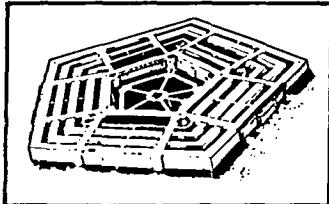


IDEAS and ISSUES

Candid professionally oriented comments on matters of interest to Marines. Particularly invited are new ideas that enhance the mission and esprit of the Marine Corps. Length: 500-1,500 words.



Since the end of the Vietnam War, the American military has been subject to increasing criticism by our own civilian leadership. Military operations since Vietnam, such as the aborted operation to rescue the hostages in Iran, have brought forth choruses of complaints about the way the Department of Defense (DOD) is organized, managed, led, and functions. Although much of this commentary was unfounded, other parts of it were not. There were problems that needed to be addressed. Congress, in an attempt to deal with supposed problem areas, has passed the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986.

This bill covers a multitude of organizational changes that will have impact throughout the DOD, and some that have potentially drastic ramifications for the Marine Corps. My intention here is not to debate and discuss

Informal Remarks of VAdm Dudley L. Carlson, Chief of Naval Personnel, on the Joint Officer Personnel Policy

Title IV simply means you will take more quality out of the Service headquarters and put it in a joint staff because you can't have one exceed the other. You'll see officers running to go to a joint staff. All the things Congress has imposed in Title IV are such that we can't get there from here . . .

Fortunately, we think there is an appetite on the hill to receive constructive recommendations for change. I am optimistic that they will hear us

Defense Reorganization Institutionalizing Careerism

by Maj Robert B. Neller

"If any group within the Corps, or any of the Services, should be given an edge at promotion time, it should be those individuals who possess the leadership and tactical expertise in warfighting skills and can lead us to victory in war."

the entire bill, but to focus on one part—Title IV—"The Joint Officer Personnel Policy." This section has implications that affect all the Services but will impact more significantly on the Marine officer corps. This is due, in part, to the Corps' smaller number of officers in relation to enlisted Marines and, I believe, the unique psychological makeup of most of those who chose to be Marines. Regardless, its implementation will force dramatic changes in the career pattern some officers will be forced to take in order to

out and enact changes. We would start by asking that there not be a joint requirement to be promoted to O-7. We think that would help a lot. We have nuclear trained officers. Those guys are head down and nose to the grindstone for their whole career, and there isn't time to send them to a senior Service college and have them serve a 3½-year tour on a joint staff to check off that joint box. And let's face it—who is the best joint officer? He's the guy who just arrived from the fleet. If you want a good guy to plan amphibious operations you ought to get a current Marine from the Fleet Marine Force, not some Pentagon E-Ring darling who has been around for five or six years and knows all the political ins and outs. If you want somebody to

advance, and ultimately in the kind of leadership the Corps has come to expect.

Simply put, Title IV establishes "an occupational category, referred to as the 'joint specialty,' for the management of officers who are trained in and oriented toward joint matters." This joint specialty designation is an attempt to eliminate the perceived parochialism toward their own Service that officers assigned duty in the joint arena may exhibit. It is this inter-Service rivalry and competition that is

talk about strike warfare planning, who can do that the best? Probably somebody who is just off the 6th Fleet staff, not some guy whose been in Washington for 3½ years, went to a Service college, went someplace for 2 years, and cycled back to the Joint Staff . . .

The joint designator concept may be intellectually attractive, but it is very difficult to execute. The Joint Staff needs skilled war planners with detailed professional experience, not a bunch of armchair experts. If they persist in establishing all these wickets through which joint officers must pass, you end up with a bunch of civilians in uniform, not war fighters or sound planners. You build a separate, elite caste.

blamed for many of the failures America's joint military ventures have experienced. By creating a cadre of joint operations specialists, it is hoped that inter-Service friction will be eased and operational effectiveness improved—a worthy cause, without question, but the results may be more distasteful than the status quo.

In all probability, however, the joint officer specialty will lead to something quite different than what was intended by its architects. It will create an officer corps within the officer corps, with officers from all Services being forced to join this exclusive group in order to advance their own career ambitions. It will become a sort of a super careerist class, with a type of careerism much stronger than we experience today, and all due to the rules and regulations surrounding the joint specialty designation. Unchecked, it would ultimately create problems much greater and more divisive than those it was intended to solve.

