

AMERICAN CIVIL-MILITARY INTEGRATION:  
UNIFICATION AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR, 1939-1947

THESIS

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This thesis is dedicated to Dr. James W. Pohl. Laetus sum  
laudari me abs te, magister, a laudato viro.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The unification of the armed forces of the United States is a subject which has not suffered from neglect. Since the passage of the National Security Act of 1947, which was the result of years of civil-military and intra-service conflict, military unification has been the subject of countless scholarly articles, theses, dissertations, and books, not to mention magazine articles, newspaper editorials and articles, and the like. The first attempt to synthesize unification processes into a readable whole was made by Major Lawrence J. Legere, Jr., now of the Institute for Defense Analysis, in his doctoral dissertation at Harvard in 1950, entitled "The Unification of the Armed Forces."<sup>1</sup> Major Legere merely attempted to outline the military unification conflict, based upon his experiences in the old War Department at the time. Considering the sheer amount of material with which he was no doubt overwhelmed, he performed his task very well indeed. However, what this endeavor meant in terms of the total subject was that the facts were worshipped to the exclusion of interpretation. Certainly, Major Legere did not fail in his objective, for what he set out to do was

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence J. Legere, "The Unification of the Armed Forces" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1950) (Hereinafter cited as Legere, "Unification").

to simplify the subject.

From 1950 to 1966, studies dealing with American civil-military relations never failed to mention the unification controversy. Such studies usually referred to Legere's work as the authoritative source, especially concerning aspects of the conflict just prior to World War II. In each case, the prime objective of these works was the investigation of something other than unification itself, as in John Ries' The Management of Defense,<sup>2</sup> or Paul Y. Hammond's Organizing for Defense,<sup>3</sup> both of which were interested in organizational dynamics. In 1966 Demetrios Caraley published The Politics of Military Unification, which dealt exclusively with the political mechanisms of the conflict from 1943 to 1949.<sup>4</sup> In this writer's opinion, Mr. Caraley's work has been challenged, but not yet surpassed as an analysis of these mechanisms.

One might well ask why, after such prodigious scholarship on the part of these and other skilled men, yet another study destined (as master's theses are always destined) for oblivion should be made. The answer will become clear if one merely reviews such works as those cited above: the historical perspective has been almost completely avoided, even though the unification conflict is very much a part of the military history of the

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<sup>2</sup>John Ries, The Management of Defense (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1964).

<sup>3</sup>Paul Y. Hammond, Organizing for Defense (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961).

<sup>4</sup>Demetrios Caraley, The Politics of Military Unification (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966).

United States. One common limitation of prior studies of the unification conflict is that it has been treated as though it occurred in a vacuum. Such a cul-de-sac approach might be useful for those who wish to study an isolated phenomenon of organization peculiar to the subject, but to the historian it is anathematic. So far as this writer is concerned, vital miscalculations about the conflict have resulted. Established premises based on such a limited concept of the conflict have precipitated, in turn, myths which are accepted a priori. The limited field of inquiry must, therefore, be discarded if a historical picture of the conflict is to result. For instance, the fact that war was occurring during much of the conflict has been singularly swept aside, as though it had little to do with the affair at all. The avoidance of this generally important fact has similarly pointed many analysts in the wrong direction when they ventured to explain away certain unaccountable developments of the conflict.<sup>5</sup> It is, therefore, this writer's faith in his craft as much as anything which leads him to believe that history can bring a much more satisfactory explanation to bear upon this subject than has come before him. This conflict, which occurred primarily between the years of 1939 and 1947, is now ripe for a historical investigation. The very same article of faith has led

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<sup>5</sup>For instance, the impending arrival of the quietly efficient British Imperial Staff to take part in the first "Anglo-British Conversations" of early 1941 did much to spur on staff developments within the American services at a time when one particular Admiral was resisting such developments within the Joint Board of the Army and Navy. See Chapter II, below, wherein the influence of the British Staff on American staff development is discussed.

this writer to believe that when the historical method has been applied to the conflict, something substantially different will result. Obviously, if such were not the case, this thesis would not have been done.

Since the unification conflict has so often been viewed in such a limited manner, we have lost sight of the fact that the subject is an excellent vantage point from which to view modern warfare such as we saw in the Second World War. While previous studies have taken unification and atomized it into limited studies, this paper proposes to utilize unification in a partial manner as a means of viewing warfare itself, as well as the changes which warfare underwent during this period. Viewed in such a way, unification's value is that it was a constituent part of those changes in warfare. The unification conflict is that one continuing, constant thread which ran throughout the entire Second World War and its aftermath. That thread was nothing less than a clue of how the United States' civil-military establishment was going to cope with the demands of a world which had radically changed, many times beyond the range of America's ability to affect the way those changes were occurring. Simultaneously, the changing demands of the nature of warfare itself and American attitudes about meeting those demands were revealed during the various stages of disagreement concerning the national security both during and after the war. Since the American military establishment is still trying to cope with these changes, the study may take on an indirect contemporary relevance, which one might presume good history is wont to do.

Within such a framework, therefore, this thesis stands as an historical reinterpretation of the unification conflict in the United States which culminated in the passage of the National Security Act of 1947. Simply put, one aim of this thesis is to place the unification conflict in the proper perspective of its own historical environment: a world torn by warfare, and a desperate nation hurrying to bring war under its control at a time when such controls were either non-existent or so primitive as to be ultimately dangerous.

The unification conflict is indeed a modern chronicle; yet, conflicts surrounding the status of the military within the state's system of government are not modern phenomena, and neither is the notion of civil-military cooperation for national survival. The continuing good will of civilian leaders and their military counterparts on a mutually beneficial basis is of the most manifest importance in the survival of government, regardless of creed.

