

JOINT SERVICE: PLANS AND OPERATIONS

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by  
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In the first battalion to which I was assigned after my commissioning, some 36 years ago, the 2d Battalion, 325th Infantry of the 82d Airborne Division, one of the more senior captains was Bob Shoemaker, whose name may be vaguely familiar to some present. Bob, then commanding Company E, 2/325, taught me by example much that I subsequently came to value highly about commanding airborne troops. In later years, when he was in command here and I was Director of Training at Tradoc, I visited Fort Hood. I am sure he would not remember the visit, but I will never forget it, because he taught me on that occasion an important lesson about the difficulties of joint operations. My returning here, on this occasion, to address the announced subject, bring his ideas back to their origins, I hope as much to your advantage as they have been to mine.

During the past three years, a great deal of controversy has surrounded proposals to revamp the way the Department of Defense is organized and managed. The Military Reform Caucus in the Congress did much to promote the debate, but General David Jones, USAF, once Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff --a man, incidentally, who served longer as a four-star general than did I from brigadier through four-star-- probably deserves first mention among those who brought about this latest attempt to concert more surely the contributions of the top leaders of our military profession, and of their civilian masters. Changes there will surely be this year, but it remains to be seen whether President Reagan will be more successful in bringing about new clarity and breadth of vision, and more unity and coherence in formulating national military strategy than were Presidents Eisenhower, Truman, or Theodore Roosevelt.

I do not wish to discuss the range of issues which caused the latest of the periodic attempts to reorder organization charts and procedures for the Department of Defense. I believe we could all agree that, whatever the outcome of the current reorganization, America's defense establishment will continue to evolve, and that probably another Blue Ribbon Commission, and certainly another President and another Congress will have to deal with those issues once more.

Rather, I want to comment on a directly related subject which is, unless I miss my guess, of much more immediate interest to this audience: joint operations, the planning and executing of military

officer's promotion would be controlled by the National Staff.<sup>1</sup>

The last statement is footnoted as follows:

**They would probably, though not necessarily, return to the service from whence they came. But their fitness report during their tour of field duty would be written by the National Defense Staff, not the service.<sup>2</sup>**

Fellow professionals: given the gravity of the charges leveled at us by the Military Reformers, we have a right to expect more serious diagnosis and prescription.

The obvious consequence of abolishing unified commands is retrogression to the military department "executive agents" which were the major target of President Eisenhower's 1958 reform. I see no need to recycle that experience, for I agree with what the President said in his message to Congress in April 1958:

**..separate ground, sea, and air warfare is gone forever. If ever again we should be involved in war, we will fight it with all elements, with all services, in one single concerted effort. Peacetime preparatory and organizational activity must conform to this fact. Strategic and tactical planning must be completely unified, combat forces organized into unified commands, each equipped with the most efficient weapons systems that science can develop, singly led and prepared to fight as one regardless of service...**

I recognize that there will be occasions when it makes sense to use units of one service for a particular operation, and that the Navy and Marine Corps have a special relationship and admirable readiness upon which any CINC should capitalize for projecting force ashore from the sea. But in this year of 1986, unification has evolved to the point that all such operations would be planned and executed within the "joint system," under one of the unified commands. The evident ability of the United States to muster all the depth and flexibility of the several services assure any operation of back-up power and sustainability, and enhances deterrence, especially vis-a-vis the U.S.S.R. Joint operations can leverage the power of participating service components, and a joint command, properly led and staffed, is a force-multiplier. In a dangerous world, with adversaries who outnumber our forces, and who are in many instances as well armed, our warriors, our country, needs such advantages.

As for establishing a new service named National Defense Staff, that seems to me a dubious way to bring about the "one single concerted effort" which Eisenhower sought. I am quite sure that most officers who have served as commander-in-chief of a unified command would much prefer to be advised, and to have directives acted upon,

<sup>1</sup>Hart, Gary, with Lind, William S., America Can Win: The Case For Military Reform, Adler & Adler, Bethesda, Md., 1986, p.217.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 282.

by a staff composed of service practitioners rather than staff specialists.

