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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**



**“When Sentiment Gives Way to Common Sense”
The Emergent Joint Training Culture within U.S. Military”**

By

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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16 May 2006

Abstract

“When Sentiment Gives Way to Common Sense: The Emergent Joint Training Culture within U.S. Military”

During World War II, George C. Marshall commented that “Sentiment must give way to common sense”¹ to address his concern that service traditions can get in the way of doing what needs to be done to make our military the most effective fighting force. Operations in the “Long War” demonstrate that U.S. forces need greater interoperability at every echelon to conduct fully integrated joint operations. This paper examines the United States military’s shift in two decades from a service-specific to a joint operations mindset. It examines how the convergence of three factors: the operational necessities of the “Long War”, a generational change in attitudes within the military Services about joint training, and institutional and statutory changes mandating greater joint training are providing momentum to an emergent joint training culture in the U.S. military. The paper stipulates that this culture is overcoming entrenched service cultures and politics. As a result, more joint training is producing a force capable of greater interoperability and integration than our current force.

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“We prepare and train for war just as we fight, that is jointly. We cannot expose the individuals of our military forces for the first time in combat what they have not been able to rigorously prepare for in training.”

*Dr. Paul Mayberry
Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Readiness
Naval Post Graduate School, March 2002*

Introduction

Operations in the “Long War” demonstrate that U.S. forces need greater interoperability at every echelon to conduct fully integrated joint operations. In Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere, Army and Marine forces fight together, often leading or supporting one another while Air Force, Navy and Marine aircraft conduct air operations as a single air arm. The military Services and JFCOM must address the challenges of conducting joint training at the tactical and the operational level of war, in other words, joint training at echelon. An emergent joint training mindset is picking up momentum because of the convergence of three principal factors: the operational necessities of the “Long War”, a generational change in attitudes within the military Services about joint training, and institutional and statutory changes mandating greater joint training. These factors are overcoming entrenched service cultures and politics and are permanently changing how the U.S. military trains and fights as a joint force.

Necessities of the Security Environment

The events of September 11, 2001, dramatically changed the security environment. New asymmetric threats required the U.S. military to change training processes to address an increasing need to integrate operational forces. In the 2002 and 2006 National Security Strategies, President Bush stated that America is engaged in a war on terror, and he

expounded on the challenges facing America throughout the world to win the war. In the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review Report (QDR), Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld equally described the 21st Century as “an era characterized by uncertainty and surprise.”² The Department of Defense (DOD) shifted from a peacetime tempo to a wartime sense of urgency set on changing the military to address the new norm of unpredictability and multiple complex challenges. DOD began to transform the U.S. military into “an adaptive, fully-equipped and fully-manned force, using capabilities-based planning and integrated approaches to conduct mobile, expeditionary operations to accomplish of our national security objectives.”³

Two decades after the enactment of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, the U.S. military is unable to provide fully integrated and interoperable fighting forces to its warfighting commanders. Though many senior civilian and military leaders state that we must “train as we fight”, the United States military does not. For most of the last twenty years, changes in joint training occurred incrementally. *Operation Just Cause* was the first full test of Goldwater-Nichols in a combat situation and set precedents for joint operations in *Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm*, but these conflicts took place too close to the enactment of the law to fully incorporate the mandated changes.

The post-Cold War strategic environment provided the military with new challenges worsened by the downsizing of the force in the early 1990's. Military operations other than war (MOOTW) in Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo required the coordination of service capabilities but not major integration. Joint operational headquarters were needed to conduct this coordination between U.S. forces within the context of a multinational operation. To this

end, Atlantic Command (ACOM) assumed the responsibilities as the joint force provider, integrator and trainer in 1993. ACOM focused on training and providing mission-ready joint task force headquarters to the combatant commanders. However, the responsibility of providing mission-ready forces remained a Service Title 10 responsibility and the Services conducted little joint tactical training.