Warfare has not always been, of course, the highly scientific affair that we know today. Prior to the rise of nationalism, warfare was based upon the heroic system, in which battles between kingdoms swirled about the state leader.<sup>6</sup> If we are to believe Sir William Charles Oman, this heroic system was known as Comitatus to the Teutonic knights. This ethic dictated that the king was both civil and military leader,

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<sup>6</sup>Sir William Charles Oman, The History of the Art of War in the Middle Ages, rev. ed. by J. H. Beecher (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1953), p. 8.



and that when he fell on the battlefield, both the kingdom and the army fell with him. The ancients realized the benefits of such a system, and had their equivalent to Comitatus as well. Alexander was one of these warrior-kings; as he sallied across the Sea of Mamara in 334, B.C., to find the Persian King Darius, he was as much troubled by what lay behind him as in front of him. In the front, the situation was ultimately military; but behind him in Greece his political enemies, led by Demosthenes, were rapidly garnering domestic opposition to Alexander's rule. Knowledge of this opposition led Alexander to change his strategy somewhat. As he approached the Granicus River in Asia Minor, he was faced with an option: he could attack the Persians directly (even though he was outnumbered), or he could circle the Persian army, and bide his time until he had sufficiently built up his army. While advantages were clearly on the side of Darius, all of Alexander's generals counselled against an attack. But Alexander was aware of Demosthenes' intrigues in Athens and knew also that a battle won at the Granicus would be a battle won at home as well.<sup>7</sup> This factor, reputedly, drew Alexander into battle the next day. Here at the Granicus Alexander defeated the Persians and later solidified his position at home and abroad in the decisive victory over the Persians at

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<sup>7</sup>John Frederick Charles Fuller, The Generalship of Alexander the Great (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1960), pp. 99-101. See also Sir William Tarn's Alexander the Great (Boston: Beacon Press, 1956) II, 286-7, in which is confirmed that Arrian also thought that Alexander and his generals were quite anxious concerning the newly formed Hellenic League, over which Alexander had been given supreme rule. Demosthenes' plots are now well known, but Alexander was not certain of them then.

Issue.

While historical comparisons are occasionally odious, there is much to be found here which has a bearing upon this thesis. At first glance one may see even here the relationship between governing and warring. Yet, civil-military relationships as they bear upon national action have been inordinately difficult for American leaders to grasp, and, therefore, it will be the business of this thesis to examine the modern problem of unification with a view to unearthing this relationship between the state and the military in this country.

That such a relationship has changed phenomenally in our nation quite recently makes the explication of the unification struggle that much more difficult and esoteric. This change in relationship between the state and the military was manifested by the attempt to meet the new sort of warfare which emerged during the Second World War. Because the Second World War was responsible for much of this change, this phenomenon is by no means restricted to the United States. Since the Second World War there has been an increasing need for the councils of government all over the world to adjust themselves to the new order. Even at present the Second World War is central to the state of world existence, so much did it impose radical changes upon perceptions of government and warring. The validity of such a contention has already been confirmed by such analysts as Harold Lasswell.<sup>8</sup> Specifically, Lasswell

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<sup>8</sup>Harold Lasswell, "The Garrison State Hypothesis Reconsidered," in Changing Patterns of Military Politics, ed. by Samuel P. Huntington (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), pp. 51-70.

views with alarm a trend of certain superpowers in the direction of what he calls a "garrison state."

Similarly, in a discussion of how the Second World War brought about such changes, Hans Adolph Jacobsen has maintained that, during this time, warfare in its new aspect was so foreign to prior experience that it somehow slipped out of man's control and took on a dynamism all its own. In such a context as all this rapid change, the Second World War could be considered a revolutionary sort of war.<sup>9</sup> Such a view is supported by the now apparent indecision by American and other Allied leaders after the war as to what to do with the victory they had just engineered. During the war these leaders did fashion a primitive sort of personal cooperation between allied elements and between different arms of those elements. That they did so was indeed laudable, but at the same time many of these mechanisms for control of war were so transitory that if they had been allowed to remain as they were until they were faced head-on with the immeasurably more complex postwar military situation, these controls would have been flimsy enough to invite disaster of one sort or another. True, the machinery designed in such an ad hoc manner carried the allied forces into a war which ended in a victory over an enemy which, conversely, seemed to exemplify every facet of the new sort of war. However, Professor Jacobsen observed that war by this time had progressed to such an extent that the whole process was out of control, and

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<sup>9</sup>Hans Adolph Jacobsen, "The Second World War as a problem in Historical Research," World Politics, XVI (July, 1964), 638.

that war had taken on a momentum that had to be taken into hand by the free world's leaders. We might say then that the Second World War could be characterized by a mad rush to bring wars and warfare back under some sort of institutionalized human control. After 1941 war became so proliferated on this globe that such a feat seemed beyond comprehension. It would be worth noting here, parenthetically, that when Jacobsen wrote of control of war, he did not imply the abolition of war, but only the manipulation of its conduct.<sup>10</sup>

When Americans finally grasped the idea that it was not possible to avoid a new war, and Pearl Harbor admirably drove home the point, those mechanisms of military control which were extant had been so depressed that the American military position was woefully incomplete, incompetent, and fanciful in its stated objective of national defense. A major part of this problem was directly related to the historical trend of American attitudes toward the military. In the military history of the United States, it is axiomatic that during times of peace deliberate neglect of the military was the order of the day, and that during times of war, conversely, the military suffered from an elevation to monumental importance and influence in national and political affairs.<sup>11</sup> When the Second World War ended, the

