LEADERSHIP and Parochialism

General Horner and his air staff, Desert Shield.

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An Enduring Reality?

By BROOKS L. BASH

A military culture influenced by rigid planning and structured regulation dictates a rational approach to crisis response. But organizational influences can enter the decisionmaking process. One critic, for example, argues that standard operating procedures as well as survival instincts and a desire for prestige can influence and bias decisions.[1] A large bureaucratic structure encourages such agenda setting and distorts reports made available to decisionmakers. Moreover, staffs filter and order huge amounts of data received during a crisis, which naturally colors the upward flow of information as it assumes the form of options and recommendations. This article examines the organizational impediments to optimal military responses in a crisis.

According to the late Carl Builder, the services have unique sets of organizational attitudes and beliefs.[2] As the most powerful institutions in the national security community, the services have distinctive organizational personalities that dictate much of their behavior. Therefore the attitudes of individual servicemembers are a subset of organizational attitudes in any given service. There is a strong tendency through socialization, education, and self-regulation to migrate individual beliefs toward centralized institutional attitudes.

The way services manipulate information affects decisionmaking in crises. Research into cognition suggests that complex decisionmaking forces human minds to break down information.

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Cognitive forces also tend to be more absolute in crises and more uncertain when decisionmakers lack time to assimilate facts.[3] In an era of exploding sources of knowledge, decisionmakers depend on information provided by organizations with many entrenched prejudices.

Defense Reorganization

The Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 sought to decrease service bias in providing recommendations to the National Command Authorities (NCA). It mandated a series of reforms in joint education, joint duty assignments, and joint doctrine. To reduce parochialism, the law enhanced the power of the Chairman by making him principal military advisor to the President while joint publications sought to make decisionmaking less susceptible to service parochialism. Specifically, Joint Pub 5–03.1, *Joint Operation Planning and Execution System*, contains guidance on planning and executing joint operations. It directs a supported commander—typically a regional commander in chief (CINC)—to develop a course of action. The Chairman, in turn, then reviews that course of action and concurs (either in whole or part) or calls for development of an alternate approach. This structured decisionmaking process culminates in one or more alternative courses being provided to the Chairman, who then makes a recommendation for NCA consideration.

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General Colin Powell, considering the role of the Chairman as principal military advisor to the President, remarked: "I consult widely with the chiefs and I always know what the chiefs are thinking. In the final analysis, I provide advice in my own right. So we don't vote on anything."[4] One unintended consequence of Goldwater-Nichols is that the new power invested in the Chairman may have increased his vulnerability to organizational influences. Some contend that this change increasingly limits the advice given to NCA by presenting a single viewpoint, whereas previously service chiefs, as JCS members, offered a range of options. Moreover, John Lehman, former Secretary of the Navy, contends that Goldwater-Nichols "created autocracy in the Joint Staff and arbitrary power in the person of the Chairman."[5] He holds that although the law allows the service chiefs to present dissenting views to NCA, this option is unlikely to be exercised. The Chairman can effectively mute any major disagreement by controlling the agenda and making unilateral decisions. General Carl Mundy, USMC, a former commandant of the Marine Corps, asserted that Goldwater-Nichols reduced coordination between the Chairman and service chiefs. He wrote to the Chairman on his retirement that the influence of the individual services over joint matters had been reduced.

Despite the rational military decisionmaking structure and the Goldwater-Nichols Act, there is evidence that military decisionmakers remain vulnerable to organizational influences.

Bias in Praxis

Operation Just Cause in Panama (1989) and the Persian Gulf War (1990–91) both illustrate that organizational and individual bias still adversely affect force employment. During Just Cause Colin Powell became the first Chairman to exercise power as the principal military advisor to the President under Goldwater-Nichols. Early in the crisis Powell called the chiefs to his quarters to agree on a course of action. He stated his preferred course, then asked for different viewpoints.

General Al Gray, another former commandant of the Marine Corps, said the selected course of action was primarily Army and did not include Marine assets suited for a forced entry. His argument was stifled by Powell's contention that there would not be time to position Marine amphibious units into place: "I can't change the timelines or the plan now."[6] But neither the President nor Secretary of Defense had set a timeline. The critical timeline was apparently the one found in Powell's preferred course of action. In effect, the Marine disagreement was overcome by the implication that Powell's direct access to NCA had provided critical information not available to the chiefs.

In addition, Admiral David Trost, the Chief of Naval Operations, worried that an airborne operation was risky and unnecessary. He believed troops could be landed without opposition. He also felt that the primary reason for the airdrop was to allow thousands of Army soldiers to earn combat jump wings. His objection did not prevail, however, because Powell and the Army Chief of Staff, General Carl Vuono, argued that an airdrop was most prudent. Moreover, General Max Thurman, USA, the commander in chief of U.S. Southern Command and the main architect of the operation, was a veteran parachutist.