While the U.S. military recognized the need for more joint tactical training in the late 1990's, the accomplishments of United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM) forces during *Operation Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan increased the tempo of change within the rest of the military. In Afghanistan, fully integrated and interoperable joint special operations forces assisted the indigenous Northern Alliance to bring down the Taliban regime. SOCOM's soldiers, airmen, and sailors seamlessly exercised their service capabilities to accomplish what skeptics claimed could not be accomplished without a much larger force. Senior DOD leaders viewed this synergistic application of capabilities in a joint operation as an example for the rest of the military. They hastened the pace of organizational and training transformation to achieve SOCOM's demonstrated level of integration and interoperability.

The current security environment is the primary factor in developing a joint training mindset within the military. Veterans of the "Long War" understand that integrating Service capabilities is necessary to support the joint warfighter. In his article "*Joint Professionals: Here Today, Here to Stay*" Michael Coss credits today's warriors with realizing that "combining service capabilities maximizes their total capacity, reinforcing their effects while minimizing their relative vulnerabilities."⁴ Examples of effective joint operations abound in Iraq and Afghanistan. During Operation Phantom Fury in November 2004, the 1st Marine

Regiment had operational control of two Army mechanized infantry battalions, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry and 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry, which provided the regiment greater firepower for the assault on Fallujah, Iraq. Embedded within these organizations were Air Force Tactical Air Control Parties which directed Air Force, Navy and Marine strike aircraft against enemy targets.

In Afghanistan, the employment of joint ground forces continues to capitalize on the capabilities of each service. In 2005, Army LTC Terry Seller's, 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry was under the operational control (OPCON) of the 6th Marine Regiment and later the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), Special Operations Capable (SOC). Necessity forced these Marines and Soldiers to address integration and interoperability issues while engaged in combat operations. "For our missions, we ... received additional USMC assets: Corpsmen, a US Navy Demolitions Team, US Navy HET Team, additional USMC communications personnel to augment my Tactical Operations Center (TAC) and a few logistics personnel for initial cross training of my Support Platoon personnel. USMC units had to understand our logistical operations and needs as well as our missions and priorities. Likewise to support the MEU redeployment, we supported them in the same manner. Color of uniform or insignia meant little in that environment."⁵

Quick integration of capabilities requires people who understand its necessity and are comfortable with the resulting interdependence. This understanding and comfort are best developed *before* execution of joint operations through joint training at echelon, in other words, the echelon (tactical or operational) at which the integration takes place on the battlefield. A lack of pre-deployment training involving elements of different Services results in adhoc exchanges of personnel and equipment, *during operations*, to address

integration and interoperability shortfalls. These actions take time and can threaten the accomplishment of assigned tasks and missions. Tactical commanders, like LTC Sellers and his Marine superiors, have overcome these challenges through cooperation and force of will.

Many military leaders across the services recognize that the current strategic environment requires a change in how we train. They do not want future leaders to undergo the communication and coordination challenges experienced by them on the battlefield. Their experiences are contributing to the change in attitudes towards joint training at echelon. Across the military establishment, there is a palpable atmosphere of change and a reallocation of resources to make joint training at echelon possible. This change in mindset is causing a reassessment of military Service training responsibilities and resulting in greater collaboration to achieve interoperability between units of similar functional capabilities.

One example of this collaboration was the development of the joint terminal attack controllers (JTAC) certification process after the contentious debate initiated by MG Hagenbeck, the 10th Mountain Division Commander, pertaining to the effectiveness of close air support during *Operation Anaconda* in Afghanistan⁶. The Army and the Air Force promoted an initiative in 2003 designed to enhance joint air-ground integration by standardizing the certification and qualification process for JTACs. This initiative provided a common capability across the services. It resulted in the publication of Joint Publication (JP) 3.09.3 Tactics, Techniques and Procedures (TTP) for Close Air Support, which codified the requirements for personnel directing the actions of combat aircraft conducting close air support (CAS). The “Long War” has provided operational commanders more influence pertaining to what gets trained. The result has been a greater focus on concerns for synergy rather than the Services’ focus on specialization.⁷