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Prior to World War II this axiom was tantamount to military doctrine. For a salient example see Walter Millis, Arms and Men (New York: Mentor Books, 1956), p. 86. A general view of this American military-political ethic is also available in Russell F. Weigley's History of the United States Army (New York: Macmillan and Company, 1967), p. xiii. Because of this trend in attitudes concerning the place of the military in American society, there

United States would never again enjoy such prerogatives; for in the crisis atmosphere of a postwar world, the military would be required to remain in a status more closely allied to its stature in wartime. The reason was that the world situation became as much a military situation as it was a political situation. The political element, to be sure, still officiated; but the station of the military had definitely altered itself beyond the old recognition. Thus, the military of the United States had acquired a new and exalted position in the scheme of American government, if only because it could not recede once more into its historical cocoon. Additionally, these new military pressures which were revealed as hostilities unfolded meant that the military was going to be closer to civil power and to those traditionally sacrosanct civil channels of decision-making. The new proximity to the civil branches of government in effect gave the American military apparatus a new political role which it had never enjoyed to such an extent. Yet, the new demands of war exerted far more influence than that revealed within the military system. What actually occurred was that the political sphere of war control shifted as well; hence, what we have during the Second World War is a mutual accommodation of the civil and military sectors toward one another. Such a mutual accommodation, perforce, precludes any implication of any kind of one-sided "militarizing of America" during

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is no small amount of British disdain toward the American system to be found in John Frederick Charles Fuller's The Conduct of War, 1789-1961 (New Brunswick: The Rutgers University Press, 1961), p. 272.

that time.

In point of fact, the military did accrue more potential decision-making power but not to the detriment of civilian decision-making power. However, if the military has somehow come by a victory in this transformation since the advent of the war, it has indeed been a Pyrrhic one; at present, the controls which act upon the military of the United States are more numerous than ever before, and as a result of the military's part in the unification controversy many of these controls are of the military's own invention.

Impulses toward unification of the American armed forces were present long before 1939, although no one attempt to unify the Army and Navy was even partially successful.<sup>12</sup> The unification conflict with which this paper concerns itself is the one which was successful. As mentioned above, ways of looking at the unification conflict have evolved to the extent that trends resulting from prior analysis have come to be accepted a priori. Thus, one task of this thesis must be to examine unification in order to make a different case supporting those views already outlined by this writer.

The examination of these points of view already expressed has necessitated a new look at the events between 1939 and 1947 without relying overly upon works on the subject. By doing so, this writer has found it possible to view on his own the rather obvious trends in the unification affair. The first phase was

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<sup>12</sup>Curtis Tarr, "Unification of the Armed Forces: a century and a half of conflict" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Stanford University, 1962), table 2.2.

especially important because it was here that changing world conditions revealed the inherent weakness of strategic plans which were at that time based upon wholly fanciful assumptions. At the same time those mechanisms of joint Army and Navy coordination which had actually produced these unrealistic plans were put to a damning test by the rapidly multiplying world crises. Finally, during this phase the leadership of both the services was put to the same sort of test to adapt to changing conditions in the world. Neither the old leadership nor the old plans survived these new tests. In each case, the reason was the same: the interwar period had been effective in the debilitation of military men and their plans.

The second phase encompasses the early war period wherein the influence of America's allies, notably the British, became crucial as well as telling upon the American war organization. Although from the first days of the coalition the Americans had the last word on major war decisions, British influence upon the command structure (even upon the President) served to impose a rare type of peer-group pressure upon the American system. As time and the war progressed with the adjustments of American systems of control, the unification idea became a well-known and rather public idea. As a result, a third phase began with the first attempts by civilian and military leaders to give the unification idea de jure as well as de facto permanency. The last phase of unification revealed that what began as a "purely military" proposition to increase the efficiency of America at war had by the end of the war be-

come the basis for a totally new postwar, politico-military problem of adjustment. Thus, military and civilian adjustment to the requirements of warfare was the chief impetus for the organizational and doctrinal changes which took place between 1939 and 1947. Though the military was the chief actor in this drama for a time, its role was taken over by the political sphere which ultimately was to determine the entire postwar stance of the military system, including the station of the military in the picture of American national security.



CHAPTER II  
PRE WAR ORGANIZATION  
AND THE EMERGENCE OF  
COOPERATIVE VENTURES

It was one of those queer turns of history that on the very day General George Catlett Marshall assumed the post of Chief of Staff of the United States Army, the Germans invaded Poland. Marshall was to write a few days later, "my day of induction was momentous with the starting of what appears to be a world war."<sup>1</sup> No doubt Marshall entertained a suspicion or two that the forces he had just begun to command would in some way be involved in the fighting at one time or another. The total strength of the Army he commanded at the time was but 190,000 men, yet less than two years hence the Army would have grown well over 500 per cent.<sup>2</sup> The condition of the Army in 1939 was a perennial one. Following the traditional predilection of America to virtually ignore its own military affairs in times of relative peace, the strength and qual-

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<sup>1</sup>Forrest Pogue, George C. Marshall: Ordeal and Hope (New York: Viking Press, 1966), II, 2 (Hereinafter cited as Pogue, Marshall, II).

