

Why Goldwater-Nichols Didn't Go Far Enough

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The Secretary and Chairman visiting CINCCENT.

DOD (Helene C. Sirkkel)

While the statutory role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) was expanded and strengthened by the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, Congress failed to provide him the wherewithal to do the job in four key areas all relating directly to joint readiness. Congress must address this oversight by amending the current law. Part

of this amendment must clarify the wording of the Chairman's duties to better focus his efforts. This is not a matter of trivial definitions. In fact, the exact meaning of words in Goldwater-Nichols was what set the stage for much of the confusion that has followed. These issues are very complex. This article may well raise more questions than it answers. As established by Goldwater-Nichols, the expanded, interrelated CJCS functions include:

- ▼ developing doctrine for the joint employment of the Armed Forces
- ▼ performing net assessments to determine the capabilities of the Armed Forces
- ▼ formulating policies for joint training
- ▼ establishing and maintaining a uniform system of evaluating preparedness.¹

One knowledgeable observer, William Odom, has suggested that the Chairman should have "unrestricted authority in the joint exercise program."² The result, according to Odom, would be a vastly improved vehicle to develop joint doctrine. His underlying assumption is that better joint doctrine will improve joint readiness, an implied CJCS task. Exercises represent one of the best

Summary

The Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act strengthened the role of the Chairman with one hand and weakened it with the other by failing to provide adequate resources in four crucial areas. CJCS is charged with developing joint doctrine but is so understaffed and underfunded that doctrinal development must be passed to the services, which seem unable to handle it. Further, the Chairman must assess service capabilities, yet a more rigorous *evaluation* is needed. Joint training also poses a dilemma: the services train forces for joint operations, but no one has responsibility for training CINCs and their staffs to use those forces. Finally, the Joint Staff evaluates *preparedness* (readiness) under a *uniform system* that is not up to the job. Among the answers to such problems are inviting retired CINCs to rate active ones, enhancing exercise evaluations, enacting legislation to bolster the doctrine process, and lifting the manpower cap on the Joint Staff.

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means to improve readiness. While the Joint Chiefs have a large exercise budget, most of their funding underwrites the costs of moving personnel and equipment.

The Joint Warfighting Center (JWFC) is chartered to be the focal point for joint doctrine, assessment, and training issues. JWFC works for the Chairman through the Director, Operational Plans and Interoperability (J-7), Joint Staff. Unfortunately its vast mission must be accomplished with extremely limited resources. The JWFC mission reads:

*Assist the CJCS, CINCs, and service chiefs in their preparation for joint and multinational operations in the conceptualization, development, and assessment of current and future joint doctrine and in the accomplishment of joint and multinational training and exercises.*³

The key term is *assist*. What JWFC does is neither authoritative nor evaluative in nature. The staff routinely observes joint exercises as well as real-world crises. In turn, they recommend actions on doctrine and training which may be ignored. Perhaps the circum-spect mission statement with its focus on assistance reflects the fact that, although strengthened by Goldwater-Nichols, the Chairman is still not in the chain of command.

According to a member of JWFC:

*We generally don't write doctrine. Currently, the services write most of it and sometimes I think they are the greatest impediment to a genuine joint doctrine development process. If the services don't like a particular piece of joint doctrine they can and do make it die.*⁴

Is this what Congress intended in enacting Goldwater-Nichols, or did they want CJCS to exercise a greater role? As one observer stated: "The requirement to write joint doctrine was superimposed over existing institutions that previously had little

emphasis on joint doctrine."⁵ Those institutions, the services, are not suited to write joint doctrine.

JWFC is working with a contractor to develop a command post exercise (CPX) program to assess CINCs' staffs. According to one player:

*The CINC will assign standards to the task and conditions identified. When the CINC wants his staff exercised and assessed he will select his areas of focus. The JWFC will provide the CINC feedback by way of an after action review.*⁶

JWFC foresees CINCs funding the deployment of JWFC personnel to conduct CPXs for CINCs' staffs and joint task force (JTF) commanders and their staffs. The JWFC program model under development uses the Army's Battle Command Training Program (BCTP). Although JWFC finds the model laudable, it lacks an evaluation; thus their method of implementation would be radically different. Moreover, no opportunities exist for training and evaluating CINCs with their staffs. Nor is a program to accomplish this goal envisioned, though one is needed. Aside from the reasons already stated, evaluations provide better input to doctrinal development.