There are quite contrary views. Recently I watched Senator Hart on television agree with Brian Gumble that the failure of seven F-111 crews to pickle their bombs over downtown Tripoli was symptomatic of irresolute leadership and incompetence throughout the services, not just in the Air Force units from Lakenheath. You and I understand, of course, the collateral damage strictures bearing on those crews. But evidently the Senator has been led to believe that operational performance would have been materially improved had the squadron been led by a lieutenant colonel from the National Defense Staff, perhaps an infantry officer of admirable character, wearing on his coveralls a carmine stripe denoting his complete mastery, during three rigorous academic years at Leavenworth and Maxwell, of Sun Tzu, Frederick the Great, Clausewitz, and the gospels according to Steve Canby, Chuck Spinney, Pierre Sprey and John Boyd. But note that, in any event, Senator Hart would have the National Defense Staff determine whether his performance was adequate or otherwise, not Colonel Sam Westbrook at Lakenheath, or any other USAFE commander, or even USCINCEUR. Ladies and gentlemen, I do not purport to understand whether such notions add up to good politics. I can only report that I consider them military nonsense.

However, let me be quick to add that I agree with Senator Hart's objectives: he wants more defense for the dollar, and I am convinced that we can and should provide for same. Moreover, I strongly concur with his proposal that the individual service staffs should be forbidden to involve themselves in most war-fighting issues, and that force employment should be guided, on behalf of the Secretary of Defense, by the Chairman and the JCS, their Staff, and the Commanders-in-Chief of the combatant commands.<sup>3</sup> Surely what is needed now is to strengthen the "joint system" --the Chairman, the Joint Staff, and the unified and specified commanders-- at the expense of the military departments, to evolve further toward the "truly unified commands" sought by President Eisenhower. Obviously, I support the recommendations of the Packard Commission to that end, and I admire the provisions of the bills now before Congress which have that effect.

Let me see if I can direct your own analyses of these issues by posing two questions:

First, should you consider loyalty to a service an outmoded idea?

Second, if being a "service practitioner" is what is important, should you seek joint service outside the Army?

Of course, I now will give you my own answers, but to do so, I will have to go back to my beginnings.

The year 1950 witnessed one of those events in the cosmos of

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 218.

rank of the most senior leaders within the

the American military profession which caused a shower of stars decades afterward. Just as the USMA Class of 1915 produced an unusual number of the generals of World War II, the USMA Class of 1950, I am told, went on to earn more stars than any class since 1915. Its contributions to the "joint system" were significant, including Charley Gabriel, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, John Wickham, Chief of Staff of the Army, Generals Volney Warner and Wally Nutting who served as Commanders-in-Chief of the U.S. Readiness Command, Benny Davis as CINC of the Strategic Air Command, and myself as USCINCSO.

What we were then taught about the value we should attach to our chosen service is, it seems to me, what you should be taught today. I still have among my books one of our texts on that subject, a slim blue hardback entitled The Armed Forces Officer, a manual on leadership first published in November, 1950, under the signature of George Marshall, then Secretary of Defense. The Armed Forces Officer had as its principal author Brigadier General S.L.A. Marshall, the Army's combat historian of World War II, Korea, and Viet Nam. SLAM Marshall figured in a number of updates and rewrites of the book until he died. As far as I know, there have been no editions since the late '70's. That's regrettable.

Incidentally, The Armed Forces Officer was reissued in 1956 as Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-2, when Maxwell D. Taylor was Chief of Staff of the Army, and Dwight David Eisenhower was in the White House. General Eisenhower, you know, told the cadets at West Point in 1945 that there should be but one service. Nonetheless, as President, he signed into law the bill authorizing establishment of ~~this~~ Academy in April, 1954, and in his memoir, he wrote in 1965 that:

I have always believed that a nation's defense would be most efficiently conducted by a single administrative service, comprising elements of land, sea, and air. I did not (and do not) join those who insist that a system of "checks and balances" among services contributes to the nation's security. Successful defense cannot be conducted under a debating society...

