



**Business Executives
for National Security**

Statement of General Norton A. Schwartz, USAF (Ret.)
President & CEO of Business Executives for National Security

Before the United States Senate Armed Services Committee
On the topic of Defense Reform

December 10, 2015

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, Members of the Committee, thank you for your commitment to improving internal governance and defense organization shaped by the Goldwater-Nichols reforms. My remarks are based on my experience in uniform as the 19th Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force and a former Commander of the US Transportation Command. It is an unexpected privilege to return to this hearing room and to offer a few related ideas on how best to improve performance in the Department of Defense.

I now serve as the President and CEO of Business Executives for National Security, a non-partisan organization of business executives with genuine concern for national security. As part of your defense reform review I would be pleased to offer to you, at some future date, my organization's views on the pressing need to make more efficient use of defense resources and improve Defense Department management—also objectives of the original Goldwater-Nichols legislation.

As requested, my remarks today are confined to the topic of increasing the effectiveness of military operations. The views are my own.

The rationale for reform

First, let me commend the Senate and this Congress for restoring acquisition responsibilities to the Service Chiefs in this year's National Defense Authorization Act legislation. Not only does it put accountability where it belongs in the Service acquisition structure, it identifies the acquisition career field as central to respective service identities, which is important for promoting viable military career paths.

The need to reconsider the roles of other senior military leaders in the structure of the Department stems, I believe, from two transformational factors that have evolved since implementation of Goldwater-Nichols. The first is the concept of jointness, which has been inculcated over a period of nearly thirty years into the daily cadence of military operations. I cannot foresee us ever going to war in the future with a concept of operations that is not joint. Because of this irreversible development, we should perhaps look at adapting the current joint duty requirements for officer promotion by emphasizing joint experience at the operational level of command instead.

The second factor is related to the first and involves changing the way we identify and resolve conflict today as opposed to more traditional warfare designs of the past. The evolving threat is political, economic and demographic. In the Middle East the adversary is ideological, made up of proto-state, non-state, and sub-state entities. Think ISIS/ISIL, Hezbollah, Hamas. Internationally, China and Russia seek ascendancy. Across the developing world, nearly 40 percent of the population is under the age of 15 creating a huge demand on future resources and governing institutions. Climate change suggests complex consequences with security implications. Clearly, maintaining national security in this environment requires DoD to plan for a wide range of contingencies. The model we have adopted more often than not as the preferred military response is to task organize for the specific contingency.

Goldwater-Nichols arose in an era of more sharply defined politico-military circumstances. Those boundaries no longer exist. It is therefore appropriate and necessary to evaluate the need to adapt our military operational structure for the new threat environment.

Three suggestions for improving military operational performance

While there are many issues that warrant attention: command arrangements, resource allocation, acquisition processes, overhead reduction, joint credentialing for military personnel and the potential for consolidation among others, I wish to focus on the three I am persuaded hold the greatest promise for particularly positive outcomes. They are: the role and authority of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, right-sizing the Combatant Commands (COCOMs), and establishing standing Joint Task Forces for execution of COCOM operational missions.

1. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the operational chain of supervision

In my experience as a former member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, I have come to the conclusion that the Chairman's informal role in supervising the Combatant Commanders and the JCS is insufficient for the demands of our times. While it is true that delegated authority from the Secretary of Defense is an alternative and is routinely implied, there should be no doubt in the Armed Forces of the United States about the directive authority of the Chairman, subject to close and continuing scrutiny and oversight by the Secretary of Defense.

Developing strategic guidance for force employment, deciding force allocation tradeoffs between Combatant Commands and establishing strategic priorities for the Armed Forces should not be the result of bureaucratic negotiation or the exquisite application of personal suasion but, rather, the product of strategic leadership. That capacity is constrained by the Chairman's inability to exercise executive authority on behalf of the Secretary of Defense. The remedy, I suggest, is to place the Chairman in the line of supervision between the Secretary and the Combatant Commanders.

2. Right-sizing the Combatant Commanders for peacetime deterrence and engagement roles

The nine Combatant Commands are complex entities, none alike, some with regional responsibilities and others with functional roles. The commands strive to serve both peacetime, crisis response and warfighting obligations. The composition of the Combatant Command staffs clearly reflects the inherent tension in this excessively broad mission array: peacetime administration, deterrence and partner engagement versus maintaining the capacity to conduct complex contingency operations in peace and war.

The proliferation of organizational elements such as resource directorates (J-8s), Joint Intelligence Centers (J-2s), security assistance program offices (typically J-4s), partner engagement entities (typically J-9s) and operations and training staffs (J-3s) is the result of the expansive assigned mission set. What we see over time is that the warfighting role of the Combatant Commands has evolved to the almost exclusive use of subordinate Joint Task Forces (JTFs)—up to and including four-star led JTFs—to execute assigned operational missions. Further, the infusion of greater Federal interagency heft into the Combatant Commands has, in my experience, detracted from core operational focus, in both crisis and conflict. This evolution in organizational complexity raises a simple question: can a Combatant Command, however well-tailored, perform each and every associated task with equal competence? I

don't think so, and I believe it is necessary to refocus the Combatant Commanders on their core mission: strategic engagement, relationship building, joint training, combat support, and contingency planning; and, adjust their headquarters staffs accordingly.

3. Standing Joint Task Force for land, maritime and air

The proliferation of COCOM organizational elements that I have just described brings up a fundamental question of task and purpose. The COCOMs are supported by separate component commands in land, sea and air. Yet, their components role is largely administrative not operational. Instead, we have we squared the tension between Combatant Command peacetime and wartime roles by extensive (some would argue excessive) use of Joint Task Force organizations to execute operational missions. By and large this has been successful.

It is my conviction that the efficacy of the Task Force employment model is beyond dispute. The National Counterterrorism Joint Task Force demonstrates conclusively, in my mind, the enduring value of standing, mature, well-trained and well-equipped Joint Task Forces. It may well be that high performance parallels exist for National Joint Task Forces in the surface, maritime and air domains as well. We need to consider creating highly efficient National Joint Task Forces for global employment when and where needed. What we should discontinue, however, is the proliferation of Joint Task Forces in each Combatant Command, with attendant service components and headquarters staffs (Task Force 510 in the US Pacific Command, PACOM, might qualify as an exception to the rule).

Conclusion

A major purpose of Goldwater-Nichols was to strengthen the Joint Staff and the Combatant Commanders. Your comprehensive review needs to balance that objective with the Service's authorities to organize, train and equip. The roles are complementary: operations and support. However, we need to reinforce the chain of supervision and, in turn, accountability. You have done this with the reconstitution of the Service Chiefs' acquisition role. On the Joint Chiefs' side, we need to have within the armed forces a strategic leader who can exercise executive authority. We need to aggressively align Combatant Command headquarters composition to its core mission(s) and refrain from creating subordinate Joint Task Forces from Service headquarters. And, finally, we need to drive toward employment of long-term, highly proficient National Joint Task Forces for Combatant Command employment.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Committee today.