Developing Doctrine

Among the plethora of problems confronting the Chairman, developing joint doctrine is one of the thorniest. Joint Pub 1-02 defines joint doctrine as "Fundamental principles that guide the employment of forces of two or more services in coordinated action toward a common objective."⁷ Joint doctrine is the foundation for effective joint training and therefore the basis of joint readiness. But Goldwater-Nichols made CJCS responsible for joint doctrinal development without providing the resources. This compelled the Chairman to subcontract the writing of most joint doctrine to the services—not a good idea. Not only does this prolong the time needed to publish doctrine, it is unlikely that a service can write high quality joint doctrine. Service parochialism is often too powerful, and the service agencies charged with preparing joint doctrine may lack joint experience. "The assignment of joint doctrine writing responsibilities, which often become an additional duty, is based on personnel availability instead of experience and ability.

Goldwater-Nichols made CJCS responsible for joint doctrinal development without providing the resources

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U.S. Navy (Steve Miller)

Rangers aboard USS George Washington.

The poor quality of many of the initial drafts produced so far reflects this situation.”⁸

Writing joint doctrine is too important to be relegated to the services. The overwhelming success of Operation Desert Storm has been credited in part to provisions of Goldwater-Nichols. General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, USA, was able to integrate his joint and combined forces and synchronize their activities to devastating effect against the forces of Saddam Hussein. This was no accident. Joint warfare works and its basis is joint doctrine. CJCS needs dedicated personnel and funding for the critical task of writing and evaluating this doctrine.

Given the necessary wherewithal, how does one develop and improve joint doctrine? An excellent source would be a data base developed from evaluations of actual joint CPXs.

Net Assessment

Congress tasked the Chairman to perform net assessments of military capabilities. This is no small matter. Congress may use such findings to determine future service roles and missions, fund weapons programs, or decide what personnel programs to support. The assessments would also influence joint doctrinal development. But what exactly is net assessment?

Assess is synonymous with *estimate*. Why did Congress mandate that CJCS provide just an estimate of capabilities? An assessment is obviously based upon a judgment absent better data. *Net* in this context could be synonymous with *gist*. A net assessment, in other words, merely means providing the gist of an estimate. Was this the actual intent of Congress? By contrast, one definition of *evaluation* is to determine by careful appraisal and study. If more information could be made available through a JCS-funded joint mobile training group (JMTG), one sufficiently manned to provide a genuine evaluation as opposed to a net assessment, why shouldn't we create one? The ultimate result would be to improve joint readiness. This point is significant given the continuing downsizing of the Armed Forces. As the services grow smaller and we attempt to do more, better, with less, improved readiness will be increasingly important.

According to a faculty member at the Armed Forces Staff College, net assessment in this context means “a total estimate of the warfighting capabilities of the services.”⁹ Is this accurate? Clearly there is disagreement on a precise definition of the term.

Regardless, why did Congress direct the Chairman to perform net assessments? It seems unlikely that the services would conduct rigorous evaluations of commanders, staffs, and units, yet CJCS is only tasked to perform net assessments on the most senior joint leaders and their staffs. Perhaps, since Goldwater-Nichols was passed in the Reagan era when defense budgets were large, the focus was on quantity rather than quality. This seeming contradiction might also have resulted from the Chairman being out of the chain of command. Obviously, the Secretary of Defense is in that chain and can conduct evaluations.

Another approach is to have CJCS administer a careful and thoroughgoing analysis (evaluation) *for the Secretary*. The mechanism for providing such an analysis is now unavailable; but creating a team of officers exclusively dedicated to conducting and evaluating CPXs would provide the answer. Obviously, joint readiness is the result of

various factors. The most important is quality training. Unfortunately, there are problems there as well.

Policy for Training

The authors collectively have over fifty years of service and, in our experience, we have never encountered a command that has failed a major joint field training or command post exercise. Are our forces that good? Are exercises that easy? Are assessments overly generous? The last possibility is probably closest to the truth. It is not enough for the Chairman to simply formulate policies as required by Goldwater-Nichols. JCS-run CPXs would make much better vehicles for evaluating joint readiness.

