



**Testimony before the
House Armed Services Committee**

**“Roles, Missions, and Requirements of the
Department of Defense”**

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A Statement by

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Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today on the issue of roles, missions, and requirements in the Department of Defense. The 1986 passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Act was a watershed event in the evolution of inter-service jointness. In the twenty years since Goldwater-Nichols, the Department of Defense has made great strides in expanding jointness, moving from simple deconfliction of military functions to, in many instances, true operational interdependency across the services.

While there has been enormous progress during my professional lifetime, there yet remains work to be done. Four years back, the Center for Strategic and International Studies sought to build on the last generation's progress through a five-year program we call "Beyond Goldwater Nichols." I believe we need to promote a new era of defense reform that better reflects the geo-strategic realities facing today's military. In pursuing reform, we must focus on three key challenges:

- Increasing joint warfighting commanders' capabilities today and in the future;
- Striking a prudent balance between the modernization of the Military Departments and the growing imperative to undertake seamless joint operations; and
- Improve the efficiency of decision-making processes within the Defense Department.

I will address each of these challenges in turn, but before I do, let me offer an introductory perspective I hope you will consider as you review the legislation you are proposing.

I was on the staff of the Senate Armed Services Committee when the Committee developed its version of the ultimate Goldwater-Nichols Act. There were three critical pillars of the reform legislation. First, the act strengthened the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and gave the Chairman and Vice Chairman and the Joint Staff dramatically more power and influence in the Department. Second, the Act raised the profile of the Combatant Commanders (formerly called the Unified Commanders in Chief). The third critical initiative was to require officers to have experience in joint operations before they could become a general or flag officer. I can't overstate the importance of these three key innovations. They fundamentally have reformed the Defense Department.

In essence, Goldwater-Nichols created a new and healthy balance of "supply" and "demand" for military capabilities. The Military Departments—the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force—are now "supply" operations—providing the personnel, equipment, training program and facilities required to undertake military missions. The "demand" function is now concentrated in the combatant commanders. The Joint Staff and the Chairman/Vice Chairman integrate the operational needs of the combatant commanders and advise the Secretary of Defense concerning those operations.

It is this healthy balance of "supply" and "demand" that needs to be at the center of your thinking as you consider organizational reform of the defense department.

The Joint Warfighter as Customer

The Goldwater-Nichols Act created an effective "supply-demand" relationship in the Department. Today, however, DoD's requirements and resource allocation processes are dominated by the "suppliers" of military capability—most notably the military services.

The Military Departments have a vital *role* to play in national security: they organize, train, and equip US military forces. Their success in this role is unparalleled in the world, and we must continue to strengthen their unique capabilities to man, train, and equip the force. But the Military Services do not conduct combat operations—the Combatant Commanders do.

Since Goldwater-Nichols, military *missions* have been the distinct operational province of the unified combatant commands. Joint commanders are charged with effectively employing military force, typically in a multi-service and multi-national environment, in order to secure US national interests. Combatant commanders write all war plans, oversee all peacetime military activities, and conduct all military operations.

We need to organize the Department's decision-making procedures so that they bring both the advocates of supply and demand to the table equally before the Secretary. I believe that too often the Washington councils are populated just by the "supply" side of the equation. The Chairman and Vice Chairman have to carry the full burden of representing operational demand, and I don't think that they have all the horsepower that is needed for this task.

We can't ask each Combatant Commander to spend all his time in Washington attending meetings. He needs to be in the field fighting wars. But we do need the voice of the operator in these councils. We believe that the Department should establish a new 4-star advocate for the future joint warfighter, with sufficient, analytically capable staff to coordinate effectively with combatant commands and assess the needs of the future joint force through doctrine, organization training, materiel, logistics, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF). We are still discussing this idea in our Beyond Goldwater-Nichols working groups. This could be a re-tooling and strengthening of the Joint Forces Command. But the most important thing is to have that commander sit in all major requirements and resource allocation forums in order to advise the Secretary of Defense on the needs of the joint force in the Future Years Defense Program and beyond.

Mr. Chairman, the key goal here is to bring a balance to the supply and demand dynamic in the Pentagon. Currently the decision making is too dominated by the voices of supply.

Core Competencies and Roles and Missions

Mr. Chairman, the House version of the 2008 defense authorization bill has several provisions (sections 941, 942 and 943) that establish new procedures to identify core competencies and roles and missions in the Department. When I worked for the Senate Armed Services Committee, I worked on similar provisions back in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I later worked at the Defense Department, first as the Comptroller and later as the Deputy Secretary.

I understand the spirit that is moving you to introduce this legislation, but let me suggest that you are contradicting your own interests. If you demand that the Department go through a detailed study of core competencies and roles and missions, you are in essence putting in motion a great tidal wave of service uniqueness and exceptionalism. There is understandable rivalry among the Military Services. That rivalry is basically healthy, in my view. But at times it becomes a negative force. If you launch a major analytic drive to force the services to define core competencies and unique roles and missions, you will unleash forces that make it harder to get jointness.

