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# Reorganization of U.S. Armed Forces

John L. Byron



A National War College Strategic Study

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# Reorganization of U.S. Armed Forces

John L. Byron

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A National War College Strategic Study

1983

National Defense University Press  
Fort Lesley J. McNair  
Washington, DC 20319

93-04605



2681

98 3 3 085

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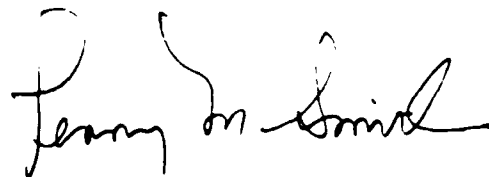
# FOREWORD

The essay you are about to read has a dual distinction.

It is the first "Strategic Study" published by the National War College in cooperation with the National Defense University Press. Since its founding in 1946, the National War College has dedicated itself to promoting excellence in the study of national security strategy; continuing in this tradition, we are proud to inaugurate this series of studies on broad strategy issues. We hope it will prove to be a forum for creative approaches to the complex problems of national security.

Commander John L. Byron's study enjoys the second distinction of being among the winning entries in the first Joint Chiefs of Staff Strategy Essay Competition, authorized in 1982 by General David C. Jones. At that time, the Chairman challenged the students of our senior military colleges to formulate fresh strategies for national security, encouraging original and innovative *thought pieces* as opposed to traditional research or staff reports.

Commander Byron certainly takes up that challenge. He questions the foundations of the armed forces as established in 1947, citing discrepancies between mission and structure. He proposes a radically new military structure, entailing the abolition of one armed service and the creation of another. Although many will not agree with his proposals, Commander Byron has cut to the heart of a number of issues afflicting our military establishment. Such imaginative analysis should invite future thoughtful and provocative National War College Strategic Studies.



**PERRY M. SMITH**  
**Major General, USAF**  
**Commandant**  
**National War College**

# THE AUTHOR

Commander John L. Byron, U.S. Navy, has a BS degree in Physical Oceanography, University of Washington. He graduated from the National War College in June 1982, and has completed courses at the Destroyer Engineering School and Submarine School. He has also completed the following courses: Polaris Weapons Officer Course; Poseidon Prospective Commanding Officer Course; Submarine Executive Officer Course; Submarine Prospective Commanding Officer Course; Tactical Planning Course; and the Command Tactical Training Course.

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# REORGANIZATION OF US ARMED FORCES

## The Defense Missions

A mixture of agreement and compromise resulted in the National Security Act of 1947 and the current US military structure. Definitive discussion of the background of the act is beyond the scope of this paper,<sup>1</sup> but a few key elements in the reorganization decision bear mention:

- the desire of President Truman to replace the separate Departments of War and Navy with a single organization, the Department of Defense
- the determination of the Army Air Corps to gain autonomy
- the determination of both the Army and the Navy to remain autonomous, with the Army willing to be rid of its factional Air Corps but the Navy unready to release control of naval aviation
- the serious belief that strategic bombing would be decisive in the next war.

Two themes informed all considerations of defense structure: on the one hand, the President's desire to strengthen his control of the armed forces as components of the Federal Government; on the other, a widespread recognition that the structure of the armed forces had to take into account the strategy and fighting organizations needed in the field.

What emerged was a centrally organized Department of Defense containing three separate service branches, each assigned a distinct mission. Arguably, the structure fit the security environment of 1947. Since then, however, enough problems have emerged to question this structure for the 1980s. The march of events and the onrush of new military technology over the past 35 years have resulted in an unanticipated evolution and overlapping of the missions assigned to the individual armed services in 1947.

## **Reorganization of US Armed Forces**

**Three Natural Missions.** Three functional mission areas have evolved and will be referred to throughout as *Land War*, *War at Sea*, and *Strategic Deterrence*.

*Land War* is the ability to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations on land. This mission remains as in 1947; it has always been the mission of the Army. But, in 1947, the Land War mission was divorced from supporting air operations. Although perhaps justifiable back in the heyday of strategic bombing and certainly reflecting a cleavage within the Army that predated World War II, the separation of supporting air operations from the Land War mission is invalid today. In what follows, the term Land War should be understood to mean all that is required to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations on land, including air support. Land War is also intended to include strategic mobility, both sealift and airlift. These capabilities are as integral to the Land War mission as is firepower.

*War at Sea* is the ability to conduct prompt and sustained combat operations at sea, including the projection of military power over the beach from the sea. The War at Sea mission has not changed since 1947; it is assigned to the Navy.

*Strategic Deterrence* is a new mission, emerging from the awesome destructive power of thermonuclear weapons. It is defined as the ability to deter nuclear war through the capability to employ nuclear force sufficient to cause unacceptable damage to any enemy nation. It also implies the ability to fight a strategic nuclear war should deterrence fail. Currently, all three services participate in Strategic Deterrence: the Air Force with its strategic bombers, continental air defense, and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs); the Navy with its submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs); and the Army with its assigned role (now largely inactive) in ballistic missile defense (BMD).