Though joint training at echelon is a trend, there are tremendous challenges to making it common practice. In his article “*How Joint Are We and Can We be Better*”, Lieutenant Colonel Chuck Harrison points out that joint tactical training currently requires commanders to seek out their own training opportunities with sister service units. Training often depends on the relationship between units and the organic resources they can afford to commit to the training. Higher level stakeholders are not providing training directives and resources to make joint tactical training possible. Harrison points out that resource constraints such as inadequate homestation training venues (training areas and ranges) also thwart joint training at echelon by relinquishing it to major exercises and combat training center (CTC) rotations. Such events seldom focus on joint tactical training and do not occur often enough to enhance familiarity and interoperability between units. These challenges make joint training at echelon difficult and too easy to subordinate to service-specific training.

Many espouse the idea that joint tactical training problems could easily be corrected by assigning forces to the regional combatant commanders who are responsible for warfighting. This solution is myopic because it places a premium on regional perspectives over global perspectives in priorities setting. *Operation Enduring Freedom* serves as a telling example of this concern. Few senior planners at the Pentagon in 1995 envisioned the United States conducting major military operations in Afghanistan in 2001, yet that is exactly what happened. For this reason, it is important to train forces which can quickly transition to operations anywhere in the world against different adversaries, bringing to bear the capabilities needed to accomplish the mission.

A Culture of Change

The existence of an environment conducive to change is as important as recognizing the need for change. A cadre of joint specialty officers, at the mid and senior levels of the military provides such an environment. The implementation of the Joint Officer Personnel Policy mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 produced a new generation of senior leaders less prone to parochialism and the self-interest cultures of the military services. Goldwater-Nichols placed a premium on joint education and joint duty assignments. By mandating promotion policy objectives, joint education requirements, joint duty assignment tour lengths, and procedures for monitoring careers of joint specialty officers, the law ensured the military services placed quality officers in joint assignments. Congress ensured the Department of Defense executed its mandate by requiring the Secretary of Defense to provide an annual report to Congress from 1987 through 1991 on the implementation of the provisions of the Joint Officer Personnel Policy in the Act.⁸ Across the Services, a generation of highly qualified mid-career officers and senior military officers underwent the new education and duty assignment requirements of the law.

More importantly, Goldwater-Nichols changed the culture of the military by codifying the preeminence of joint assignments. The law changed the military establishment by empowering joint commanders and staffs, *the operational commands*. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Staff and the Combatant Commanders all received greater responsibilities and authorities. Prior to the law, many thought that joint duty assignments were not career enhancing. In the mid-1980s, Marine Corps General George Crist, then Commander in Chief of Central Command (CENTCOM), testified to Congress that there had not been a single volunteer for any of the thousand billets on the CENTCOM staff—all of

them joint billets. Everyone had been forced to serve there.⁹ Michael Coss' article points out that Goldwater-Nichols worked because it incentivized officers to serve in joint billets. First, the law caused officers to compete for joint assignments because they brought more status than service staff assignments. Secondly, officers preferred joint assignments because their operational focus was more appealing than service staff assignments. Lastly, joint assignments were required to achieve general or flag rank. Each of these factors led to the development of a joint specialty officer population which rose to leadership positions at the tactical, operational and strategic levels of each of the military services. Officers with joint experience possessed a broader perspective on military matters. They looked beyond their service niche to espouse new ideas to maximize joint warfighting capabilities by leveraging the capabilities of other services to optimize the contribution of their own.

Current American senior military leaders are more responsive to the concepts of joint interoperability and less parochial than their predecessors. While not devoid of service-interests, leaders in today's military understand and acknowledge the inherent need for interoperability and integration to conduct the joint fight. Forged by the Goldwater-Nichols Joint Officer Personnel Policy requirements, they serve as a testament to the objectives of the law. Each of the flag officers that comprise the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the flag officers on the Service general staffs served in joint assignments and underwent joint professional military education prior to their selection to flag officer rank. The result is a corporate culture inside the Pentagon and at the major service commands which is more willing to advocate joint training initiatives at the expense of some service equities.