There seems to be no unanimity in arriving at a definition of joint readiness. As one source has stated, "The Joint Staff is currently attempting to define joint readiness."¹⁰ For purposes of this discussion, it is the integration of ready forces and synchronization of

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their activities to achieve mission accomplishment. How does one evaluate or assess integration and synchronization? Is mission accomplishment the sole criterion for success in a

field or command post exercise? Joint doctrine certainly must provide a base of knowledge on which to build evaluations. Congressional choice of the word *evaluate* in the context of preparedness suggests more careful study is required. Preparedness and readiness are synonymous.

The problem is substantial. The services train individuals and units for combatant CINCs. But who trains CINCs and their staffs to integrate and synchronize the ready forces provided by the services? Nobody. CINCs are responsible for their commands, but criteria for evaluating joint preparedness are undefined. Each CINC has ideas on what is vital. Currently, the unwritten evaluation criteria seem to be mainly derived from professional estimates by CINCs and CJCS, flag officers who must regularly report to the Secretary of Defense and Congress on prepared-

ness. Many times their reports rely heavily on anecdotal evidence.

The Joint Staff must "accomplish evaluation by monitoring, observing, analyzing, and assessing joint activities."¹¹ The paramount J-7 evaluation vehicles are real-world operations and JCS/CINC-sponsored exercises. By its own admission J-7 only conducts an evaluative sampling. Their staff simply is not large enough to do a thorough job. To carry out this sampling, J-7 sends observers to real-world crises and major joint exercises even though evaluation criteria are undefined. Obviously, more needs to be done in this area, but what?

Other than looking to the newly formed JWFC for answers, the creation of a JMTG warrants further consideration. Such a group, based on the Army's BCTP model, could run CPXs for CINCs. The BCTP staff relies heavily on computer simulation and high quality senior personnel. However, to be valuable a program must be able to be taken to combatant CINCs and JTF commanders. Establishing a JMTG would no doubt require significant staffing and a flag officer to administer the program.

In this regard taking stock of the BCTP's mission statement is instructive:

*Conducts realistic, stressful training for Army corps and division commanders and their battle staffs. Serves as a data source for the improvement of: doctrine, training, leader development, organizations, materiel, and soldiers.*¹²

This is not a circumspect statement. It has teeth. The Army's leadership is genuinely challenged in BCTP by realistic and stressful training that confronts them and their battle staffs with a skilled opposing force commander and a free-play scenario.



A-10, FA-18, and F-16
over northern Italy.

Combat Camera Imagery (Jamie Bowman)



USS Lamore County and a Coast Guard vessel during Agile Provider '94



Marines loading vehicles at Cap-Haïtien.

U.S. Marine Corps (P.S. Royston)

U.S. Navy (Alexander C. Hicks, Jr.)

As the primary military advisor to the National Command Authorities, the Chairman must have the most current, objective, and comprehensive information on the warfighting readiness of all CINCs. He will not get this information through JWFC as it is currently tasked, manned, and organized. Congress would have to raise personnel authorization and funding levels for JMTG to become a reality. Potential taskings for this group would include:

- ▼ writing exercise scenarios based on the CINC's OPLANs, CONPLANs, and contingency operations
- ▼ in coordination with CINCs, recommending to CJCS which tasks to evaluate
- ▼ developing criteria based on the Joint Mission Essential Task List (JMETL) for evaluation teams (tasks, conditions, and standards)
- ▼ running exercises for CINCs and JTF commanders and performing evaluations
- ▼ reporting joint doctrine-based evaluation results to CINCs and CJCS.

Obviously, the most important goal of a JMTG would be to improve readiness.

Evaluating Preparedness

The Joint Staff administers a uniform system to evaluate preparedness. Although uniform, the criteria are unfortunately general. In reality the uniform system has no teeth. One definition of preparedness is a state of adequate preparation in case of war. The term *adequate* is important. Is adequate preparation the goal Congress had in mind for the Armed Forces, or should the goal be more demanding? Certainly congressional funding of adequate preparedness would be less costly than a more stringent criterion.

One synonym for adequate is *sufficient*. What is sufficient in terms of joint preparedness is anyone's guess and would appear to be more a result of budget in-fighting between the executive branch and Congress than careful study. Regardless, establishing a JMTG capable of conducting and evaluating joint CPXs is a first logical step in developing more precise criteria for determining the preparedness of CINCs, JTF commanders, and their respective staffs. Without such criteria, determining the proper level of preparedness will remain contentious and largely unresolvable.

These are two elements almost impossible to duplicate in joint exercises involving troops.