**Air Power.** Air power was envisioned as a well-defined mission in 1947, being defined as the ability to conduct prompt and sustained offensive and defensive air operations. This paper holds that air power no longer exists as a distinct entity.

In 1947, strategic bombing was the most important application of air power; it provided the strongest justification for an autonomous Air Force. Now, however, with bombers increasingly undefendable against sophisticated sensors, guided missiles, and modern interceptor aircraft, it is my opinion that strategic bombing has become a minor capability with respect to Land War and remains important only as part of the Strategic Deterrence mission.



## **Reorganization of US Armed Forces**

A second application of air power is linked directly to War at Sea, specifically to maritime patrol, antisubmarine warfare, and power projection and sea control through carrier-based attack and interceptor aircraft. Such uses of air power are so intimately tied to the conduct of War at Sea as to warrant assigning these forces to the service charged with sea power, the Navy. In 1947 this argument prevailed and the Navy retained control of its air arm. Naval air's continued major contributions to the Navy's primary mission capabilities have validated this decision.

A third application of air power is in support of the Land War mission. It is composed of close air support of engaged ground troops, control of the airspace over these troops, tactical and strategic airlift, interdiction, reconnaissance, and airborne assault. I believe the same logic that gave naval air to the Navy would assign the forces of this type of air power to the Army, but this was not the choice made in 1947. The new Air Force got the job. That decision did not go unchallenged, however. The Secretary of Defense issued a directive in 1956 more specifically defining service roles in air support of Land War. Most of this responsibility remained with the Air Force. The Army was permitted to continue an aviation program, provided it built only small, slow, short-range airplanes and helicopters. In 1963, the rules of this directive were being partly ignored by the Army. In 1971, the directive was cancelled. The Army nevertheless was (and is) still limited to light, propeller-driven planes and helicopters as a result of tradition and assiduous Air Force lobbying. Today the Army is attempting to cover substantial portions of this air power role with its 9,000-aircraft Army Aviation Program.<sup>2</sup> The Air Force, with its current inventory of 7,000 planes, simultaneously complements and competes with the Army.

The basic difficulty with the traditional air power mission is that it is not free standing. A major component of air power, that part called tactical air, is no more than a projection of the Land War mission into the third dimension over the extended battlefield. Nor does the Air Force exercise an exclusive claim to this airspace. Except for mines, torpedoes, and charges, all ordnance is delivered through the air. No neat and logical mechanism exists to deal with "operations in the air" and so the services have waged a succession of wasteful turf battles for new weapons and components of air power to support Land War. The problem lies in the concept that air operations are an independent mode of warfare. In retrospect, I contend that the Air Force invented in 1947 did not have its own mission, as did the Army and Navy. Instead, it was an organization built around a platform, the land-based airplane.

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**The Threat.** In addition to evolution in the assigned missions, the threat faced by our conventional forces has changed since 1947 and this, too, bears on their structure. Shortly after World War II, the United States saw Russian communism as the threat. It was a static enemy in terms of its effect on organizing, building, and positioning our armed forces. The terrain was known, the enemy order of battle was known, and the advent of US preponderance in nuclear weapons threatened a retaliation so massive that we could make just about any military structure workable. The situation is different now. The Soviet Union has a navy that is developing power projection capabilities. The 1970s and 1980s have brought wars of national liberation, an emerging Third World, greater US dependence on overseas resources, and vital US national interests in a lengthening list of nations scattered around the world. This era is a time when third party wars, surrogate wars, and religious wars have the potential of destabilizing the relationship of the two superpowers perhaps more seriously than any plausible European situation. Indeed, the ability to prevent or contain small wars bears significantly on the ability to prevent a large war with the Soviet Union.

To deal with this much-changed threat, the United States needs mobile, flexible, well-organized forces so that we can predict a favorable outcome in any unpredictable situation in any unpredicted part of the globe, whenever our vital interests are at stake. Military presence, the deterrent effect of having or being able to have military forces at the trouble spot, is now of major importance. Defense planners move carrier battle groups around and invent the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force. Yet, in my opinion, the present structure of the armed services stands in the way of fielding such units in a rapid, cohesive, and cost-effective fashion.

## **Problems**

Each of what I have defined as the distinct natural mission areas—Land War, War at Sea, and Strategic Deterrence—has its own requirements, its own body of strategy, its own contribution to national security. But the structure of the armed services does not match these natural missions:

- The Army performs part of the Land War mission and is tasked also with part of Strategic Deterrence.
- The Air Force accomplishes part of Land War and part of Strategic Deterrence.
- The Navy carries out part of Strategic Deterrence, part of Land War (sealift), and all of War at Sea.

Figure 1 represents the cluttered relationship between the natural mission areas and the existing branches of the armed services.