However, I well recognized that the feeling of the individual soldier, sailor, marine, or airman for his own service was very real, that much of his morale was based on service loyalty. Therefore, a complete amalgamation of the services in 1958, I felt, would be unwise and extreme...<sup>4</sup>

David Packard, Chairman of the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on Defense Management, has interpreted the mission of our panel as fulfilling Ike's objectives. Several weeks ago, General Paul Xavier Kelly, United States Marine Corps --year-group 1950, by the way-- appeared before the Commission to provide his advice on what it

<sup>4</sup> Eisenhower, Dwight D., Waging Peace, Doubleday, New York, 1965, pp.248-249.

should aim to achieve. Dave Packard told him that we wanted to bring about what Eisenhower could not in 1958. P.X. was ready: he had brought his copy of the little blue book with him, and, by way of reply to Mr. Packard, read the following passage from the Armed Forces Officer:

Toward services other than his own, any officer is expected to have both a comradely feeling and an imaginative interest. Any Army officer is a better man for having studied the works of Admiral Mahan and familiarized himself with the modern Navy from first-hand experience. Those who lead sea-going forces can enlarge upon their own capacities by knowing more, rather than less, about the nature of the air and ground establishments. The submariner can always learn something useful to his own work by mingling with airmen; the airman becomes a better officer as he grows in qualified knowledge of ground and sea fighting.

But the fact remains that the services are not alike, that no wit of man can make them alike, and that the retention by each of its separate character, customs and confidence is essential to the conserving of our national military power. Unification has not altered this basic proposition. The first requirement of a unified establishment is moral soundness in each of the integral parts, without which there can be no soundness at all. And on the question of fundamental loyalty, the officer who loves every other service just as much as his own will have just as much active virtue as the man who loves other women as much as his own wife.

The beginning of wisdom for understanding joint operations, then, is an appreciation of the profound differences among the services of which Marshall wrote, distinguishing characteristics which are often functional and benign, and cannot and should not be dismissed. I have commented before that these hallmarks are so ingrained as to warrant the appellation culture --a corpus of ideas, suppositions, traditions, customs, prejudices, and obstinacies, as well as language and costume <sup>5</sup>. The frequently mentioned "purple suiter" exists as surely as the unicorn, and I, for one, find the descriptor offensive.

The differences among the services may be plainly perceived by comparing four three-star commanders: a Vice Admiral, USN, commanding a numbered fleet; a Lieutenant General, USAF, commanding a numbered air force; a Lieutenant General, USMC, commanding an amphibious force; and a Lieutenant General, USA, commanding a corps. There is an order of magnitude difference among the numbers of independent elements subordinate to each: the admiral would have within his command something like one hundred entities maneuvering under single intelligences --submarines, ships, flights, single aircraft. The Air Force commander would have something like one thousand such entities. The Marine three-star would have perhaps ten thousand, and

<sup>5</sup> E.g., "Genuine Jointness: Cross-cultural Aspects of Airspace Management," MITRE Corporation, Proceedings of the Battlefield Airspace Symposium, September, 1982.

the Army corps commander, upwards of one hundred thousand. Both the fleet and the Air Force commander would dispose of fighting elements under command of officers; their Marine and Army counterparts would perforce rely on more junior, less well educated and trained leaders in the small detachments of their forces. The commanders of the fleet and of the Air Force would know with some precision where their elements were from moment to moment, and would be able to talk directly to them, or otherwise alter their orders at will. The Marine and his Army counterpart would probably neither know where all their elements were with certainty, nor possess the means to order them about except through a hierarchy of subordinates.

These distinctions are, of course, a function of the environment within which each command must operate: the naval and air forces within the homogenous and extensive hydrosphere and atmosphere, the Marines and soldiers amid the disparate, confining and confusing clutter of the surface of the earth. Together with the numbers I have cited, these dictate very different attitudes toward planning and operations among the commanders concerned.

By and large the air and naval commanders would be alike in that they would be relatively unconcerned about employment, that is, how or where battles might occur, in that their forces would be practiced to deal with an adversary in one part of their domains as readily as another. Both can afford to plan without much regard for tactics, which are a make-it-up-as-you-go-along matter safely left to subordinates. To be sure, the naval commander would have to be concerned with the status of his elements, but generally speaking, of the four, he would have the greatest strategic independence and tactical flexibility. The Air Force commander would have a higher concern than the admiral for deployment --with all that connotes for enroute sustainment and protection of the force, overflight rights, and access to key facilities-- and for bed-down, or basing for the force during operations.