Despite these reservations, no other alternative was seriously considered. Powell ensured that there would be no dissension: "I want to make sure that we're all agreeing."[7] Later in the day that he met with the chiefs, the Chairman met with President George Bush and Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney to present the plan for Just Cause. Powell informed the President that all the chiefs fully agreed with him.

Marines blocking road, Just Cause.

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This operation illustrates a potential inherent bias in the position of the Chairman in making recommendations to NCA. This scenario follows the organizational model. Although in the end the operation was successful, Powell favored an Army-oriented plan by stifling disagreement and failing to consider alternatives that reduced risks. Ironically, Cheney chastised the Chairman only a few weeks earlier for filtering information when he wanted information from multiple sources.

The next significant operation that occurred after the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act was Desert Shield/Desert Storm. While the Persian Gulf War achieved stated strategic objectives, service-based organizational forces influenced strategy and operations. Powell was still at the helm and was a key decisionmaker. In the days following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, he was asked to provide options for the defense of Saudi Arabia. On August 2, 1990, the Chairman together with the commander in chief of U.S. Central Command (CINCCENT), General Norman Schwarzkopf, USA, outlined Operations Plan 90–1002 to the President.[8] It primarily called for using land forces and assigned only a minor supporting role to airpower. Lieutenant General Thomas Kelly, USA, who was Director of Operations (J–3) on the Joint Staff, indicated that he did not think airpower would have a significant strategic impact. He lamented that nothing could be done against enemy forces without heavy armor. That intransigence became more evident when Kelly railed against the embryonic Operation Instant Thunder strategic air campaign: "Airpower has never worked in the past by itself. This isn't going to work."[9] A subsequent analysis concluded that the prewar plan narrowly defined the role and application of airpower.[10] Specifically, it relegated its use to support of ground operations. Army generals had only considered land-centric alternatives.

During the course of the war one of the most controversial issues was a recent addition to joint doctrine, that of the joint force air component commander (JFACC). Schwarzkopf appointed Lieutenant General Charles Horner, USAF, to this position. Overall, the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps viewed his selection as likely to lead to misuse of their organic aircraft.

The Navy took part in the JFACC process reluctantly and opposed the concept for several months. One trip report criticized senior naval officers during the conflict: "Several . . . expressed reservations about the Navy's involvement in an air campaign centrally directed [by an Air Force JFACC]."[11] In addition, an Air Force liaison officer

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Loading bombs for daylight strike on Iraqi targets.

to the Navy stated that the Navy "expressed an attitude of resentment towards the Air Force and distrust of the [Central Air Forces] staff." Accordingly, Navy officers incessantly scrutinized guidance by the air component staff in search of hidden agendas concerning the air campaign.

The Marine Corps also held divergent views on allocation of air assets that evolved from the JCS Omnibus Agreement of 1986 and Joint Pub 3–01.1, *Aerospace Defense of North America*. Although this agreement assigned the Marine commander operational control of organic air assets, it authorized a joint force commander to assign missions to Marine Corps air. Because Horner had been appointed to "exercise operational control of air assets," the issue of control was unclear.

Marine Corps doctrine further diluted the effectiveness of the airpower provided to JFACC

The lack of clear authority over Marine air assets and doctrinal disagreements led to service parochialism. For example, General Buster Glosson, USAF, director of planning for Central Air Forces, contended that Lieutenant General Royal Moore, USMC, the commander of 1st Marine Air Wing, was unable to think at the strategic level and was obsessed with supporting Marine expeditionary force doctrine to the detriment of strategic goals. Glosson commented, "[the Marines] kept two-thirds of their air assets to support ground action that was not about to happen and wasn't even in the realm of the possible. They only used one-third . . . to fly sorties that should have been fragged."[12]

Marine Corps doctrine further diluted the effectiveness of the airpower provided to JFACC. Because of the doctrinal requirement to directly support Marine land forces, the Corps insisted that their aircraft prepare the battlefield directly in front of their forces south of Kuwait City. A related effect of this resistance to the JFACC air operation was freelancing in the air tasking order (ATO). Lieutenant Colonel Dave Deptula, USAF, a planning officer on the JFACC staff, noted:

The Marines were bypassing the [air] *planning cells where we constructed the master attack plan . . . they would go to the ATO cell late at night and give the "changes" to the process and give them to the guys processing the ATO. So they would accept this information from the Marines as if it were a change and input it to the system. In fact it wasn't really a change. It was their initial input. They had to get it into the ATO because they needed the deconfliction, they needed the call signs, the air space management, and so on. They would bypass the planning cell and go hit whatever they wanted.*[13]

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Soldiers watching prisoners during Just Cause.