**Military Planning.** In two mission areas, I believe the ability to develop and implement sound, well-integrated strategic plans within the military is severely hampered by the structure-mission mismatch. No single branch of service, service staff, or individual service member stands solely responsible for overall planning for either Strategic Deterrence or Land War. For both these missions, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) or higher-level civilian bodies (Department of Defense [DOD], Congress, the Administration) must determine basic strategy, doctrine, and force structure.

But JCS-level planning has sometimes been accused of being of poor quality, frequently comprising not much more than horsetrading.<sup>3</sup> Some people recently involved with the JCS seem displeased with its functioning as a basic planning body.<sup>4</sup> The current difficulties were envisioned by President Truman in his 19 December 1945 message to Congress:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff are not a unified command. It is a committee which must depend for its success upon the voluntary cooperation of its member agencies. During the war period of extreme national danger, there was, of course, a high degree of cooperation. In peacetime the situation will be different. It must not be taken for granted that the Joint Chiefs of Staff as now constituted will be as effective in the apportionment of peacetime resources as they have been in the determination of war plans and in their execution. As national defense appropriations grow tighter, and as conflicting interests make themselves felt in major issues of policy and strategy, unanimous agreements will become more difficult to reach.<sup>5</sup>

The problem shows itself vividly in the domain of Strategic Deterrence. The targeting end of deterrence benefits from the tightest sort of planning, with the Joint Strategic Target Planning Staff assigning each existing bomb and warhead with precision. However, the acquisition planning that yields the makeup of the Strategic Deterrence forces is characterized by intense interservice competition (in earlier years for turf; now for basing emphasis, defensive versus offensive forces, and specific systems). Arguments from the individual services for a certain deterrent strategy cannot be separated from the furthering of individual service interests.