<sup>2</sup>Mark S. Watson, The U.S. Army in World War II--Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1950), p. 16 (Hereinafter cited as Watson, Chief of Staff).

ity of the Army had been allowed to diminish almost continuously since the Great War. While the Navy had enjoyed a brief respite during the mid-thirties and had been permitted to re-tool partially, the Army got no such favors from the Congress and dipped to an all-time low during the same time.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to the historic American timidity toward a large standing Army in peacetime, there were abroad in the nation isolationist tendencies which militated against any effort to work for increases in any defense-related field. The sturm und drang between the interventionists and the isolationists which occurred prior to the "phony war" had resulted in a consummate victory by the isolationists with the passage of the Neutrality Law of 1937. Indeed, the period before the war saw Democratic and Republican candidates alike with platforms built squarely upon the Neutrality Law. Isolationism during this period was not the special province of partisanship.<sup>4</sup> No small wonder, then, that the Army stayed in hiding much of the time; but, in all probability, the public was as confused as the Army.<sup>5</sup> Oddly enough, the Navy proved valuable to those isolationists who conceded the possibility of a proliferating European war. There was a public confidence that the Navy could act as a bulwark of defense by creating a protective ring around America,

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>4</sup>Selig Adler, The Isolationist Impulse (New York: Collier Books, Inc., 1961), p. 251.

<sup>5</sup>Robert A. Divine, Second Chance: The Triumph of Internationalism in America during World War II (New York: Atheneum, 1967), p. 22.

and it was this flimsy sentiment which allowed Congress with good conscience to authorize the building of new ships during the mid-thirties.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the Congress as a whole was more isolationist in temper than the American public they purported to represent. Dr. George H. Gallup later spoke of the public attitude during this time. He recalled:

One of the first polls we took in this business was on the question of appropriating more money for the army and the navy...back in...1935. We found in that very early poll that the people were strongly in favor of increasing appropriations...at a time when the Congress was going in exactly the other direction.<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Gallup's polls notwithstanding, so far as the Army was concerned, the attitude which Congress revealed at every turn was disheartening. In January, 1938, Louis Ludlow of Indiana proposed a constitutional amendment which would have required a national referendum before a declaration of war. That the amendment later did not gather the necessary two-thirds majority afforded little comfort: the vote was 209 in favor, and 188 against.<sup>8</sup> The Army alone was not closely concerned with the

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<sup>6</sup>Watson, Chief of Staff, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup>Dr. George H. Gallup, Address before the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Washington, D.C., June 17, 1939, quoted in Watson, Chief of Staff, pp. 15-17.

<sup>8</sup>U.S. Congress, House, A Joint Resolution to require a national referendum prior to a declaration of war, H.J. Res. 89, 76th Cong., 1st sess., 1939, Congressional Record, LXXXIV, 185. Also cited in Pogue, Marshall, II, 3, the Ludlow Amendment was not the only evidence of congressional resistance at the time; a glance at the Index of the Congressional Record during this same general period reveals that there were at least four bills pending before one or another of the houses of Congress which had as their chief aim the limitation of executive war-making initiative. See U.S. Congress, List of Joint Resolutions, 76th Cong., 1st sess., Congressional Record, LXXXIV, 2639.

proposed amendment by Ludlow. President Roosevelt, already laboring under the restrictive Neutrality Law, lost little love on Ludlow and those of similar persuasion then plaguing him on Capitol Hill. He was to write in a private letter:

National Defense represents too serious a danger especially in these modern times where distance has been annihilated, to permit delay and our danger lies in things like the Ludlow Amendment which appeal to people who, frankly, have no conception of what modern war, with or without a declaration of war, involves.<sup>9</sup>

Congressional resistance to preparedness did not substantially change in the months before the war. As late as 1940, Congress refused to give in to a request to add 166 aircraft to the Army Air Corps. Fifty-seven planes were finally received; the remainder of the allotment was refused on the grounds that those bombers which made up the bulk of the Army request were "offensive" rather than "defensive weapons." At the same time Deputy Chief of Staff Major General Stanley D. Embick wrote a note to his logistics officer which succinctly outlined what had become an ethic in America before the war: "Our national policy contemplates preparation for defense, not aggression."<sup>10</sup>

Clearly, the psychological effect upon the Army's leadership during the interwar period had been detrimental. Operating within such a hostile environment for so long, the Army had been

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<sup>9</sup>Franklin D. Roosevelt, FDR: His Personal Letters, 1928-1945, ed. by Eliot Roosevelt (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), IV, 751 (Hereinafter cited as FDR, Letters).

<sup>10</sup>Major General Stanley D. Embick, OCoFS 17840-115, quoted in Watson, Chief of Staff, p. 17. Oftentimes, official documents which are untitled are only assigned a subject number, called a "serial," which is the case herein. When titles have been given, they will be cited in the usual form.

profoundly affected in areas concerning strategic planning and preparedness. Officers like General Embick had attempted to tailor the service outlook to the mood of the country. The resultant accommodation made by the services over a period from 1920 to the late thirties meant, in effect, that the American armed services, by virtue of their ineffectual doctrines and strategies, had become rather passive handmaidens to an isolationist state. This passivity on the part of the services was to mean ultimately that when the time came for a revitalization of the defenses of the nation, these old ideas and mechanisms, tailored for a "defensive policy," were going to be challenged out of existence by the new, more aggressive demands of global warfare.

By 1939 the chief instrument of intra-service control and coordination which had evolved was the Joint Board of the Army and Navy, known simply as the Joint Board. Although the Joint Board had existed since 1903, when Secretary of War Elihu Root and Secretary of Navy Hilary A. Herbert had agreed to establish it, the board was far from effective during its entire life.<sup>11</sup> During the First World War the Joint Board had for all practical purposes ceased to exist, and when it began meeting once more in the 1920's, the work produced by the board was far from being expert. The Joint Board was composed of the Army's Chief of Staff and the Chief's top assistants, the General of the Air Corps, and Chief of the War Plans Division,

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<sup>11</sup>"General Order 107," (Washington: Headquarters of the Army, June 30, 1903), quoted in Watson, Chief of Staff, p. 79. See also Paul Hammond's Organizing for Defense (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 64-66.

while the Navy's Chief of Operations, Admiral of the Fleet, and President of the Navy General Board acted as their sometime counterparts. Both of these staff systems had developed during the period of general military reform of the first two decades of the century, and in neither case was the staff system beyond dispute as to its function or utility.

