing requirements for forward presence as a world power, especially to counter the British decline. While the joint planners and JCS, with their views and advice to the President, may have exacerbated the Soviet response, their outlook was arguably natural and common given what they assumed and what they did not know (and no one knew) about actual Soviet views.[112]

More interesting for the purposes of this discussion are some of the other assumptions made by the planners. They believed that if war occurred, it would be due to Soviet miscalculation, and that it would be a total and protracted war. The planners never seemed to

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[111] JCS Policy Memo 84 (1st Revision), "Joint Program for Planning," July 27, 1955. Because of the timing of the 1955 memorandum revision, the JCS made the next JSCP good for three years, to revert to two years once the planning and JCS approval schedule got back on track in the next fiscal year.

[112] Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 3; Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. I*, 10-11, 35-36. 187-192; Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II*, 73-75; Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 35-36, 51, 99. Leffler frames his discussion as an example of the classic security dilemma.

contemplate that the United States might act in a way that prompted the USSR to escalate in kind to war; preventive war was the closest to this idea, and President Truman in particular closed the door on this option early on. The joint planners also wrote off the defense of Western Europe until 1949, when the United States joined NATO and it became politically infeasible to abandon continental allies. The planners may have been trying to make a point to policymakers about the lack of US Army capacity to defend France, West Germany, and its neighbors against tens of Soviet divisions, but based on the overall assumption about lack of expected military aggression, the strength of the assertion rings a bit hollow. Nevertheless, events in Berlin, China, and Korea bore out overall concerns about the spread of Communism and increased US defense appropriations in the aggregate along with monetary and other forms of aid to Western European allies.[113]

On the civil-military front, the joint planners remained engaged with policy makers (through the JCS and Secretary of Defense) and constantly adjusted their estimates and war plans to emerging guidance. Before NSC 20/4, they did a good job of articulating the importance of traditional American interests, like homeland security and the Western Hemisphere, while suggesting ways to posture the US military to support the nation's new leading international role. NSC 20/4 was somewhat helpful for the planners in articulating an early form of containment of Soviet influence and told the military that fighting did not have to end in unconditional surrender. At the same time, the policy did not provide solid direction regarding expectations of the military once the USSR was compelled to stop fighting, whenever and however that occurred. The joint planners did not consider Phase IV planning either in their short-range plans, and national policy did not clearly guide them toward long-range objectives. By late 1953, however, NSC 162/2 provided more specific national objectives for the military to support, prioritizing the strategic air

[113] Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, 151-152; Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II*, 117, 159-162, 194, 197, 213, 215; Poole, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. IV*, 24-25, 36-38.

offensive while allowing leeway for the services to provide flexible options for the supporting force structure and missions.[114]

What no law or policy could mitigate was the growing bureaucratic tension at the highest levels of the military. Simply put, the Joint Staff of the late 1940s and early 1950s was joint in name more than in practice, especially with regards to contingency planning and resourcing. As tensions over the budget escalated, planners consistently held their ground on service-focused recommendations for war plan objectives and priorities. The JCS tried to broker disagreements, but more often than not individual members agreed with their service planners, causing the Secretary of Defense and sometimes the President to get involved to make a decision or issue guidance. President Eisenhower witnessed this friction both as acting CJCS and President and addressed it more directly than Truman, who had his own issues during his term with varying shades of disobedience from senior flag officers. From a practical perspective, the inter-service tension meant that planners and the supporting Joint Intelligence and Logistics staffs constantly revisited documents, passing them up, down, and across organizations so much that plans did not get read or approved by the JCS per the given timetables. When the services did finally agree, plans like the first JSCP contained watered-down language to achieve consensus. David Alan Rosenberg referred to this situation as a kind of "surrogate war," in which the services tested concepts and force packages, with the resulting war plans changing only incrementally as they built on the previous years' compromises. On a more positive note, the planners and their chiefs continually invested time in their products to the point that they eventually agreed on an amended

[114] Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," 14; Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II*, 118-21; Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. V*, 24-25.

joint planning system that they intended would hold themselves more accountable for providing timely recommendations to the Defense Secretary and the President.[115]

The official JCS history quotes one of the deputy strategic plans directors from the mid-1950s who viewed the joint planning struggles not so much as the product of inter-service disputes but the ambiguity of the peacetime environment. Crafting plans during war was relatively easy when it came to the military objective of winning, but given "the confused and fluid conditions of world bi-polarity" and "lack of clear and simple (national) objectives," joint war planning was a difficult endeavor.[116] His comment reminds contemporary planners that even with the good staff and civil-military coordination, strategic contingency planning is hard work.