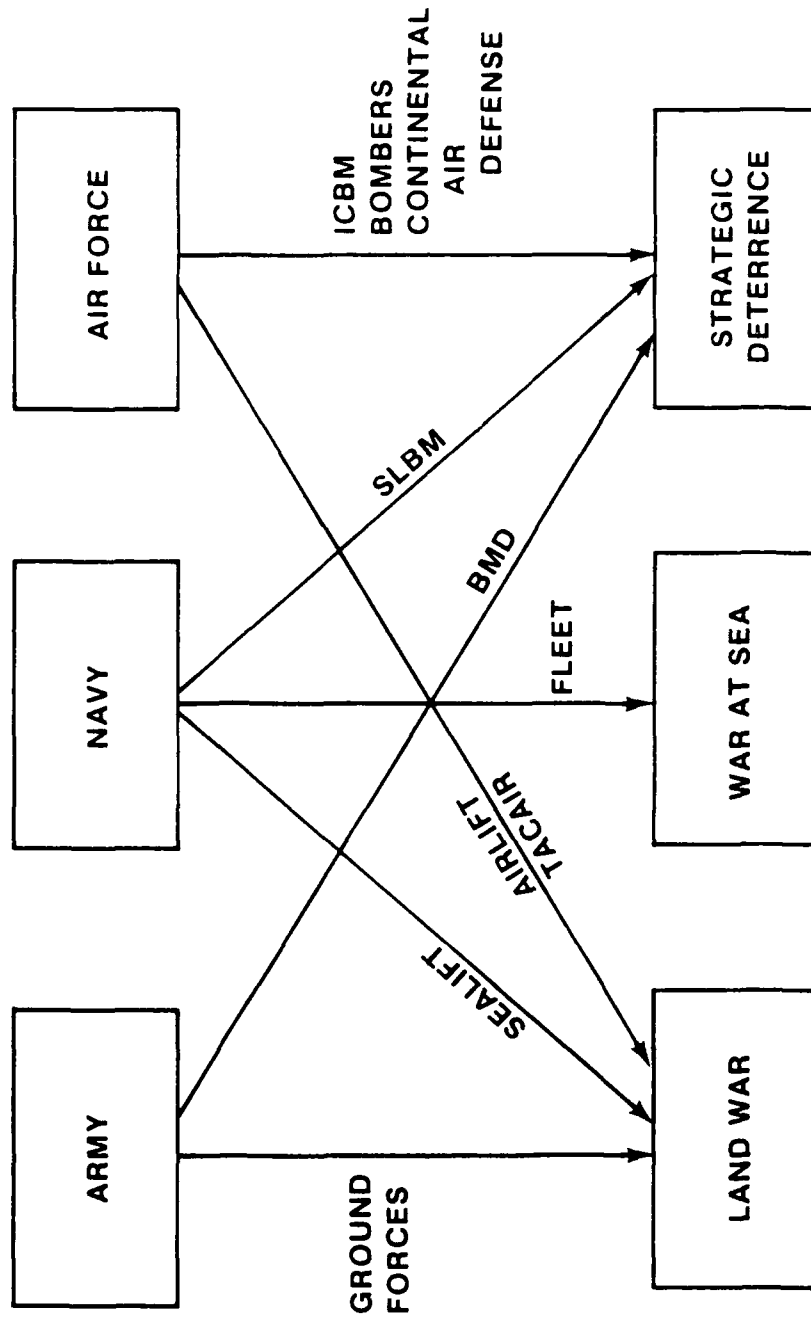


FIGURE 1: EXISTING RELATIONSHIPS OF US ARMED FORCES AND MISSIONS

## Reorganization of US Armed Forces

In Land War, I believe that the Army has been forced to adopt a suboptimal strategy by its lack of control over force development in air power and by inadequate contributions from the Air Force and Navy to meet the Army's strategic mobility requirements. I believe the Army has made choices different from those it would have made in air defense, air assault, and close air support were it in complete control of these areas. The Army has been forced to a forward-basing strategy that places active duty soldiers in garrisons around the world. (Also, since these forward-based troops constitute a commitment, that and the paucity of strategic mobility assets seriously constrain our ability to shift forces to meet unforeseen challenges.)

**Mission Tensions.** Each branch of service in the United States has roles in at least two mission areas and finds itself trying to solve portions of at least two independent problems. Within each service, individuals and organizations line up with specific missions. Thus the Army has had persons involved with ballistic missile defense in addition to those who deal with its general purpose forces. The Air Force has those who deal with Land War and those who deal with Strategic Deterrence. The Navy has its general purpose forces, its sealift managers, and its Strategic Deterrence submarines. The mission-associated entities inside each service function well internally, but at some level in each service they must come together. At this level and at all levels above it, observers find tensions in planning, funding, and, ultimately, the degree of emphasis the service should place on each of its missions.

The choices each service makes are hidden. Logic and words can be applied to any mix of choices once made visible, but the true determinants of service interest and service emphasis are concealed within the individual service organizations. Conflicts exist between the needs of the assigned natural missions within each service and choices are made within the uniformed chain of command that bear directly on the ability of each service to function in each mission area. Some of these choices, these resolutions of mission conflicts, are invisible outside the given service. Visible or hidden, choices on mission emphasis within each service are compromises of national security strategy, and reduce the capability of completing the mission.

The components of the natural missions assigned to a specific service cannot be hermetically sealed. They compete within that service for talent, management attention, and priority. A service chief devoting some attention to an alien mission—for example, BMD or SLBMs—has less to bring to bear on the service's natural mission,

## **Reorganization of US Armed Forces**

Land War or War at Sea. This is true also for subordinate persons and staff in that branch of service. That things get done with any efficiency is a credit to the individuals and the services, not the organizational structure. What I contend is a more logical structure—assigning each branch of service a single, unambiguous mission—would improve the results.

**Unity of Command.** If the forces of two services are to combine to wage war in one mission area, the command function must be deliberately and carefully fused into a single entity. In Strategic Deterrence, this unity of command is achieved at the highest level, that of the National Command Authority. The current problems in Strategic Deterrence command and control primarily reflect hardware deficiencies rather than the absence of an effective command structure.

The same is not true of Land War, and I believe that its command and control are in disarray. The degree of integration required in command and control on the modern battlefield is enormous, given high-speed, long-range, sophisticated sensors and weapons, computer management, and the requirement that the various parts of the three-dimensional battle reflect what the other parts are sensing and doing. Theater and tactical nuclear weapons tax this system even more. The problem of battlefield command and control is daunting even within a single service. I believe that the problem of combined Army-Air Force integrated command and control is probably insolvable as long as the interservice barrier exists. Each service is autonomous. Each service approaches the problem independently enough that the two systems have an oil-and-water character when mixed. The unified commander cannot hope to solve the problem on an ad hoc basis in the war zone and so effective command and control in Land War—resulting in the “integrated battlefield”—seems an elusive dream.

**Doctrine.** One would think forces that are to fight together—say the Army and the Air Force—would develop doctrine and tactics in common, would routinely train together, and would strive to develop the cohesiveness of a common fighting force.\* But what I see are two

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\*Recent efforts at addressing specific and limited aspects of joint Army-Air Force doctrine have been minor but encouraging. Under the auspices of US Readiness Command (USREDCOM), the Army's Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and the Tactical Air Command have begun to elaborate joint doctrine in specific areas. The results of these efforts, however, are neither comprehensive nor authoritative throughout the Department of Defense.

drummers, two drums, and two entirely different rhythms. The organizations occasionally exchange sheet music, or sometimes rehearse together, but the melodies—the doctrine and training and tactics—are service-specific. That the two services can function together at all results from the forces' being thrown together in the field, where they sometimes find out that their doctrine and tactics do not work as well for one as they do for the other. They throw these out and start from scratch. This happens in battle, in an impossible command and control environment. Dividing the Land War mission between two services creates an unnatural barrier to cohesiveness and integration in doctrine, training, and tactics.