The Joint Board was never really conceived as a permanent mechanism. During its entire life, the Joint Board met on an ad hoc basis; in other words, it was a formal board, but without formal function. The mechanism which did the actual work, occasionally generated by the Joint Board's sporadic meetings, was the Joint Planning Committee (JPC). The JPC was composed of the War Plans Division of each service, and because the committee met much more frequently than did its parent board, the JPC tended to usurp many of the so-called functions of the higher-level Joint Board. The prime function of the Joint Planning Committee was to plan for war, whether a possibility for hostilities existed or not. During the 1920's a set of war plans was devised by this joint committee, which called them the "color series." Within this series, each separate color designated war plans which directed American forces against a particular country. For instance the color plan Red was directed against Britain, as remote as that possibility may have seemed then. Aside from Great Britain, one of the first objects of the JPC's anxieties was Japan, which was designated Orange. Though other plans had been written as well, Orange was the only one of the color series destined for any approximation of reality; and its elevation to this status was

going to be short-lived. The chief point to be made concerning the series of color plans, including Orange, is that they were grossly insufficient. That is to say, the color plans were based upon a certain requirement of forces necessary to do the particular job outlined in the plan. In no case did the force levels in the plans approximate the actual force levels in the United States Army. The quality of extant forces was not taken into account either. But the Orange plan was rather kind to the Navy, whose force level was consistent with those in the plan's outlines; the result of the color series was that they were excellent textbook exercises for the planners, but they were lacking in realism. Certain international developments, however, were about to impose a concert between the real and the ideal in these plans.

By 1931 the Japanese had embarked upon their Manchurian adventure, and later in the decade they moved southward into China itself. The latter move inspired the famed "quarantine" speech of the President in Chicago on October 5, 1937. Even Cordell Hull became rather intransigent toward the Japanese expansion by this time, and he even surprised himself when he pressed for a bigger Navy to dissuade Japan from further extending her "co-prosperity sphere."<sup>12</sup>

Until the declaration of war, American strategic mechanisms were to suffer under a great deal of pressure. Since these mechanisms had operated in such a sterile environment free from

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<sup>12</sup>Cordell Hull, The Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York: Macmillan, 1948), pp. 456-7.

pressure, their mettle was decidedly faulty. During this period the Orange plan was to undergo so many revisions that it ultimately would be revised out of existence and superseded by what came to be known as the Rainbow plans. If external pressure were not enough, there were intra-service disputes concerning what sort of defense should be provided for in those days prior to the invasion of Poland. The Tydings-McDuffie Bill of 1934 had the effect of extending the American defense responsibilities far to the western Pacific when it guaranteed Philippine Independence.<sup>13</sup> Thereafter, General Embick, then of the War Plans Division, would advocate a retrenchment on a line bordered by Alaska, Hawaii, and Panama. Such a view was a purely Army response to a situation which was governed by more than Army capabilities. Embick and others within the War Plans Division believed that the line they had proposed was the only one which could be feasibly defended with extant strength.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Tydings-McDuffie Act, 48 Stat. 456 (1934). See also, Henry Steel Commanger's Documents in American History (New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts, 1950), pp. 467-71, as well as Henry Stimson, and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1947), pp. 148-50 for Stimson's commentary on events which surrounded the act on its way through the Congress.

<sup>14</sup>Brigadier General Stanley D. Embick, "Military Aspects of a situation that would result from retention by the U.S. of a military (including naval) commitment in the Philippine Islands," JB ser 573, December 2, 1935, quoted in Marice Matloff, and Edwin M. Snell, The U.S. Army in World War II--Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1953), pp. 2-3 (Hereinafter cited as Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning).



The Navy was bound by no such restriction, and it was probably the naval presence in the Pacific which afforded succor to the authors of the Tydings-McDuffie bill at a time when the strength levels of the Army were falling to an interwar low.<sup>15</sup> Because such disagreements existed within the services, as well as without, only continued Japanese imperialism could compel a reappraisal of the old 1928 version of the Orange plan.

Although the first Orange revision was ordered by the Joint Board as early as March 17, 1937, a new Orange plan was not approved by the service secretaries until almost one year later, on February 28, 1938. Behind the delay was a hot debate over roles and capabilities of the respective services within the Joint Planning Committee. Finally, the revision problem had to be taken from the JPC altogether and given over to two senior "far-east specialists" from each service--Major General Embick, and Rear Admiral James O. Richardson. Once this was done, less than one month elapsed before the final plan was turned over to the Secretaries of War and Navy for approval.<sup>16</sup>

Under the new Orange plan, reality was avoided rather than embraced. The round of discussions by senior planners Embick and Richardson was more aptly called arbitration than planning, per se. The arbitration resulted in an Army-Navy quid pro quo which was characterized as follows. First, the Navy was to delete all references in Orange to offensive war in

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<sup>15</sup>Watson, Chief of Staff, p. 16.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

the Pacific, and especially to the destruction of the Japanese Fleet. Second, all projected attempts on the part of the Navy to gain strategic advantage in the Pacific were to be stricken from the plan. As payment for the naval amendments to the new Orange plan, the Army agreed to give up its insistence upon the stipulation that any adventures west of Midway Island be specifically approved by the President. Furthermore, the Army conceded that its position in the Philippines was "hopeless." A token force "with little hope of reinforcement" was to remain in the islands "in order to deny Manila Bay to Orange forces."<sup>17</sup>