There are significant differences between the proposed JMTG approach and JWFC. The former must be JCS-administered, manned, and funded, and provide for evaluations which respond to priorities set by the Secretary of Defense as well as those of CINCs. Evaluation is a better standard than assessment. Again, the current thinking at JWFC is that CINCs can fund future JWFC CPXs on an optional basis. If CINCs fund such JWFC exercises, then assessments results will stay within the domains of the respective CINCs. Nobody likes to air dirty linen in public.

only former CINCs possess the credibility to evaluate a current CINC's joint preparedness

To evaluate preparedness the Chairman must create a uniform system. A JMTG would be one way of genuinely achieving that end. But here again there is a problem, one of credibility. Although CJCS has the requisite stature to conduct evaluations, he simply lacks the time. Aside from him only former CINCs possess the credibility to evaluate a current CINC's joint preparedness.

It makes sense to call on retired CINCs to perform this function. While flag officers from any service could administer a JMTG, write scenarios, conduct CPXs, and evaluate elements of a CINC's staff, only former CINCs could be credible chief evaluators of currently serving CINCs. Retired CINCs should have few axes to grind and could be counted on to be objective and candid with CINCs, CJCS, the Secretary of Defense, and Congress. A JMTG also would emulate the BCTP methodology, using retired flag officers to evaluate and mentor division and corps commanders. The same kind of program can work with CINCs as well.

General Carl W. Stiner, USA (Ret.), the former Commander in Chief of Special Operations Command, stated that a JMETL is a logical point of departure for developing criteria to evaluate the readiness of a CINC. But JMETLs must be translated into general joint staff tasks, conditions, and standards, as defined in the Universal Joint Task List (MCM-147-93), to be evaluated—all of which has yet to be accomplished. Establishing a JMTG would be a major step in that direction.

Our analysis suggests that the Chairman cannot fully perform his functions as mandated by the Goldwater-Nichols Act in the areas of doctrine, assessments, and preparedness (readiness) due to personnel and funding shortages. Formulating policies for joint training and creating a uniform system to evaluate preparedness is not sufficient. CJCS must conduct and evaluate the training of CINCs and their staffs to offer the best possible advice to the Secretary of Defense, President, and Congress. Funding these programs and raising the personnel cap on the Joint Staff are necessary if Congress is serious about fully

implementing Goldwater-Nichols. The terminology in that act must also be revised. Net assessments are not enough; evaluations set a higher standard. A JMTG composed of officers from all services, under CJCS direction and guidance, would be a far better approach than the one envisioned by JWFC. Using former CINCs as chief evaluators for a JMTG would provide credibility.

Students attending the Armed Forces Staff College are taught that future conflicts will be fought jointly. As the services grow smaller, it is all the more critical to stress joint readiness as a combat multiplier. One of the best means of improving joint readiness would be the creation of a JMTG. It is time to get serious about training and evaluating combatant CINCs, JTF commanders, and their respective staffs as well as writing joint doctrine and developing a rigorous system of determining preparedness. The greatest challenges to shaping the Armed Forces into a true joint warfighting body lie ahead. **JFQ**

NOTES

¹ U.S. Congress, Public Law 99-433, Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, Section 201.

² William E. Odom, *America's Military Revolution* (Washington: The American University Press, 1993), p. 139.

³ Joint Warfighting Center, command briefing, May 1, 1994.

⁴ CDR Kent Kieselbach, USN, Joint Warfighting Center, Norfolk, Virginia, May 9, 1994.

⁵ Robert A. Doughty, "Reforming the Joint Doctrine Process," *Parameters*, vol. 22, no. 3 (Autumn 1992), p. 47.

⁶ Telephonic interview with Lt Col Robert J. Fleming, USAF, Joint Warfighting Center, Norfolk, Virginia, May 11, 1994.

⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Pub 1-02, *Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1991).

⁸ William F. Furr, "Joint Doctrine," *Airpower Journal*, vol. 5, no. 3 (Fall 1991), p. 39.

⁹ Personal interview with Robert H. Clegg, Armed Forces Staff College, May 23, 1994.

¹⁰ Telephonic interview with CDR Michael J. Vitale, USN, Joint Doctrine Division (J-7), Joint Staff, May 11, 1994.

¹¹ Joint Warfighting Center, command briefing, p. 1.

¹² U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Battle Command Training Program Booklet, Fort Leavenworth, Kans., January 13, 1994, p. 1.