As the Army Chief of Staff during World War II, General George C. Marshall stated that "*sentiment must give way to common sense*"¹⁰ while addressing his concern that service

traditions can get in the way of doing what needs to be done to make our military a more effective fighting force. Recently, the U.S. Army reduced and realigned its air defense and field artillery units based on a holistic review of the capabilities of sister Services. The Army determined that Air Force and Navy capabilities to protect the force and provide the joint fires mitigated these Army force structure changes. In turn, these force modernization decisions placed greater demands on joint air-ground integration training as the Army became more dependent on its sister services for fires.

The military Services have undertaken similar training initiatives in an attempt to standardize and ensure interoperability. The 2005 Base Closure and Realignment Commission incorporated many of these initiatives such as the consolidation of Army and Air Force transportation management training at the Army's Fort Lee, Virginia facilities.¹¹

The advocacy of these initiatives by senior leaders demonstrates a shift in thinking, a joint culture, which is permeating throughout the military ranks. More servicemen embrace the joint warfighter moniker and strive to make their Service more relevant to the joint fight. Within this environment, increases in joint tactical training are feasible to enhance overall interoperability and integration of the total force.

Providing a Sound Structure

"Sound structure will permit the release of energies and of imagination now unduly constrained by the existing arrangements."

-- Former Defense Secretary Jim Schlesinger(1983)

Though the post-9/11 security environment demanded changes in training methodologies and an expanding joint culture advocated greater joint training, the military lacked the organizational structure to promote joint training across the services. Not until 2004, did institutional changes make Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) solely responsible for

joint training, integration and interoperability. It marked the next iterative step in fulfilling the vision of the architects of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation.

Operation Desert Storm demonstrated to then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Colin L. Powell, the shortcomings in integration and interoperability between the military Services. The United States military needed an executive agent with the authority and resources to accomplish the institutional changes required to meet the joint training goals of Goldwater-Nichols. General Powell lobbied for a single, U.S.-based unified command to be responsible for training forces from all services for joint operations.¹² In 1993, President Clinton signed a new Unified Command Plan which gave Atlantic Command (ACOM) combatant command over forces from all four Services and the mission of joint force provider for the other Combatant Commands (COCOMs).

Because of its regional and functional missions, ACOM was understaffed to address every aspect of the joint training problem. As a result, the command focused on joint training at the operational level of war and made great headway training joint task force commanders and staffs for the myriad of stability operation conducted in the 1990's. The publication of Joint Vision 2010 by the Office of the Joint Chief of Staff (OCJCS) in 1996 provided ACOM a "conceptual template"¹³ of future joint warfighting from which to structure its training programs and initiatives. In 1999, the command changed its name to Joint Forces Command to emphasize its unified command functional responsibilities, and the OCJCS updated Joint Vision 2010 to Joint Visions 2020 to emphasize the goal of creating a joint force capable of "full spectrum dominance."¹⁴ As JFCOM entered the new millennium, it lacked a clear mandate from DOD to overcome joint training obstacles.

The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review identified training as the key enabler in achieving the goals of the overarching transformation of DOD. It resulted in the publication of the “Strategic Plan for Transforming DOD Training” in March 2002. This document called for a Training Transformation (T2) to provide capabilities-based training for U.S. military forces in support of national security requirements. It clearly stated that military training must support the mission requirements of the COCOMs, the customers.¹⁵ The strategic plan unequivocally placed more emphasis on joint training while restating the responsibility of the Services to train on their core competencies. This document provided JFCOM the mandate it needed while the resulting June 2004 “Department of Defense Training Transformation Implementation Plan” defined processes and programs to execute joint training at echelon across the force.