The formulation of a new Orange plan had demanded, therefore, that the Army play a role of moderation to the Navy's role of "extremist." Army planners had become quite comfortable in their depressed role during the interwar period and, in retrospect, seemed to have accurately judged by this time that such plans as the Navy advocated were not consonant with the "public's" wishes. The strategic reflection of this timidity in the face of such wishes, as they were portrayed in the Congress, was an almost dogmatic reliance upon doctrines of passive defense. One planner, Colonel J. W. Anderson, was to capsule the Army attitude in force for the time being:

Peace, Pacifism, and economy over a period of twenty years had forced the war department to accept a military mission which contemplated a passive defense of the Continental United States and our overseas possessions. Such a mission is only consonant with the stonewall de-

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<sup>17</sup>Joint Army & Navy Basic War Plan Orange, February 21, 1938, JB ser 618, AG 223, AG Classified Files, quoted in Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning, p. 3.

fense of complete isolation.<sup>18</sup>

Passive defense, as the watchword of the Army, had not run its course; and American strategy as a result was going to contract even further with the new Rainbow plans before reality compelled the armed services to confront it in harmony.

The drawing of the Rainbow series was to be on the whole the first step, however halting, toward strategic reality. Only the disintegration of world peace and the forthcoming British influence on American staff evolution would force the American planners to adopt a somewhat more realistic bent. The reasons for this change of mind were not always strategic. American planners watched incredulously as their problems multiplied with the advent of yet another potential enemy in Europe. Whereas the old Orange series had envisioned conflict with a single enemy, events in Europe in 1938 served notice upon those planners that they would most likely have to meet more than one enemy in a future conflict. Germany was fast consolidating its position on the continent; at home, Hitler had accelerated rearmament, reintroduced conscription, absorbed the Sudetenland, and remilitarized the Rhine Valley. As German troops massed along the Czech border, Army planners in Washington moved to extend the scope of their conjectures to correspond with the change in the European situation. On November 11, 1938, Commander Robert S. Chew, then Secretary of the Joint Board, sent a letter to the JPC entitled "A Study of Joint Action in the event of a violation of the Monroe Doctrine by a Fascist Power," which

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<sup>18</sup>Colonel J. W. Anderson, quoted in Watson, Chief of Staff, p. 3.

first approached the problem of fighting more than one enemy at a time. His directive to the JPC requested a study of:

...the various practicable course of action open to the military and naval forces of the United States in the event of (a) a violation of the Monroe Doctrine by one or more of the Fascist powers, and (b) a simultaneous attempt to expand Japanese influence in the Philippines.<sup>19</sup>

During this phase of planning, which lasted from November, 1938, until well into 1939, the joint planners operated with bases of several a priori assumptions which tended to apologize for hemispheric defense policies already current in isolationist military thought. The stipulation was made that the Fascist powers would only invade the western hemisphere if Britain and France were neutral at the time. This stipulation automatically precluded the possibility that American forces would intervene in the European struggle before these two countries were "neutralized." Second, it was assumed that Japan would not launch an offensive in the Pacific to which the United States would be compelled to respond. That is, it was considered highly improbable that Japan would attack the Philippines. Coincidental to this assumption, the planners also maintained that the Latin American states would be neutral.<sup>20</sup> Such a set of assumptions on the part of the Joint Board was predictive of the direction which would be taken in the actual planning for contingencies in the Rainbow series. Rainbow was to maintain initially the bent toward un-

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<sup>19</sup> Commander Robert S. Chew, "A Study of Joint Action in the event of a violation of the Monroe Doctrine by Fascist Powers," JB 325, ser 634, November 12, 1938, quoted in Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning, p. 5.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

realistic planning which traditionally had been established through the Orange series. Yet, even hemispheric defense contemplated a tremendous increase in the strength of the Army, including the formation of American Expeditionary Forces. The folly of such a projection was underscored by the announcement by General Marshall at the time that the United States was then only at twenty-five per cent strength.<sup>21</sup>

At first, four separate and distinct plans within the series had been envisioned. Rainbow One would have been the most limited, providing as it did for only a piecemeal defense of the western hemisphere south to Brazil; Rainbow Two stipulated that those operations originally found in Rainbow One would be extended into the western Pacific; and Rainbow Three only extended operations of Rainbow One south of Brazil. Rainbow Four, on the other hand, demanded a plan so involved that it quite literally overwhelmed the members of the JPC in that all the old basic assumptions were blithely ignored in the outline. The difficulty involved in coping with this entirely new set of requirements led the JPC to recommend that a whole revision be made of the Rainbow series. The main difference between Rainbow Four and its brother plans was that it provided for projection of American armed forces beyond the hemisphere. Rainbow Two had also provided for this contingency, but the projection of these armed forces had hypothetically been in the direction of the Pacific, where clear-cut American in-

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<sup>21</sup>George C. Marshall, Selected Speeches and Statements of General of the Army George C. Marshall, ed. by Harvey DeWeerd (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1945), p. 39 (Hereinafter cited as Marshall, Speeches).

terests were discernible. Rainbow Four's demands saw troops landing across the Atlantic, in either Europe or Africa. Until this time, the total direction of forces toward the Pacific was fairly certain; but the inclusion of Rainbow Four in the series presented a major and rather serious departure from all the old avoidance of these newest strategic realities which were developing in Europe.<sup>22</sup>

Aside from the difficulty the JPC was having by trying to formulate so many plans at once, there was yet another problem--the continuing disputes between the Army and Navy planners concerning the usefulness of a Pacific commitment. Considering the wording and priority of the first four Rainbow plans, it would not be impossible to speculate that these plans, in themselves, represented the various divergent views held by the planners. Brigadier General George V. Strong, then on the committee, described the dispute in this way:

Army members...consider that an advance to the western Pacific does not properly come within the scope of hemisphere defense; that it would be an extremely costly undertaking and that the benefits to be derived therefrom are in no wise commensurate with the time, effort, and cost involved.<sup>23</sup>

By June 30, 1939, the Joint Board had approved the descriptions of all the plans in the Rainbow series to date. There was still another plan to be included; Rainbow Five, as it was

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<sup>22</sup>Joint Planning Committee, "Alternative situations set up in Directive for Joint Rainbow Plans," JB 325, ser 642, June 23, 1939, quoted in Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning, pp. 7-8.