## Comparisons and Conclusions

Civil-military and bureaucratic tensions within the highest ranks of the Executive Branch are not new, and as Cahill realistically concludes, will never completely go away, meaning that joint planners need to continue to find constructive ways of mitigating these tensions in order to provide the best military options to the nation. If the two historical examples are any guide, there will also continue to be times where national policy guidance is lacking or ad-hoc, especially as the United States faces not just competition from near-peer threats in multiple theaters and domains but also the continuing aspirations of international terrorist organizations and would-be nuclear powers, all in hard-to-predict combinations. The US military will also continue to be affected by or directly deal with the ramifications of domestic economic stress, environmental changes, and natural disasters. Joint planners increasingly find themselves challenged to prioritize

[115] Rosenberg, "The Origins of Overkill," 25; Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. V*, 93-109. For more on civil-military tensions during the Truman Administration, see John M. Taylor, "Revolt of the Admirals," *MHQ: The Quarterly Journal of Military History 19*, no. 1 (Autumn 2006): 76-83, and the many articles and books on President Truman's firing of General Douglas MacArthur, one of the most recent being Michael D. Pearlman, *Truman & MacArthur: Policy, Politics, and the Hunger for Honor and Renown* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008).

[116] Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. V*, 108.

the efforts of multiple commanders' campaign and contingency plans and may find themselves echoing John Mearsheimer's words about missing the relative simplicity of the Cold War.[117]

The two case studies previously examined underscore that, if nothing else, planners have to demonstrate initiative, be persistent in seeking guidance, and expect to do their jobs at times in the absence of clear guidance. These qualities are certainly expected of all field grade officers, not just those in planning billets; the salient point is in how these abilities are best applied in the twenty-first century joint and inter-agency environment. In both cases studied, joint planners executed multiple iterations of war plans, sometimes on their own initiative, but often to keep improving the products as political leaders clarified guidance and the service chiefs agreed on mission responsibility. Before World War II, the Army and Navy encouraged and institutionalized the use of their respective war colleges to assist the JPC with the Color plans, and then actually assigned graduates to the service staffs in Washington, DC to utilize their skills. As a result, both services had highly-practiced staffs who were used to working under time constraints and continuously improving the plans based on their reading of the global environment and guidance from civilian and military leaders. After World War II, as the services were formally tied into the budgeting process in a unified Department of Defense, the joint planners recognized the utility of designating three different planning horizons to aid them in articulating requirements and capabilities for executing World War III in the short-, middle-, and long-term. Today, the JSPS has built in the flexibility for commanders and decision makers at the Pentagon and CCMDs to review contingency plans as needed without waiting for a given suspense date. Implied in this direction is that joint planners are constantly reviewing their plans as they may be asked to provide updates at any time. This construct provides planners the freedom to think yet forces them to not get complacent with their current work. The looser

[117] Cahill, "Producing Strategic Value," 27, 32; John J. Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War," in *Conflict After the Cold War: Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*, 5th Edition (New York: Routledge, 2017), 16.

framework also provides additional opportunities for civil-military dialogue both within the DoD and with allies and inter-agency partners.[118]

The historical case studies also highlight attempts on the planners' part to coordinate their efforts with the Department of State, and later, the National Security Council, as well as their growing tendency to find themselves and seize the opportunity to participate in the realm of policy recommendation. In the late 1930s, the outreach was one-sided on the military's part based on Secretary of State Hull's tendency to eschew mixing diplomatic and security matters. Some personnel within the State Department were amenable to working with the planners, and coordination improved during World War II, especially after Hull left and following the formation of the SWNCC. Secretaries Stettinius and Byrnes were somewhat more inclined to have their staff work with the joint planners, and many diplomats' views, particularly those of George Kennan, influenced the JSPG and JSPC as they considered Soviet intentions and how the military should posture to counter the threat.[119]

In both examples, joint planners made pointed recommendations to the State Department and military leadership regarding overtures to other countries about basing rights for ships and aircraft. The planners saw this effort as vital to both military and civil aviation, especially during the early years of the Cold War, to assist with force projection and strategic bombing in the event of conflict. They did not consider their recommendations as inappropriate, which reflected the growing influence of senior military leadership in the national security apparatus. By 1945, the joint planners were used to their estimates being sent to the President via the JCS. The National Security Act of 1947 curbed this influence somewhat by reinvigorating the service secretary roles and creating the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Although the planners still had their service

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[118] Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, xvi, 31-32; *Joint Strategic Planning System*, 1-3; CJCSI 3141.01F, *Management and Review of Campaign and Contingency Plans*, B-2; Robert A. Gleckler, "Why War Plans, Really?" *Joint Force Quarterly* 79 (4th Quarter, October 2015), 74.