Another method used by the Marines to manipulate air targeting during the execution phase involved asking permission to strike secondary targets. Because these targets did not receive much planning scrutiny, Marine Corps pilots would have preferred targets listed as secondary. In reality these targets became primary when permission was granted (generally by Navy air controllers) for Marine aircraft to attack them as secondary targets during execution.

Similarly, the Army questioned the air effort to shape the battlefield for the land offensive. On February 18, 1991, Army Central Command released a highly critical situation report.

Air support-related issues continue to plague final preparation for offensive operations and raise doubts concerning our ability to effectively shape the battlefield prior to initiation of the ground campaign. Too few sorties were made available to the VII and XVIII Corps and, while air support missions are being flown against first-echelon enemy divisions, Army nominated targets are not being serviced.[14]

Schwarzkopf also contributed to the Army organizational bias in his role as the head of land forces. Moore described the land battle emphasis displayed by Schwarzkopf, who was dual-hatted as JFC and land component commander, when he remarked: "as a ground officer, [he] wanted to prepare the battlefield; this was very important in the evolution [of the air campaign]. He was not willing to let any of us go off and shoot down airplanes or conduct deep strikes at the cost of preparing that battlefield in front of the Army, Marines, and coalition forces."[15] Schwarzkopf, according to Horner, daily reapportioned air assets to attack enemy positions directly in front of coalition forces.

Glosson also exhibited an Air Force bias, in the opinion of a Navy liaison officer working on the Central Air Forces staff.

Early on, the Air Force committed fully to the forward deployment and utilization of every possible facet of their force structure. This positioning was only thinly veiled . . . as positioning and preparation for the upcoming "battles with Congress." The JFACC planning cell had a member of the Secretary of the Air Force's personal staff—he was the second senior member in the planning cell.[16]

Moreover, Horner thought that the Army leadership did not understand the best use of airpower on the strategic level and was inclined to "fight in isolation" on the operational level. Consequently, when a commander demanded increased sorties to support his land forces, Horner responded with a simple "no." He recalled Schwarzkopf's response. "[He] laughed when I fell on my sword. He didn't give [me] any support at all. But he summarized it by saying, 'Guys, it's all mine, and I will put it [airpower] where it needs to be put'."[17]

Reallocating airpower along with Marine Corps insistence on supporting ground forces resulted in an overall emphasis on air sorties to shape the battlefield containing first and second echelon enemy forces. CIA analysis revealed that coalition air forces destroyed twice as much Iraqi equipment in the second echelon near the front lines as opposed to striking the Republican Guard, which was a primary strategic goal. Overall, 70 percent of air sorties were flown to support the eventual ground campaign, but only 15 percent were used in strategic attacks on Baghdad or the Republican Guard. Fortunately, disagreement over airpower in Desert Storm was strategically insignificant because there were virtually unlimited coalition air assets available against an ineffective enemy.

Surveying Attitudes

Both organizational and individual biases during Operations Just Cause and Desert Storm affected both strategic and operational decision-making. Nevertheless, at the time of these conflicts, senior officers and their staffs only had served a small part of their careers in the joint environment envisioned in Goldwater-Nichols. Today, when the Armed Forces are more than a decade beyond that law's implementation, a clearer notion of its effectiveness should influence future leaders.

It is generally agreed that jointness has evolved from a structural and doctrinal perspective since 1986. Nevertheless, the question remains whether legislating jointness has changed attitudes among younger officers who will be the

Tomahawk missile, Desert Storm.

U.S. Navy (Brad Dillon)

leaders of tomorrow. Have joint doctrine, education, and duty assignments modified parochialism within the services?

To evaluate attitudes on jointness, a survey was administered to war college students. The colonels/captains and lieutenant colonels/commanders who attend senior-level professional military education (PME) institutions were selected as a sample because they represent the most promising officers in each service. Some 36 percent of war college graduates achieve general or flag rank, and all future chairmen, chiefs, and unified commanders in chief will come from their numbers.

To reduce the risk of error, a complete census survey was taken among these students with the response rate achieving a precision level of 95 percent (± 5 percent confidence). Respondents were categorized as joint or service officers only to determine whether joint experience impacted on their individual views.

Marines preparing to enter Kuwait, Desert Storm.

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Medical evacuation in Panama.

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The survey indicated a strong attitude variance among officers of various services toward the use of force. Moreover, it indicated that parochialism does exist among future leaders enrolled in the war college classes of 1998. Perhaps more surprising, it suggested that joint education and experience may not reduce service bias. The implications of this insight are twofold. First, even though Goldwater-Nichols has structurally increased jointness, this law has not eliminated service parochialism in the officer corps. Second, more structural changes may be required in the military decisionmaking process to suppress service parochialism.