<sup>23</sup>Brigadier General George V. Strong, "Memorandum dealing with JB 325, ser 634," WPD 4175, May 2, 1939, quoted in Watson, Chief of Staff, p. 99.

called, was not a part of the original directions issued to the JPC in May, 1939, but apparently was added later.<sup>24</sup> That the Rainbow Five description did appear by the time the Joint Board had approved its committee's efforts at the end of June indicated much indecision among members of the Joint Board itself about just what it did want to achieve in facing the several contingencies presented by the new world situation. Therefore, not only was the Joint Board to resolve and satisfy strategic demands, but their job was made that much more difficult by attempting to choose between differing perceptions of American responsibilities. The approval of this first set of four plans by the Joint Board also represented a defeat for Strong and his fellow dissidents, who argued that the extreme western defense line was too far off to be successfully defended. What these first four plan descriptions did provide for was a primary role by the Navy's Pacific Fleet, which was still agitating for a role similar to the one it had with the first Orange plan. Seemingly, the advocates of strict hemisphere defense as well as naval projection to the Pacific had been satisfied. But, as events were to prove later, the last Rainbow was to be the most crucial of these several plans. When it finally appeared in the documents of the Planning Committee for approval by the Joint Board, Rainbow Five was the only plan which approximated the situation the United States was eventually required to meet; to wit:

Project the armed forces of the United States to the

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<sup>24</sup>Legere, "Unification," p. 191.

Eastern Atlantic and to either or both of the African or European continents, as rapidly as possible consistent with carrying out the missions in a above Rainbow One, in order to effect the defeat of Germany, or Italy, or both. This plan will assume concerted action between the United States, Great Britain, and France.<sup>25</sup>

Rainbow Five's departure from the first four plans did not represent the present policy of the executive branch, which was still compelled to do service to the idea of neutrality. The inclusion of the last Rainbow did indicate that some distillation of dissenting and divergent views was taking place within the Joint Planning Committee and that the Joint Board was well aware of what was happening there.

Upon examination, the whole Rainbow series reveals the influence of the Navy and its ideas about hemispheric defense. The promise of naval action was pervasive throughout the structure of the first four plans, at least, and played no mean part in the last Rainbow. Rainbows One, Two, and Three either eliminated or minimized the role of military forces; and Rainbow Four described the naval role in such a way that it would eclipse any possible Army function in the plan. Since the exact origin and date of the last Rainbow is in doubt, having appeared as it did between May and June, 1939, in the JPC's list for consideration, it was possible that number five was the result of a compromise within the JPC, an afterthought by the Joint Board, or honest initiative on the part of either. In any case, the various developments of the Rainbow series are more indicative of the political intra-service process than they are of any particular plan which may have been precipitated. There were

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 192.



two rather divergent influences at work here. The first was the desire of the planners to plan in concert with the temper and mood of the nation. The other pressures were those arising from the very real changes in world conditions which tended to undermine assumptions grounded upon the inferences drawn from the former pressure. The discordant note here was simply founded in the fact that American sentiment was grossly off-key in its reading of the verities of the international situation.

As soon as the Joint Board approval came through in June, the JPC went to work on implementation of these plans. Each plan in the Rainbow series envisioned an Army force level far beyond the actual strength of the Army. The President had just turned the Army down for another troop increase request.<sup>26</sup> As early as December, 1938, the Assistant Secretary of War, Louis Johnson, had alerted the Army Chief of Staff, Malin Craig, to the possibility of fighting for a troop increase; yet, that spring Roosevelt balked at the idea. Hence, the Rainbow plans were revised for the better part of eight months with the idea in mind that those troops necessary to effect the plans would be forthcoming. The planners had no right to expect such increases, given the reluctance of the Congress to afford the country with things military. The disappointment on the part of the planners when the request was turned down was manifest in a flurry of staff papers which circulated in planning sections in WPD that summer.<sup>27</sup> In the meantime during the summer and autumn of 1939, Rainbow One had been sufficiently developed to

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<sup>26</sup>Watson, Chief of Staff, p. 102. <sup>27</sup>Ibid., fn. 40-41.

gain a final approval.

Outside the War Department and Navy Department there was another development that summer which was to prove germane to the problem of unrealistic and ill-formed military planning. In August, an Executive Order was issued which stated that the Joint Board and

...related lesser joint agencies now functioning by understanding between the Secretary of War and Secretary of Navy, shall hereafter exercise their functions...under the direction and supervision of the President as Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States.<sup>28</sup>

It is quite possible that the issuance of this Executive Order was the first in a chain of moves by the President to isolate Secretary of War Harry Woodring, who from this time until his resignation was demanded by FDR on June 19, 1940, was increasingly resistant to the President's foreign policy.<sup>29</sup> There was also the matter of a clash of personalities between Woodring and his assistant, Louis Johnson. Johnson was an able, ambition-ridden, and ruthless administrator, who was very much the interventionist. Woodring, being an ardent isolationist, was just the opposite. The Executive Order of August 1, 1939, cut away the Secretaries of War and Navy from the ordinary military decision-making process. The resultant fragmentation of the policy-making machinery at such a high level did much to upset the scheme of military planning. It was soon to become very evident

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<sup>28</sup>See S. Res. 185, 76th Cong., 2nd sess. (1939), for a text of the order.