In contrast, both the Marine and his Army colleague would have to plan in detail all aspects of deployment and employment, to calculate carefully how to deal not only with the enemy, but also with the terrain, the weather, the civil population, and the logistic infrastructure of the area in which they intended to operate. They would be less able, once committed, to improvise a major deviation from these plans. The Marine, were he to execute an amphibious landing, would have to see to it that his ships were loaded so that men and materiel were available for landing in the proper sequence. Were the corps the senior Army headquarters involved, its commander would have to shoulder most of the burden of planning and providing for seaport throughput and overland logistic support for forces of all services within the theater of operations.

Concerning logistics, both naval and air forces prefer to operate from secure bases remote from combat, and to employ factory-like techniques for replenishment and maintenance. The forces on land must plan to resupply and repair within easy reach of their foe, and to do so with a much more decentralized, cottage-industry organizations.

Even service doctrine or fighting concepts tend to have different meanings to each commander. For the admiral and the commander of the Air Force, these center on how to exploit the capabilities of their several weapon systems. For the Marine and the soldier, doctrine has to encompass materiel, but then go beyond to provide within their dispersed forces and decentralized command and control apparatus an effective concensus on how to operate together to defeat the enemy, and to cope with terrain, weather, and other uncertainties.

But it is important to remember that these pairings I have identified fly in the face of history: despite the fact that the Navy and Air Force commanders have a great deal in common, as do the Marine and Army commanders, the maritime services, both in the Department of the Navy, have a long tradition of cooperation, and they practice continuously at making it work despite adversity. By the same token, there are strong bonds between the Army and the Air Force rooted in their common heritage, and in their common need to prepare for joint air-land battles of the future.

In recent years there has been a striking growth in the amount of interdependence among the services, reflected in critical dependencies of one unified or specified command upon others. In any joint operation, the more demanding the mission, the more important these dependencies become. Think of a deployment to Southwest Asia: neither the Marines or the Army could get there without MAC, and forces from all services would have to count heavily upon a sea line of communications. Or think of Tripoli. You were probably as disturbed as was I with the continuous coverage in the visual media of the position of our aircraft carriers, and the repetitive speculation on the time of strike. In the event, CINCEUR achieved the requisite operational surprize by using entirely unanticipated forces, and by striking in the dead of night. These dependencies can be strength.

I find, however, that there is a canard which even those of us who should know better often repeat: the charge that the "joint system" causes the services to vie one with another to participate in any contingency operation, so that everyone has a "piece of the action." I had lunch last week with two retired Army generals, both of whom asserted that F-111s were superfluous to the Tripoli operation, their participation an attempt to attract for the Air Force a bit of the favorable publicity accorded naval air for its earlier forays against the Libyans. I tell you what I told them: certainly the carriers could have struck unaided, but they could not have attacked so swiftly, widely, ~~precisely~~, and devastatingly, and the hazards for all involved would have risen proportionate to the amount of time available for the Libyans to react. In this case, I think a joint operation was solidly indicated, and that far from carping and nit-picking criticism, I think USCINCEUR, USNAVEUR and USAFE deserve high praise for a difficult assignment well executed.

Of course, joint operations are more difficult than single-service operations. They are therefore often more risky, and

a well-chosen  
potentially more costly. They may violate the principle of Simplicity to achieve Surprise, exert Mass, exploit Maneuver, or insure achievement of Objective. But they will assuredly be more efficacious if well planned, and if the forces involved are well trained. Incidentally, it is not enough for participants to be ready or proficient in a general sense: most joint contingency plans address operations which are highly situational, and which demand rehearsal of the specific cooperative interactions among the service components of the joint task force. A long-standing contingency plan requires frequent update and re-rehearsal, especially if it involves maritime units, which often rotate. One hears a lot these days about "C<sup>3</sup>"; the commander of a joint operation must plan for "C<sup>4</sup>": command, control, communications, and culture. Intelligence --relevant, timely, frequently refreshed and re-analyzed information-- is crucial for joint planning. The authority who can plan the C<sup>4</sup>I most cogently and train most appropriately for such joint operations is a regional CINC.