With a DOD mandate and a DOD written implementation plan, JFCOM relinquished its regional mission and became the primary conventional force provider for the regional COCOMs in 2004. It became singularly responsible for developing joint warfighting capabilities through joint training and solutions, as well as delivering joint forces and capabilities to warfighting commanders. To facilitate the transformation of the military services into joint capable forces, the 2004 Unified Command Plan (UCP) assigned nearly all continental U.S. (CONUS) based military forces to JFCOM.¹⁶

These major institutional changes placed the JFCOM commander in a position to influence joint training across the services. His joint staff singularly focused on joint training, integration and interoperability issues based on the warfighting needs of the regional COCOMs. Colonel Bryan K. Stephens, USJFCOM’S deputy director for joint training, stated that “the services are the absolute best at what they do to fulfill Title 10

responsibilities...”, but he acknowledged that the challenge lay in transforming training to ensure more integration and interoperability among the services so that forces deploy into a theater of operations with fewer obstacles and less time devoted to training for specific operations.¹⁷ Wielding the COCOM authority provided to him by Goldwater-Nichols, the JFCOM commander wrote joint training policy directives, provided joint training venues and resources, and certified the joint capabilities of the units in his subordinate service components. The institutional changes mandated by the T2 strategy and implementation plan provided unity of command and effort to joint training across the force by making JFCOM its executive agent.

As DOD’s joint training executive agent, JFCOM synchronizes resources from throughout DOD (time, people and equipment) to conduct joint training at echelon. The Joint Worldwide Joint Training Conference, co-chaired with the Joint Staff J7, provides a process to resource COCOM joint training exercises with forces relevant to each COCOM’s warfighting requirements. It also strikes a balance between regional and global perspectives pertaining to joint force training priorities. JFCOM’s certification requirements integrate best-practice service training methodologies, provide a common standard and increase inter-service dialogue pertaining to functional training requirements. Training initiatives, such as the Joint National Training Capability (JNTC), clearly demonstrate the progress made by JFCOM towards addressing the challenges of integration and interoperability of joint forces prior their employment. These are but some examples of JFCOM activities that provide focus, direction and momentum to the institutionalization of joint training in the U.S. military.

The Impact of the 2005 BRAC

Prior BRAC analyses considered all functions on a service-by-service basis and, therefore, did not result in the joint examination of functions that cross services. While some unique functions may exist, those functions that are common across the services must be analyzed on a joint basis.

-- Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (2002)

By taking effect, the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission recommendations move the Services towards more joint training. Like the Goldwater-Nichols legislation, the BRAC law's implications have an enduring impact on DOD processes. The BRAC law made it difficult for politicians to protect their self-interests by requiring Congress to adopt a joint resolution of disapproval to reject the commission's recommendations. Failure by Congress to do so meant that the 2005 BRAC commission recommendations automatically took effect.¹⁸ Knowing this from the onset, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld focused the 2005 Base Realignment Commission (BRAC) round on military force transformation thus overcoming political advocacy for service-specific interest.

Within the context of transformation, the 2005 BRAC provided the Secretary of Defense an opportunity to promote jointness.¹⁹ Unlike previous rounds, he chartered six Joint Cross-Service Groups (JCSGs) which conducted an examination of functions that cross the Services. One of the six was the Education and Training (E&T) JCSG. Each Service, the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Staff composed the E&T JCSG which was chaired by the Principal Deputy under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. This JCSG focused its analysis on the potential of cross-service, joint, and transformational opportunities in four functional areas: flight training, professional development education, range and collective training capabilities, and specialized skill training.²⁰

The E&T JCSG assessment strategies inherently promoted the joint principles of interoperability and integration. Its nine approved recommendations sought training collaboration, consolidation of functional training and the leveraging of world-class training capabilities. Actions like the establishment of a Joint Center for Consolidated Transportation Management moved the Air Force's Transportation Management training to Fort Lee, Virginia, to leverage the Army's transportation training resources while preserving service-unique cultures. Another recommendation created a Center of Excellence for Religious Education which established joint officer and enlisted specialized skills training. Its flight training initiative cut across all of the E&T JCSG's strategies. DOD made Eglin Air Force Base, Florida; a joint training site to teach Air Force, Navy and Marine entry-level aviators and maintenance technicians how to safely operate and maintain the F-35, Joint Strike Fighter (JSF). Promoting these initiatives outside the BRAC process would have been impossible because of political lobbies whose interests run counter to them. Because of the BRAC process, each initiative will occur. These initiatives promote greater functional interaction and dialogue between the Services at a tactical level. They increase understanding which facilitates interoperability and integration and enhance the joint capabilities of the total force.