The professional military officer corps has been accused of being a careerist group, putting their personal career ambitions ahead of the needs of the entire Defense Establishment. Ticket punching, infrequent and shortlived tours of command, cronyism, and teambuilding are all cited as examples of a leadership not dedicated to serving the Nation well. Many of these issues were considered and corrective measures sought in earlier legislation before the passage of this new law. Although of little help, these earlier efforts avoided the potential damage the joint specialty may inflict.

In its well-intentioned but misguided attempt to legislate the attitudes and convictions of officers in all the Services, the provisions of Title IV state that the following actions will direct and guide the implementation of this policy:

- Prescribes, subject to a waiver by the Secretary of Defense, that joint duty tours shall be at least three years for general and flag officers and three and a half years for other officers.
- Requires that an officer may not be selected for the joint specialty until he completes a joint education program and a full joint duty tour.
- Requires the Secretary of Defense

to furnish to the secretaries of the Military Departments guidelines to ensure that promotion boards give appropriate consideration to joint duty performance, and in effect ensures that officers with the joint duty specialty receive promotion opportunities equal to those of other select groups.

- Requires, subject to a waiver by the Secretary of Defense, that an officer may not be promoted to general or flag rank unless he has served in a joint duty assignment.

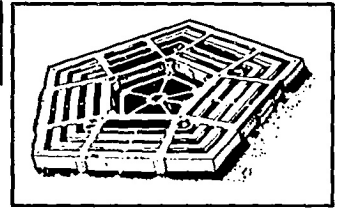
What does all this mean to the Marine officer out on the street struggling to get back to the Fleet Marine Force (FMF) and get promoted during a time of high officer retention and excruciatingly slow promotion rates? My interpretation may be somewhat different from some, but I believe most people will point out some of the following facts of life:

- Getting the opportunity to go to a school certified as one that gives an officer the opportunity to get joint duty will become increasingly competitive. However, no provisions are made in the law to determine who gets picked, such as through a competitive qualification examination or prerequisite accomplishments.

- At promotion time, those who have the joint officer specialty could very well have an advantage, as their interests are protected by the law. This undoubtedly will come at the expense of those who, through no fault of their own, have not been extended the same chance for this duty.

- Since there is a limited number of joint billets, not everyone will get the chance for such duty. This will require that early in an officer's career he be screened and identified as one worthy of this duty. Getting put on this track will let us all know very early on who the real players are or, more accurately, who they are perceived to be.

- Those who get the nod for the joint school/duty assignment can count on being away from the Corps for a minimum of four years. FMF time is hard enough to come by now; this just adds another variable to the equation. We all lose our real warfighting skills in proportion to the amount of time we spend away from the Fleet. Pilots will be hurt even more severely by the



length of this separation. The end result is reduced effectiveness and joint specialists with less operational experience and insight.

- If you have aspirations for flag rank (would any Marine worth his salt admit even to wild and exotic dreams about such a possibility?) you must earn the joint specialty designation to even be considered.

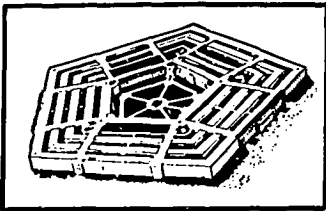
These are only a few thoughts on the subject. As discussion of the joint specialty is brought to the forefront in the coming months, far more commentary on the situation is needed. The Marine Corps' leadership is well aware of this and other potentially catastrophic provisions of the entire bill and is moving now to obtain corrective actions. In his posture statement, Gen Paul X. Kelley says:

I strongly urge the Congress to conduct an early and comprehensive review of Title IV, joint officer personnel policy. I believe that if the title is implemented, as written, it could adversely impact upon the morale and effectiveness of our officer corps and ultimately create a new class of "mandarins"—joint staff specialists skilled in the bureaucratic ways of higher headquarters, but who will have little opportunity for critical operational experience in the field with troops. While I do not believe that this is the intent of the Congress, it could, nevertheless, be the end result.

Hopefully, those who made this happen will recognize what they have created and take corrective action.