It is the hubris of Washington, and it afflicts civilian leaders as powerfully as military men, that our capital is the repository of available wisdom on all problems on the national agenda. It is fostered by the concentration in Washington of technical and analytical centers for the several intelligence agencies, and the nodes for the stovepipe communications from our Embassies abroad. It leads to attempts to plan and conduct joint operations from the Pentagon, and it leads to ignoring and bypassing the combatant commands and their CINCs. But I know from experience how mistaken it is, for while there may be in the Washington area much information, that information is all too rarely transformed into intelligence, that is, sifted and situated between the ears of decision makers.

The regional CINCs and the other combatant commanders within the "joint system" serve their nation by concentrating talented minds on their joint staffs full time on in-depth overwatch of a narrower span of problems than Washington can afford to consider, by developing estimates thereon informed by physical presence and a transregional perspective, and by raising these with proposals for decision in Washington. It is a grievous, if common error among civilians to suppose that the unified and specified commands are in place only to deter war and to provide against its outbreak, and that they are extraneous for the day-to-day formulating and conducting of foreign policy. The exercise of national power is by no means coextensive with the use of force, and an Assistant Secretary of State or U.S. Ambassador who exploits adroitly the resources of a CINC substantially amplifies his decisional information and his ability to influence events.

But let's talk for a moment about the sort of planners a regional CINC might require for some prospective joint operation. There is a misapprehension that a CINC must have contingency plans for any eventuality, a patent impossibility. There is another, equally untrue, that a joint planner must be prophetic, able to foresee distant events with unerring accuracy; the fact is that a CINC plans for those missions which higher authority directs, or which he

himself anticipates. Even were the services to recruit annually one or two genuine clairvoyants, I doubt that they would have much of a professional future as prophets, even in Washington on the National Defense Staff, for much that is future is better unknown.

A senior officer of the German Bundeswehr once told me this story about a particularly brilliant young officer of the Generalstab --nameless, as General von Seekt thought of staff officers. In 1928 the staff officer was directed to prepare an estimate of the strategic position of Germany five, fifteen, twenty and forty years in the future to serve as the basis for contingency plans. The staff officer promptly prepared a briefing which began with the assertion that in 1933 Germany would be in the grips of a world-wide depression, and would be ruled by a certifiable maniac intent on eradicating the Jewish people. Stunned, his superiors asked whether this portended military disaster for the country. Not so, said the staff officer, because in fifteen years, in 1943, a Third German Empire would extend from the Volga to the French coast, from the Norwegian Arctic to the African desert. Would Germany then go on to dominate the world? No, replied the staffer, because in 1948 Germany would have been divided among the Bolsheviks and the western democracies, its cities in ruins, and its industrial production only 10 percent of 1928's. Would this mean the end of German military power? No, replied the staffer, because he estimated that in forty years time, in 1968, Germans would provide the bulk of the armed forces in Central Europe, and would have a robust war industry in the Rhineland, where workers of unprecedented affluence would divide their time between automated machine tools and little black boxes where they would watch a man on the moon. That staff officer's carmine stripes were promptly ripped from his uniform, and he was quietly spirited off to a padded cell.

There is another, older story about military staffers, concerning the two British balloon observers of World War I who had a brush with a German fighter, were cut loose from their mooring, and before they could parachute, were blown into a fog bank. They drifted in the murk for about an hour, panic rising the while over concern that they might cross the front into German-occupied Belgium. Then the fog parted a bit, and they saw on the ground, to their immense relief, two British officers in a formal garden. "Where are we", they shouted down. "You're in a balloon," came the answer from below. Whereupon one balloonist said to the other, "I know exactly where we are. We must be over GHQ. I know because those must be general staff officers. Their answer was instantaneously fast, exceedingly precise, and utterly useless."