Rigorous proof of these assertions is probably impossible, but the doubting reader can reflect on these four examples that demonstrate my point:

1. The development of the Army helicopter gunship force to compensate for Air Force disinterest in the close air support requirement
2. The relatively poor quality of Army-Air Force joint air-ground undertakings in Vietnam
3. The extraordinarily high degree of doctrinal and tactical cohesion of the Marine air-ground team, a single force not bedeviled by a two-service split
4. The difficulties currently being experienced in trying to bring together the Army's plans for the Integrated Battlefield with Air Force doctrine, tactics, and plans.

**Force Integration.** Force integration is a unified approach to a mission, a comprehensiveness and cohesion that runs from initial strategic conception through force structure design, force doctrine, training, and tactics, to a commandable and controllable entity in the field, one fully capable for its mission. This entity is an Army that can fight Land War. It is a Strategic Deterrent force that provides sure, yet affordable, deterrence. As suggested above, structural barriers in our present armed services make impossible the achievement of force integration in the Land War mission and Strategic Deterrence acquisition plans.

## **The Defense Budget**

In peacetime, when much of military strategy consists of fostering positive perceptions (in potential enemies, neutrals, friends, and our-

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selves) of our capability, the defense budget is a vital document. At one time Congress simply gave the services a sum of money and told them to spend it. Now, however, the defense budget specifies exactly how funds are to be spent, item by item. By its nature the defense budget now determines our military capabilities, as well as stimulating the earliest meaningful perception of trends and future posture. Peacetime military strategy is largely determined by the defense budget. I believe that since 1947 the defense budget and the forces purchased through it have become increasingly distorted, incommensurate, and poorly planned. The situation stems from two problems in the defense budget process.

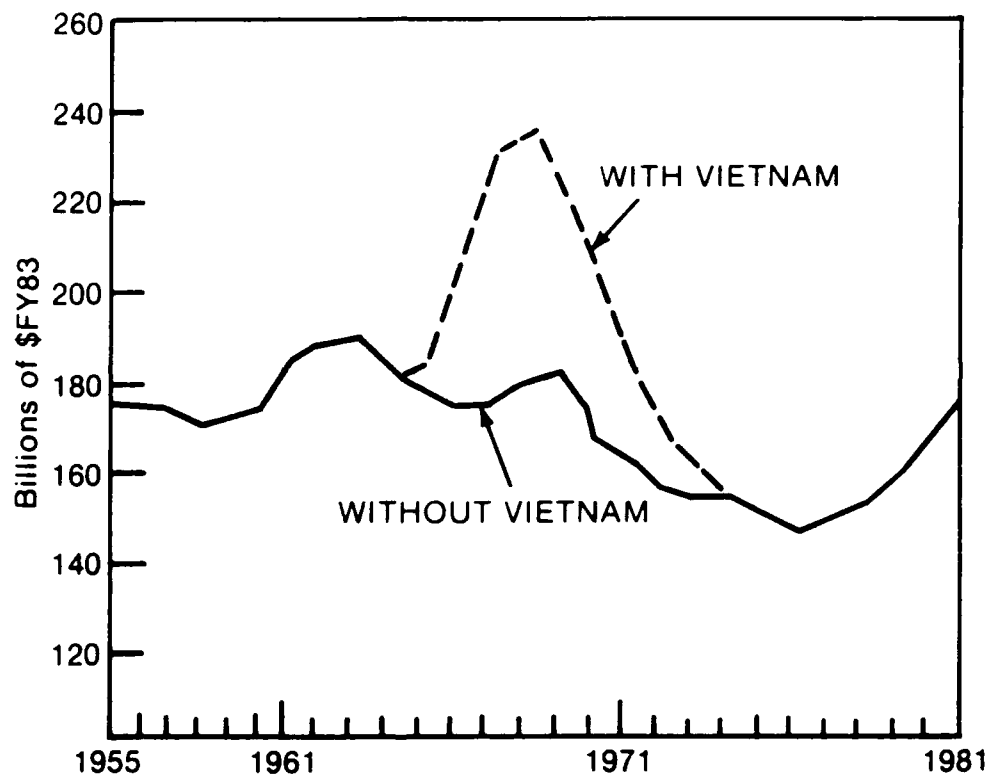
**Problem One: No Link Between DOD Budget and Strategy.** Reasonably, force structure (and budget) should follow planning. But top US leaders (military as well as civilian) have great difficulty in articulating a single strategy in the three mission areas. Planning difficulties stem, in large part, from the absence of an effective military planning body responsible for developing a cohesive strategy in each mission area and capable of directly implementing this strategy through programs, budget, and control of forces. In reality, military planning becomes the process by which force structure is bought piecemeal and then collected to be used as well as it can be. The process fails partly because the individual services do not have sole control over their missions. The two essential ingredients missing are (a) cohesive plans from the services for each mission and (b) the commitment of the individual services to strategic choices that can actually be controlled and implemented by the planners—without reference to the voluntary cooperation of another service and without competition from another mission assigned to the same service. The present military structure provides no forum for such cohesion and control. "Military plans, more than any other, must be the product of the best military judgment a nation can produce."<sup>6</sup> I do not believe that this is now the case in the United States.