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Recommendations

First, the Chairman should routinely provide dissenting or minority opinions along with his course of action. Currently, as principal military advisor to the President, he generally recommends a single best course. In reality, there are many feasible military options with attendant political advantages and disadvantages for NCA consideration. As seen in Operations Just Cause and Desert Storm, proffering one option increases the likelihood of prejudiced recommendations. Alternative options would facilitate decisions based on a range of possible outcomes rather than a single expected outcome.

Next, a stricter policy of rotation should be adopted by the President in the appointment of both chairmen and unified commanders. Over time dominance by one service in providing officers to fill these positions can introduce a bias in planning and procedures. For example, Army officers have been historically named to warfighting commands. In addition, Army officers have filled the post of Chairman for a decade. During this period, the Joint Staff has been completely reorganized and a hierarchy of joint doctrine publications have been issued in accordance with the Goldwater-Nichols Act.

A third recommendation derives directly from the Persian Gulf War. While Schwarzkopf was the joint force commander in charge of all land, sea, and air forces, he also retained the role of land forces component commander. Ostensibly, he was dual hatted out of political necessity since he commanded coalition forces. However, this dual role made it difficult to make impartial force employment decisions. JFCs should not also be component commanders.

Fourth, the Secretary of Defense should sponsor a joint forum for academic debate on the roles and missions of the Armed Forces. Unfortunately, extant processes such as the Quadrennial Defense Review are too often played out in the form of budgetary and procurement decisions rather than meaningful doctrinal dialog. As new technology and threats emerge, the contributions of each service will inevitably change and joint doctrine must be adapted. Although *Joint Force Quarterly* is one outlet for this debate, an annual conference should be convened for senior officers, civilian officials, and academic specialists to discuss issues involving roles and missions.

Finally, the survey illustrates that requirements for joint experience may be insufficient to overcome parochial attitudes developed during an officer's formative years. To foster joint culture, joint education should be introduced earlier. Both precommissioning education and basic schools provide opportunities to develop a joint perspective. The academies should increase the number of faculty members drawn from other services and from among joint specialty officers to teach cadets and midshipmen different perspectives. Finally, joint education must be reinforced throughout an officer's career in addition to the mandatory PME and joint duty assignments.

For the revolution in military affairs to succeed, the Armed Forces must shed service force employment paradigms. Service parochialism is alive and well despite the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The results of the attitude survey reported in this article provide a glimpse into the divergent views of future leaders. Although service-specific expertise and academic debate are necessary to evolve the joint force of tomorrow, the U.S. military must ensure that turf battles conducted to protect organizational prerogatives not blind decisionmakers to the goal of providing the best possible defense. **JFQ**

NOTES

[1] Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), p. 67.

[2] Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 3.

[3] William R. Farrell and Mel Chaloupka, "Four Perspectives on Decision Making and Execution in National Security Organizations," *National Policy and Strategy* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, 1997), p. 264.

[4] David Roth, *Sacred Honor: A Biography of Colin Powell* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), p. 195.

[5] Douglas C. Lovelace, Jr., *Unification of the United States Armed Forces: Implementing the 1986 Department of Defense Reorganization Act* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: U.S. Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 1996), p. 36.

[6] Bob Woodward, *The Commanders* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), p. 164.

[7] Ibid., p. 167.

[8] Ibid., p. 228; Richard H. Kohn, "Out of Control: The Crisis in Civil-Military Relations," *The National Interest*, no. 35 (Spring 1994), p. 163.

[9] Richard T. Reynolds, *Heart of the Storm: The Genesis of the Air Campaign against Iraq* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University Press, 1995), p. 11.

[10] James A. Winnefeld et al., *A League of Airmen: U.S. Air Power in the Gulf War* (Santa Monica, Calif.: The RAND Corporation, 1994), p. 55; Woodward, *The Commanders*, p. 228.

[11] Thomas A. Keaney and Eliot A. Cohen, *Gulf War Air Power Survey,*Volume I, Part 2: *Command and Control* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1993), p. 53.

[12] Mason P. Carpenter, *Joint Operations in the Gulf War: An Allison Analysis* (Maxwell Air Force Base, Ala.: Air University Press, 1995), pp. 27–28.

[13] Ibid., p. 25. Interview on December 21, 1993.

[14] Carpenter, *Joint Operations*, p. 44.

[15] Charles D. Melson et al., *U.S. Marines in the Persian Gulf, 1990–1991: Anthology and Annotated Bibliography* (Washington: Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, History and Museums Division, 1992), p. 112.

[16] Keaney and Cohen, *Gulf War*, p. 54.

[17] Ibid.