My intention here is not to promulgate fear or animosity toward anyone or anything, but the facts are clear—the joint officer specialty is a law of the land; there are problems with it; and these problems need to be addressed. We, as Marines, need to be constantly aware of such developments and strive to prevent future encroachments. History tells us that it will happen again.

More importantly, the lesson to take away from this is why Marines find the joint officer specialty an unacceptable albatross to hang around



our personnel assignment policies. Though no one can deny the critical realities of joint operations, we all joined the Corps for one overriding reason—to be Marines; to eat, sleep, train, and live this life to the best of our ability. Assuredly, we will serve on joint staffs and serve well. However,

the most important times in our career will remain those seemingly brief interludes when we get to the Fleet Marine Force and do what we were trained to do—successfully lead Marines into combat. This is where aspirations are fulfilled, where the most meaningful service can be given. To give an edge in career advancement to a group singled out to manage the massive bureaucracy of the Defense Department seems skewed. If any group within the Corps, or any of the

Services, should be given an edge at promotion time, it should be those individuals who possess the leadership and tactical expertise in warfighting skills and can lead us to victory in war. Incompetent generals and staffs, with well trained and effectively led soldiers and sailors, have won in the past in spite of themselves. Few, however, have ever won with merely a highly trained staff, especially if that training comes at the expense of other forms of readiness. **USMC**

'Joint Think'

by Capt Francis G. Hoffman, USMCR

I recently received an introductory briefing on the new joint duty specialty mandated by Title IV of the Defense Reorganization Act (DRA). Judging from the level of indifference from the Marines in attendance, either the ramifications of this innovation are not appreciated or the audience expects this invidious reform to pass away.

My immediate concerns with the DRA are tied to the joint duty specialty and those provisions that seek to create a national general staff. The jury is still out on the remainder of the DRA. Adm William J. Crowe, Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and the officer tasked with implementing the legislation, probably said it best: "It isn't going to be as great as the advocates said it would be, and it won't be as bad as the critics thought."

I imagine that when the joint specialty change fails, and as enacted it will certainly fail, most of the self-styled reformists who created it will be at a loss to understand why. Its proponents do not grasp the fundamentals of military men or military life.

Unfortunately, it may take a tumultuous military failure bordering on a national tragedy to convince some proponents of the inherent weaknesses that should be immediately apparent. The new system relies on a form of inbreeding to produce, by design, a cadre of professional military officers who theoretically place the Nation's inter-

ests over their particular Service. One can make an argument that the new law is aimed at ambitious men who will also put their own interests ahead of obligations for professional development within the profession of arms to achieve success and promotion.

Title IV

Provisions of the DRA serve to establish and protect officers who serve in joint billets. Congress intends to ensure that quality officers are assigned to the Joint Staff and to the unified/specified commands. Additionally, Congress intends to ensure that the parochial Service interests are removed from the joint arena by safeguarding the career opportunities and promotions of joint duty specialists. The reformists have institutionalized the primacy of the joint arena by dictating that general officers will have to have had joint duty as a prerequisite for flag rank.

These actions send a very clear message that the way to get ahead and achieve highest rank is through the joint arena. The grand design behind these personnel policies is to free the JCS Chairman from the Service bureaucracies and improve the decision-making processes of a ponderous Defense Establishment.

Officer Development

Unfortunately, while trying to come to grips with decisionmaking at the

top of the structure, Congress has seriously detracted from warfighting capabilities by reducing the development and experience level of the officer corps. Additionally, it may have unintentionally created a situation whereby the internal dynamics and attitudes within the Joint Staff will adversely impact the quality of decision-making and policy development.

The provisions of the DRA stop just a hair short of establishing a national general staff. Over time we will create a multi-Service cadre of officers who have succeeded by working on staffs rather than the more rigorous and more valid series of progressive command assignments in a combat specialty. Certainly, most Marines have severe reservations about a general officer community made up of officers who have not proceeded through successful levels of command acquiring combat related experience. As one officer cogently noted after our introductory briefing, "it looks like you have to decide by the time you're a major if your real goal is to command a battalion or regiment or if you really want a star." It appears we have made the two choices mutually exclusive. Can we really live with a Naval Service comprised of admirals and generals in positions of command who achieved their flags through the joint arena and not from the bridge of a ship or at the front of a command? Has Congress designed a system that will develop a