**Problem Two: The Nature of the Budget.** In wartime the defense budget allocates scarcity. The level of spending is, basically, all that the nation can afford. In peacetime, the budget is much different, a political document whose nature service planners need to understand better than they do. A misunderstanding prevails which is more basic than that introduced by the complexity of the budget or the effects of inflation on time-series analysis.



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The defense budget is thought to be an expandable instrument that tallies the cost of important defense programs, each of which is included because of a defense need. In fact, peacetime defense spending in constant dollars has remained at roughly the same level for the past two decades. With adjustment for the Vietnam war, defense spending is seen to fluctuate within a quite narrow band from year to year. Figure 2 shows defense spending in constant dollars in recent years.



Source: Adapted from: Report of Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger, to the Congress, on the FY 1983 Budget (Wash, D.C.: GPO, 8 Feb 82)

**FIGURE 2: US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE OUTLAYS  
(FY 1955-1981)**

## **Reorganization of US Armed Forces**

The factors that I see as determining defense budget size are nearly all external:

- inflation
- interest rates
- balance of payments
- desire to balance national budget
- pump priming
- national mood
- administration foreign policy
- administration economic policy
- administration domestic policy
- personalities in Congress
- congressional committee composition
- current events

Often, the increased funding in an upswing goes to pay for previously deferred requirements or to replace drawdowns from earlier years. Defense planners must recognize that domestic spending needs have considerable weight in the budgeting process and that both domestic and military needs must be balanced. The amount of money allocated to defense is pushed upward by the accretion of desirable defense programs and at the same time constrained by pressures on the overall budget and the competition of domestic programs.

Assuming the amount of money available for military purposes is basically fixed, money spent on one program is at the expense of money spent on other programs. More Strategic Deterrence would prey on conventional forces; hardware-buying, on training. The issue then is not whether an individual budget item is needed and useful, but whether it is the best use of that money.

Even if the quality of military planning is better than many authorities believe, the acquisition plans always seem to cost more than will be available to fund them. Oil shocks, inflation, cost overruns, technical problems, contract flaws, the practice of "buying in"—these and many other factors are cited as reasons that the funding is insufficient for the plans. A more fundamental statement of the problem can be found in the Joint Strategic Planning Document (JSPD) (and its

predecessors), which documents year after year that the current strategy is underfunded; it is always underfunded, since by definition the JSPD is a fiscally unconstrained document used to base decisions for the budget. When budgetary reality imposes itself plans are killed outright or squeezed slowly to death and the strategy must adapt.

The disconnection between strategy and budget is a primary cause of oft-discussed difficulties in weapon system acquisition. In accommodating the funding competition noted above, each service finds itself pressed to forward its own solutions to mission needs and to seek funding for top-of-the-line systems. These are the natural outcomes of a situation in which the individual services are neither tasked to develop an entire funding profile to respond to a mission's needs nor constrained to a given dollar amount in their development of long-range plans.

Furthermore, I believe the services are pressured to buy as much as possible. Lower cost alternatives in some areas might better fit an overall mission-funding profile, but incentives under the existing system lie with the expensive option. The system must be changed so that the incentives lie with buying the best mission strategy overall, not—as at present—with buying the best parts to fit a strategy that ultimately will not exist.

### **A New Military Organization**

For the United States to get as much defense as it pays for, I believe the organization of the armed forces must correspond to what I have defined as the three natural missions that exist today. The nation needs one service organized, trained, and equipped to conduct Land War; a second service organized, trained, and equipped to conduct War at Sea; and a third service organized, trained, and equipped to provide Strategic Deterrence.

The new Army would be made up of existing Army forces, the tactical air elements of the current Air Force, and all strategic mobility forces, both sealift and airlift. This new Army would thus have responsibility for the entire Land War mission, controlling all components of the Land War forces.

The new Navy would retain responsibility for War at Sea and would be composed as it is today, minus its small sealift force and its missile submarines. It would retain amphibious lift, the nature of amphibious operations requiring a degree of integration with sea control forces that can occur only within a single service. The Navy would continue to be responsible for providing safe conduct for Army

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sealift units. The Marine Corps would continue in its present role, forces, and relationship to the Navy.

The third branch of service would be called the Strategic Deterrence Force. Assigned to it would be all elements of Strategic Deterrence, namely:

- intercontinental ballistic missiles
- manned bombers
- ballistic missile submarines
- continental air defense
- ballistic missile defense
- strategic command, control, communications, and intelligence (C<sup>3</sup>I) (including strategic space assets).

Figure 3 shows the way the services and missions would relate. This structure includes no separate Air Force. The same personnel and equipment would be doing the same jobs, but now as integral parts of an Army in prosecution of Land War and as primary components of the new Strategic Deterrence Force.