The key problem in the department is not core competencies. The services manage their core competencies very, very well. No one in the world is as good at night time flight

operations from an aircraft carrier than is the United States Navy. No one does amphibious assault operations as well as the United States Navy. The United States Air Force is unparalleled in air superiority. Combined maneuver of battle formations is the Army's unchallenged expertise. Core competencies are not the problem in DoD.

I believe there are two much larger problems. The first is the efficient preparation for and management of joint operations, and second, the operations and activities that are critical, but which the Military Departments do not consider to be core missions. The great debate going on in the Army today is whether post-conflict reconstruction is a core mission. Before Iraq, the Army felt that was not a core mission. They are now working hard to develop expertise.

Legislation that forces the Defense Department to undertake core competency and roles and mission reviews will only reinforce the things that the services do well and keep us from focusing on the things that we don't do as well.

I understand your goal to reduce unnecessary redundancy and provide better stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Both of these goals are laudable, but they are better achieved through improvements to the Secretary of Defense's toolkit for making the right long-term joint investments. A welcome addition to that toolkit would be a capable advocate for the future joint warfighter who is engaged in major decision forums. Second, we need to strengthen OSD's ability to undertake mission area analyses, now often referred to as capability portfolio assessments. The Department does not systematically and comprehensively assess the linkage between the future years defense program and the missions needed to support the defense strategy. We did this in an earlier day. We need to bring this back.

Enabling the Secretary of Defense

Let me turn to the third primary point I wish to make this morning. We have a system of government where the Secretary of Defense is accountable to the American people through the President and the Congress. This means that the Secretary of Defense is singularly responsible for balancing competing demands and limited capability supply within the Department.

You have a provision in your just-passed defense authorization bill (Section 944) that would beef up the Joint Requirements Oversight Council. The JROC reports to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and is chartered to validate joint military requirements. Continued emphasis on strengthening the JROC suffers from two significant shortcomings that, if uncorrected, will ultimately undermine the Secretary of Defense's capability and authority.

First, the JROC's charter and its membership are poorly matched. Were it appropriately constituted with future joint warfighting representation, the JROC could provide powerful demand-side advice to the Secretary by way of the Chairman. It is not so constituted today. Instead, in addition to the Vice Chairman, it is comprised of senior representatives of the four military services. These officers can represent what the services could, would, or would like to provide to the future joint force, but they cannot speak to the future mission requirements that must be met.

Second, efforts to push resource allocation and requirements decision-making down to the Chairman and the JROC ultimately undermine the Secretary of Defense's prerogatives and authority for balancing supply and demand. The Chairman is a critical advisor to the Secretary in making hard choices, but he is not the only advisor. Consolidating military

advice so fully under the Chairman filters too much out for the good of civilian control. I also think this would weaken the OSD staff compared to the Joint Staff.

Effective governance of DoD must start with the Secretary of Defense. It is imperative that the Secretary routinely and directly hear from the Service Chiefs, the Chairman, the Combatant Commanders, and an advocate for the future joint warfighter if he is to execute the president's defense agenda.

Creating a Chief Management Officer Position

Finally, let me comment on Section 906 in your bill. Section 906 would create a Chief Management officer in the Defense Department. This has been a recommendation of the General Accountability Office (GAO) for several years. I have had an ongoing discussions/debate with my friends at GAO on this question. Let me offer the following observation.

It is critical that we not confuse the "line versus staff" functions that need to be performed. The Office of the Secretary of Defense is inherently a "staff" function. OSD doesn't—or shouldn't in my mind—conduct operations. That is left to the line organizations in DoD. There are four primary line organizations—the Army, Navy Department (Navy and Marine Corps) and the Air Force, and the Defense Agencies.

The line management for the three military departments is good. There is weak line management for the Defense Agencies. The Defense Agencies are huge enterprises, and I think they are doing well. But we don't have the strong management oversight for the defense agencies.

I support the creation of an Under Secretary for Management, and to make that Under Secretary responsible for the efficient operation of all the defense agencies. Right now these defense agencies report up to assistant secretaries in OSD, but these assistant secretaries are basically staff officers working for the Secretary. We need effective senior management, and having the defense agencies report to a new undersecretary for management is a good idea. The under secretary should have the same responsibility to build the budgets and oversee the operations of the defense agencies as a service secretary has for his respective military department.

I read section 906 and frankly it is a muddy construction. There isn't a clear understanding of what this new undersecretary would do. Is this new management under secretary a line manager (like a service secretary/service chief) or a staff officer (like an assistant secretary)? Does the new undersecretary have the power to overrule a service secretary or service chief? The legislation is ambiguous. I don't think he should have that authority. I think the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army are directly responsible to the Secretary of Defense for the operation of the Army. If you want better management in a military department, get a different secretary. Don't muddy the waters by creating an under secretary for management with ambiguous authorities.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, distinguished members of the Committee, the Congress has a vital role to play in shaping and improving the Department of Defense's structure and in promoting greater jointness in our military operations. I think this hearing is essential and I commend you for hold it. I stand ready to assist as you move forward on this important issue.