[119] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 35, 61, 65-66, 196-97, 212; Ross, *AWP 1945-1950*, x; Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. I*, 4-5; Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 42-43.

chiefs as their advocates, since the JCS was not required to provide a consensus opinion, the Secretary of Defense was often left to adjudicate unresolved disputes. The Joint Staff also worked in parallel with the Secretary's staff, and as the national military establishment bureaucracy grew, many voices joined the debate on war plans and strategy. In essence, the primacy that the JCS, Joint Staff, and service planning staffs enjoyed in providing advice to the Commander-in-Chief on matters of national security and defense advice through the end of World War II proved difficult to relinquish, and tended to play itself out during the ensuing years via intra-service debates over mission priorities, platforms, and manning.[120]

Bureaucratic infighting between the services before and after World War II occurred due to differences in thinking about ways and means along with military strategy in general. In the 1930s, the Army was not, with rare leadership exceptions, interested in far-flung missions requiring forward presence, mainly because it was not manned for the task. Planners and Army War College leaders prudently prepared for contingencies, but consistently prioritized the traditional homeland defense mission. The Navy stayed true to its expeditionary heritage and capabilities with its continuing interest in the western Pacific and ensuring freedom of navigation through the Panama Canal. Isolationism and low budgets reinforced the focus on the Navy as the service necessary to maintain links to commerce and distant American possessions. As war drew closer, so did the services' opinions on military strategy, but not before differences of opinion on what to do about Japan, which was arguably a greater threat to the United States during the 1930s than Germany. With the example of the Army Chief of Staff and Chief of Naval Operations constructively discussing issues with each other and their staffs and presenting them on a consistent basis to the president, the service planners grew used to working well together. Their

[120] Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 16, 139-40; Schnabel, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. 1*, 113; Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 29-30.

collaborative work on the Rainbow and Victory Plans established the foundation for a well-functioning joint planning staff through the duration of the war.[121]

After the Axis surrender, however, the joint planners became increasingly parochial; by 1955, the JCS often mirrored this tendency. What happened to the fruitful years of 1939-1945? The situation to a large degree can be attributed to the peace dividend complicated by the start of the nuclear era. All of the former belligerents reduced their militaries and demobilized, as most of them had always done after the fighting ended, but now this occurred under the auspices of rising tension between two former allies, one of them armed with the atomic bomb. The job of each service, now also including the Air Force, was to figure out what it was to look like and its missions in support of national policy under a tense and evolving strategic environment. Joint and service planners early on identified the USSR, or more broadly Communism, as the enemy, but working on the assumption that the enemy would not fight then, but could fight later, and probably with nuclear weapons of its own, had to figure out what to do about this potential problem. In this case, the unconstrained thinking encouraged by previous tendency and lack of consistent political guidance, along with to the uncertainties of a nuclear world, in a way worked against the joint planners. Under the broad direction of NSC 20/4, the planners could still provide many options on how to address the threat while agreeing on the basic objectives of keeping a toehold in Western Europe for the eventual counterattack and conducting a strategic bombing offensive against Soviet war-making potential. Meanwhile, President Truman, the State Department, and Congress were increasingly committed to financial aid to Europe and alliances, but the even with the Korean War bump in military spending, the planners could not match ways with the means given to fulfill war plan objectives. As previously noted, the JCS members provided individual opinions to the CJCS, and they also sent guidance to the joint and service staffs to account for or fix aspects of the war plans. While certainly within their purview, the JCS

[121] Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, 82-83, 119; Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries*, 5-7; Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations*, 120-21; Cline, *Washington Command Post: The Operations Division*, 59.