Under this proposed new military structure, the organizational and bureaucratic forces would operate to reduce or eliminate most of the current problems, rather than to intensify them:

- In Land War and in Strategic Deterrence, the responsible services could develop cohesive strategies, whereas now this is practically impossible.
- To do this, the Army would have to integrate expertise in tactical air capabilities with its sound knowledge of traditional land forces. It would also have to develop a well-thought-out set of plans to balance the costs, needs, and importance of land, tactical air, and strategic mobility forces against a fairly constant sum representing the share of the constant defense budget allocated to the Land War mission. These are challenging tasks, but they would carry with them the promise of greatly enhanced Land War capability.
- The new Strategic Deterrence Force would bring together all US military knowledge and skill in this field in a noncompetitive manner for the first time. From the former Air Force and submarine force officers could come an informed strategy not committed to the solutions of the past.

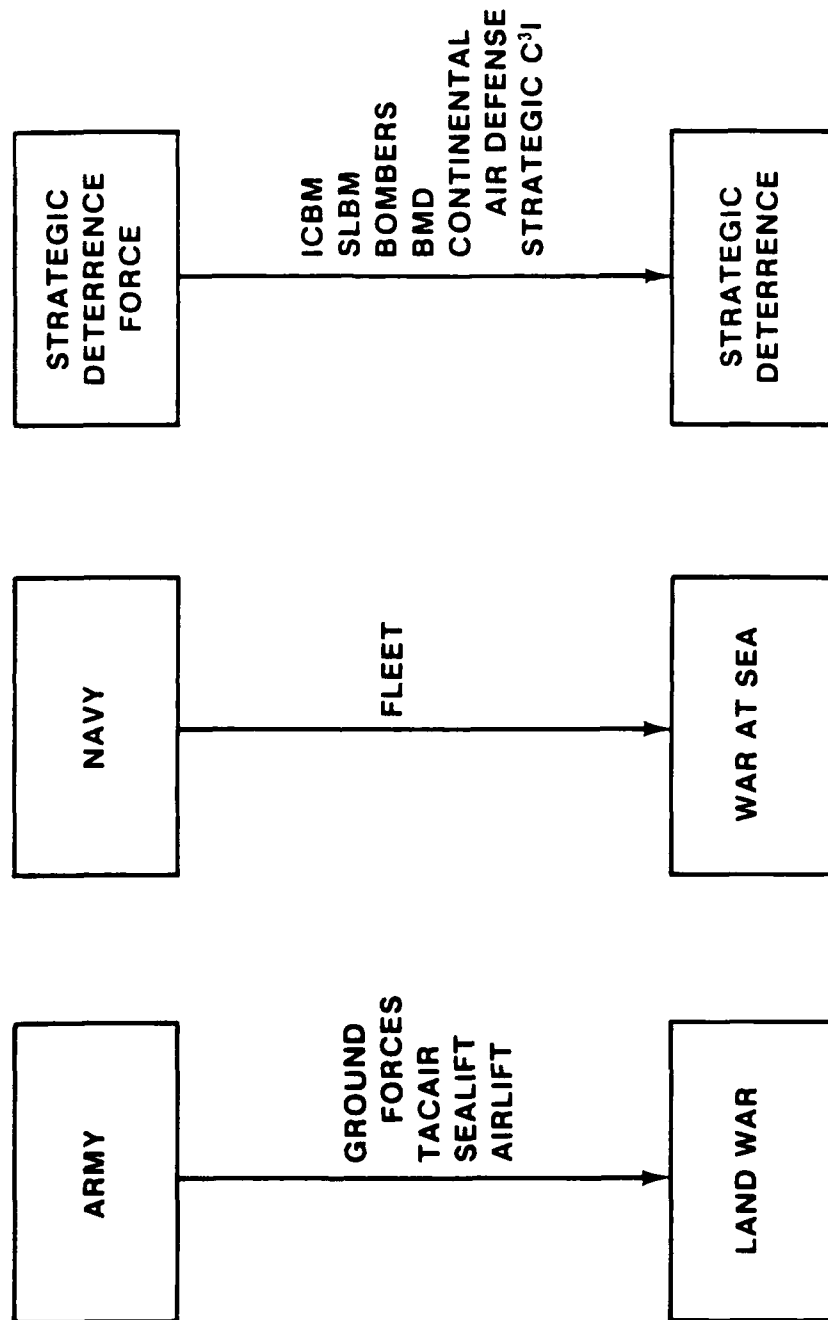


FIGURE 3: PROPOSED RELATIONSHIPS OF US ARMED FORCES AND MISSIONS

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- The new Navy could approach its traditional role without the internal competition from Strategic Deterrence submarines and without a nagging sense that it was ignoring sealift, which would be the Army's responsibility.
- Land War command and control issues would become solvable inside the Army chain of command. The exercise of authority would replace two-service coordination and plans for cooperation, which are now the only approach. What I see to be an important advantage would be the elimination of essentially all need for unified commands in Land War, these being replaced by commands from the single Land War service, the Army.
- In addition to being superior to the current organizations in their inherent simplicity, the new single-service replacements for unified commands would provide something missing now: effective feedback into the service planning and budgeting processes.
- Land War doctrine and tactics would issue from a single source. integrated training would be the normal mode.
- Effective force integration for the Land War mission would follow naturally from reorganization.
- Effective integration at the strategy and planning stages of the Strategic Deterrence mission would follow naturally from reorganization.
- Service competition would occur at the mission level. Competition for emphasis on Strategic Deterrence forces versus conventional forces and for Land War versus maritime strategy would be visible and clear-cut.
- Decisions made in these competitions would translate directly into the share of the defense budget assigned to each service, with deemphasis on individual programs and stronger focus on the bottom line of the budget for each service. With such forces operating, the incentives would lie with frugality and careful planning.
- With role competition between services eliminated, a service could not win funds from another service through trying to accomplish the same role in its own way. Program funding decisions would relate directly to mission emphasis.
- Each service would exercise complete responsibility for all elements of its mission, from planning through budget, acquisi-

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tion, and employment. The individual services would become fighting forces, not just service bureaus.

Creation of the Strategic Deterrence Force in the proposed new structure could raise questions about nuclear weapons control, theater nuclear forces, and the level of release authority for nuclear weapons. How would the new structure affect existing policy? Nothing inherent in the proposed structure requires any change in existing national policy or procedures regarding the use and control of nuclear weapons. Tactical nuclear weapons would remain in the custody of the Army and the Navy, and strategic nuclear weapons in the custody of the Strategic Deterrence Force. Release authority for both would reside in the National Command Authorities.