Joint planning requires neither prescience, nor omniscience, nor instantaneous precision. It does require some art in selecting circumstances which might call for military response. A joint staff's energies must be focused, and that is the purview of the CINC, which he discharges with the exercise of logic, prudence, his years of experience and perhaps hunch. The CINC's planning guidance is crucial for staff efficiency: he must set forth a concept of operations, describing what he wants to accomplish, and generally how he would like to operate, so that the staff can bring in the service

components to test his concept and devise supporting plans. The joint staff officer, whatever his service of origin, must understand that the inputs from a naval or air component are likely to differ from those from a Marine or Army component and why --as I have described. The joint staff officer becomes the CINC's surrogate in probing to ascertain the cogency of those responses, and in relating them one to another. It is within the joint staff that the force-multiplier effect of joint operations takes shape, and acquires substance. The joint staff officer thereby performs services which are properly understood as the quintessence of military professionalism.

This is especially the case with respect to low intensity conflict, the political uses of violence in the form of sabotage, terrorism, and insurgency. These will, in all probability, constitute the most urgent threats to our national interests and to our citizens for the foreseeable future. For example, I can tell you that there exists today only three places where the future of the Central America is being planned comprehensively and intensively: Havana, Managua, and Quarry Heights, Panama, the headquarters of the U.S. Southern Command.

I have had occasion recently to remind members of Congress that in April 1983, three years ago, Honduras was threatened with war by Nicaragua, El Salvador had all but succumbed to Marxist guerrillas, and Congress was divided over whether to attempt to aid in defending either. Today Congress is seized with an issue of offense vice defense: whether to help anti-Marxist rebels fighting in Nicaragua. I do not claim credit for this turn-about, credit which belongs largely to the Central Americans and to the skilled U.S. diplomats we have had on the scene. But I will state that USSOUTHCOM has played an important role in advancing our national policies, an unspectacular role very different from the sort our forces would play in other forms of conflict. In USSOUTHCOM's joint operations, for instance, its first-line aircraft, the mainstay of its airpower, has been the C-130. And most of those C-130s have been manned by reservists. The Army troops most heavily involved have been engineer battalions, again mostly reservists, although I hasten to acknowledge gratefully Governor White's sending armor soldiers and tanks of the Texas Army Guard. To be sure, there was not much television fare in those operations, but they nonetheless have served to reassure friends and to dismay and deter adversaries. As Sun Tzu put it, "To subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill."

I earlier raised the question whether you should seek joint service. I cannot testify that it is a pathway to stars, if that is any criterion, but we should note that joint duty is sine qua non for promotion to general officer. I can attest that joint duty can be stimulating, exciting, challenging, and rewarding exactly in the sense that SLAM Marshall meant when he urged his readers to learn about the other services. In my own view, an officer who has served as a valuable member of a joint command, either on a joint staff, or as commander of a joint task force or ~~set~~<sup>served</sup> component, has increased his or her professional worth to ~~the~~ service and to ~~the~~ nation, value-added that deserves recognition by promotion boards. Needless

to say I commend joint service to you without hesitation.

Let me conclude with a possibly apocryphal description of the last hours of General Tasker Bliss, one of our unsung aviation pioneers, who was Chief of Staff of the United States Army during World War I, from September 1917 until May 1918. My informant has it that when the old soldier's military family was summoned to his bedside for their final farewells, one junior aide had the temerity to ask the general whether, looking back on his long and successful career, he had any regrets. At the question the pale face flushed, the grey brows bent in frown, the gnarled fingers crumpled the counterpane, and with forcefulness which evoked the commander of yesteryear, he rasped: "Damn right! I should never have let the bastards out of the Signal Corps."

Ladies and gentlemen: the decision that there should be a <sup>separate service</sup> ~~separate air service~~ is no more recallable for us than it was for Tasker Bliss, or for Dwight D. Eisenhower. Our task, our good fortune, is to take advantage of the strengths of the <sup>service</sup> ~~service~~ which Bliss ~~aided in its infancy~~, and to grow within our ranks <sup>officers</sup> capable of commanding, planning, and conducting joint operations ~~with that service~~ with all the professionalism that we have heretofore brought to developing combined arms teams, <sup>for which this post is justly</sup> ~~honored~~ honored.

I am deeply honored for this opportunity to share ideas with you. My best wishes attend you all in your future service. Thank you.