provided so much parallel guidance, and the planners spent so much time shuffling versions between directorates, that the Joint Staff could not stay on its self-mandated planning schedule. By the time national security policy became more explicit during the Eisenhower Administration, and despite the President's efforts to refocus the Joint Staff on national matters, the joint planners were well entrenched in service-oriented thinking and budget feuds.[122]

To their credit, the JCS and Joint Staff tried to fix the deteriorating situation and got war planning mostly back on schedule with the 1955 revision to the Joint Program for Planning. Considering that the DoD was a new and rapidly growing civil-military organization that was quickly tasked with overseeing real-world operations while still figuring out how to act within its authorities, some friction was likely to occur. With subsequent changes to the Joint Strategic Planning System and amendments to the original National Security Act, the CJCS gained more directive authority, subject to the concurrence of the Defense Secretary and his staff, over contingency planning and service dispute adjudication. When contingency planning migrated to CCMD staffs, the Joint Staff J5 took on a parallel role of adjudication of priorities between the commands. CCMD contingency plans focus on the next two years using current resources, unlike the wargames and analysis of the SSA process, and until recently were not always coordinated between commands. More flexibility in the plans review process could inadvertently create a new form of bureaucratic competition between CCMDs for getting their voice heard earlier or more often. However, now that the 2018 JSPS guidance specifies Coordinating Authorities (CAs) to lead planning efforts across CCMDs and work in conjunction with the J5 for assessment and approval, the instances of resource competition between commands to address a shared challenge should ideally be few.[123]

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[122] Condit, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. II*, 159-160, 167; Watson, *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, Vol. V*, 107-108; Leffler, *A Preponderance of Power*, 264-65.

[123] Poole, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, 2-4; CJCSI 3141.01F, *Management and Review of Campaign and Contingency Plans*, 2, A-3-A-4; Gleckler, "Why War Plans," 72, 75.

This monograph earlier questioned the notion of the continued viability of contingency planning in an era focused on the campaign. As a recent military author notes, sometimes well-meaning strategy working groups use war plans to help decision makers address long-term strategic challenges when they would be better off leveraging the SSA process. They do this because a war plan carries a certain caché as an approved and thoughtfully produced document addressing an identified need. Contingency, or more specifically, crisis action planning, will always be needed for natural disasters and other events that contain variables that cannot be completely planned for in advance. In addition, Title 10 for years has specified the CJCS's responsibility for the direction and oversight of contingency planning. Regardless of the law, the US military has assumed the duty and responsibility to prepare for contingencies for over one hundred years; tradition is hard to break.[124]

Looking ahead, the choice of words in CJCS Instructions and Joint publications matters. Because the term "war plan" carries historical baggage, conjuring up images of total war in all domains and even nuclear holocaust, the Joint Staff's switch to "contingency plan" downplays this tendency and is a more flexible term for the various threats that the United States is likely to face in the twenty-first century. Contingency planning should continue to be carried on at CCMD level, nested with commanders' campaign plans, not so much as separate branch plans but to address escalations or de-escalations in the operational or even strategic environments. Because of the necessity to link contingencies with available resources, CCMD planners will probably not have as unfettered freedom of thought as those supporting SSA and the unknown strategic environment more than five years away, but they still have opportunities to discuss courses of action with other staffs and the inter-agency. Planners at all joint headquarters, regardless of background and professional military education experiences, should educate themselves on theory and strategy, not only to be well informed and better analysts, but to be better equipped to

[124] Gleckler, "Why War Plans," 74-75; Title 10, U.S.C. Chapter 5: Joint Chiefs of Staff, §153.

work through bureaucratic and civil-military challenges in constructive ways. Finally, the Joint Staff should, on behalf of the CJCS, rigorously monitor CA planning efforts to validate the concept under Global Integration. This initiative still needs time to mature but demonstrates that there is a solid framework in place to help eliminate planning redundancies and mitigate the demands of limited resources.[125]

Contingency planning will never disappear. The American people expect their military, along with other public and civil services, to be prepared; the defense establishment has taken this responsibility seriously for decades and the duty to accomplish this task is engrained in planners. The Pentagon uses the JSPS to help carry out this prerogative, but ultimately it is up to planners and their leadership to understand points of friction and, as their predecessors did, work through them across the DoD, coalitions/allies, and the inter-agency.

[125] CJCSI 3141.01F, *Management and Review of Campaign and Contingency Plans*, C-3; CJCSI 3100.01D, *Joint Strategic Planning System*, C-2.

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