Another matter to address is how to incorporate future technology (e.g., space) into the proposed military structure. The issue is especially pertinent in view of technology's role in making obsolete the 1947 structure. Two answers suggest themselves. First, future technology should be assigned as a function of end use. The rule is simple: Responsibility for a new technology system goes to the service that will use that particular system to prosecute its mission. The possibility of two services' developing similar systems in parallel is acceptable, especially in light of recent history's lesson that commonality is not the cost-saver once thought nor is it even necessarily achievable.

The second answer is that technology is one of three factors which, if changed significantly, might necessitate further change in the structure of the military. The other two factors are the nature of the threat and the domestic determinants of defense policy. Domestic determinants include national will, financial resources, and the political forces operating within the nation. Technological breakthroughs, important changes in the threat, or major modifications in the domestic determinants of national defense policy would require review of the military structure and could force another reorganization. The proposed new organization is not timeless; it is merely the one that best suits the current situation and that of the foreseeable future.

On the question of systems that have a dual capability, the case of the submarine-based Tomahawk missile in its nuclear land-attack configuration is instructive. The United States plans to arm some number of attack submarines with such missiles to provide a survivable strategic nuclear reserve. Under the proposed reorganization, the question is whether such submarines should be part of the Navy or the Strategic Deterrence Force. The answer, I think, hinges on whether these submarines will be operated as strategic or general purpose

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assets. If their patrol mode is to be that of the strategic missile submarine, with their attack submarine capabilities secondary and subordinate to the strategic role (as in all present strategic missile submarines, which have torpedo weapon systems), the new submarines should be part of the Strategic Deterrence Force. If the submarines' operations are to be of the traditional attack submarine type, with their land-attack cruise missiles not determining patrol area and mode, then the boats should be part of the Navy. The issue refers to the rule that responsibility goes to the service that will use the system—in this case the submarine—to prosecute its mission.

The disruptions and stresses that such a reorganization would cause are not trivial matters. I believe the need for reorganization is so compelling, however, that it overrides this consideration. The new structure I propose is organized around the mission needs of the battlefield, not the bureaucratic needs of Washington.

Some observers see little merit in an organizational solution to any problem. The situation here is different; the organization *is* the problem. It must change now, in peacetime. In weighing the decision, US policymakers should heed the words spoken in 1952 by Secretary of Defense Robert A. Lovett: "A reorganization . . . would be no more painful than backing into a buzz saw, but I believe that it is long overdue."<sup>7</sup>



## ENDNOTES

1. Office of the Secretary of Defense, Historical Office. *The Department of Defense Documents on Establishment and Organization 1944-1978* (Washington: US Department of Defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Historical Office, 1979). This volume is an invaluable reference collection of the documents that describe the establishment and development of the organization of the Department of Defense.
2. Gregg Esterbrook, "All Aboard Air Oblivion," *Washington Monthly*, September 1981, p. 15.
3. *The Department of Defense Documents on Establishment and Organization 1944-1978*, pp. 119-121.
4. Nonattributable comments by recent Chiefs and by current members of Congress and staff directly involved with the armed services bear this out. Two supporting writings on the subject are Maxwell Taylor's book, *The Uncertain Trumpet*, and the volume 2, number 1 issue of *AEI Foreign Policy and Defense Review*, 1980, composed of articles on the Joint Chiefs of Staff by John G. Kester and James L. Holloway III.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
7. *The Department of Defense Documents on Establishment and Organization 1944-1978*, p. 124.

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