Conclusion

“The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, imposed a powerful sense of urgency to transforming the Department of Defense.”²¹ DOD Transformation sought to provide operational commanders with the most capable fighting force to address the security challenges of the 21st Century. Currently, the force is composite yet capable of synergy in

execution. While not fully interoperable or capable of seamless integration, the U.S. military is getting better because it is conducting more joint training at echelon.

The convergence of critical factors has precipitated a permanent joint training mindset within the U.S. military. The events of 9/11 and the resulting security environment convinced policy makers and the military of the need for more joint training. At the same time, the first generation of fully post-Goldwater-Nichols senior military leaders provides an environment conducive to assimilation of training methodologies throughout the force. Likewise, the decision to make a single, U.S.-based unified command responsible for training forces from all services for joint operations provided the institutional mechanism to execute training transformation (T2). Lastly, statutory mandates reallocated resources to increase joint training opportunities by overcoming bureaucratic and political obstacles.

Though the United States military must accomplish a lot to become a truly joint-capable force, the conditions are set to move forward with changes which will accomplish the task. Throughout the military, there is a realization that it is imperative for sentiment to give way to common sense if it is to transform into an adaptive force, capable of employing integrated approaches to defeat our current and future adversaries.

ENDNOTES

¹William K. Brehm, “On Revolutions, Barriers, and Common Sense” in *The Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act: A Ten-Year Retrospective*, ed. Dennis J. Quinn (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1999), 48.

² Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: 2006), vi.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Michael A. Coss, “Joint Professionals: Here Today, Here to Stay” in *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 38 (3rd Quarter, 2005): 94.

⁵ Terry L. Sellers, terry.sellers@nwc.navy.mil “Info for Your Paper.” [E-mail to Jose Robles jose.robles@nwc.navy.mil], 10 May 2006.

⁶ Franklin L. Hagenbeck, “Afghanistan: Fire Support for Operation Anaconda,” in *Field Artillery* (September-October 2002): 5-9.

⁷ . Dennis J. Quinn, ed., *The Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act: A Ten-Year Retrospective*, (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1999), xii.

⁸ Public Law 99-433, *Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act, Title IV*, (1986)

⁹ James R. Locher III, “Has it Worked? The Goldwater-Nichols Reorganization Act,” in *Naval War College Review* 54 (Autumn 2001): 4.

¹⁰ Brehm, *On Revolutions, Barriers, and Common Sense*, 48.

¹¹ Department of Defense, Education and Training Joint Cross-Service Group (E&T JCSG), *Base Closure and Realignment Report, Volume VI*, (Washington, DC: 2005), 181.

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¹⁴ Joint Chief of Staff, *Joint Vision 2020*, (Washington, DC, June 2000), 1.

¹⁵ Department of Defense, “*Strategic Plan for Transforming DOD Training*,” (Washington, DC: 2002), ES-1

¹⁶ “About Us.” *Joint Forces Command*, <<http://www.jfcom.mil/about/about1.htm>> [8 May 2006].

¹⁷ Ron Schafer, “Training Transformation Prepares Forces for a Joint Future,” *JFCOM Newlink*. 20 June 2003. <<http://www.jfcom.mil/newslink/storyarchive/2003/pa062003.htm>> [8 May 2006]

¹⁸ Christopher M. Davis, “Fast Track Congressional Consideration of Recommendations of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission,” *Library of Congress* (Washington, DC: 2005), 1.

¹⁹ E&T JCSG, *Base Closure and Realignment Report*, 2005, iii.

²⁰ *ibid*, 321.

²¹ *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, 2006, vi.

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