<sup>29</sup>See FDR, Letters, pp. 1041-43, for an exchange between President Roosevelt and Secretary Woodring on the occasion of Woodring's resignation.

that the opening of the White House to the military was going to have telling effects.<sup>30</sup>

As work proceeded on the other Rainbow plans through the winter of 1939-40, the planners in JPC began to have their doubts about the validity of plans which doggedly held on to the idea of strict hemispheric defense when it was becoming obvious to all that Great Britain and France were the next countries on Hitler's list. Though Rainbows One and Four were in the final stages of development, on April 9, 1940, the members of the Joint Planning Committee agreed to send the Joint Board the following memorandum:

In view of the present world situation, the Joint Planning Committee has considered it advisable to initiate preliminary studies required for Rainbow no. 5 in advance of Rainbows no. 3 and 4, upon which no action has as yet been taken.<sup>31</sup>

From this point on, the members of the JPC and the Joint Board began to deal realistically with strategic problems for the first time. The world situation could have hardly been pleasing to the planners who cited it as a reason for developing Rainbow Five. That April, German paramilitary and marine forces under Nikolaus von Falkenhorst established a beachhead in Norway after having jumped off from a just-conquered Denmark. Allied forces sent there in an attempt to keep the Germans in check failed, and as a consequence, the British government of Chamberlain fell, to be replaced on May 14, 1940, by the government of Winston S. Churchill. Simultaneously the Germans moved

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<sup>30</sup>See, for example, this chapter, footnote 63.

<sup>31</sup>"JB serial 642," quoted in Legere, "Unification," p. 13.

west from their homeland, invested the Low Countries, swung south to sever the French defense in twain, and began to strangle the fragments of the French Army. Against such a dramatic back-drop, the Army planners counselled moderation, although it was conceded that a general European war was imminent. The Army planners had no assurances that the Germans would not take Great Britain. In light of that fact a hemispheric defense seemed most prudent. The Lend-Lease program which was to help save Britain had not yet been instituted, and the general view within the Joint Board was that Great Britain would fall quickly after France was conquered.

On May 22, 1940, this was apparently the picture General Marshall had in his mind when he went to a conference at the White House with Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles; Admiral Harold R. Stark, Chief of Naval Operations; and the President. As Marshall presented the outline for defense based upon this newer, gloomier picture, he got the impression that Mr. Welles agreed with him "fully." Since the President and the Admiral did not offer objections, Marshall presumed that they felt "we must not become involved with Japan, that we must not concern ourselves beyond the 180th meridian, and that we must concentrate on the South American situation."<sup>32</sup> Although such assumptions as Marshall outlined were directly from Rainbow One, he apparently was not satisfied with his own presenta-

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<sup>32</sup>Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall, "National Strategic Decisions," WPD 4175-7, May 22, 1940, quoted in Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning, p. 13.

tion. When he got back to the War Department, he set his planners to work on a revision of Rainbow Four. He began by describing the following premise for them:

Special Situation:--the termination of the war in Europe is followed by a violation of the letter or the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine in South America by Germany or Italy. This is coupled with armed aggression by Japan against United States' interests in the Far East. Other nations are neutral.<sup>33</sup>

Though President Roosevelt said little during the meeting to give Marshall the impression that he disagreed with his original view, it was not long before Marshall's premise was superseded by at least two changes in the crisis. First, between the meeting of May 22, and the final approval by FDR of Rainbow Four on June 13, the Lend-Lease program was in the beginning state of construction. The Lend-Lease innovation radically altered the chances for British survival and began to negate Marshall's assumption that the country would fall. By this time, Roosevelt had apparently decided that he would support Britain with military supplies as best he could within the framework provided by Congress.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, he did not presume that Britain would fall. The second factor was the French fleet, which was supposed to, but did not, fall into German or Italian hands. The President's conclusions pointed American strategy in the direction of Rainbow Five, where it would rest until U. S. involvement in the Second World War. The same morning he approved the Rainbow Four plan, now clearly superseded by events in Europe, the President surprisingly presented the two intelligence chiefs of

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid.      <sup>34</sup>FDR, Letters, p. 1037.

the Army and Navy with a scenario all his own, including a six-month projection of the situation as he read it.

1. Time. Fall and Winter 1940.
2. Britain and the British Empire are still intact.
3. France is occupied, but the French government and the remainder of its forces are still resisting, perhaps in North Africa.
4. The surviving forces of the British and French navies in conjunction with the U.S. Navy, are holding the Persian Gulf, Red Sea and the Atlantic from Morocco to Greenland.
5. Allied land forces are maintaining the present hold in the Near East. Turkey maintains its present political relationship to the Allies.
6. Russia and Japan are inactive, taking no part in the war.
7. The U.S. active in the war, but with naval and air forces only. Plan production is progressing to its maximum. America is providing part of Allied pilots. Morocco and Britain are being used as bases of supplies shipped from the Western Hemisphere. American shipping is transporting supplies to the Allies. The U.S. Navy is providing most of the force for the Atlantic Blockade.<sup>35</sup>

Although the military planners had not written off Great Britain completely, as shown by their request to begin devising Rainbow Five, they most definitely favored a strictly hemispheric defense system. General Marshall, and presumably most of his subordinates, maintained that all material must remain in the United States for the ultimate defense (a "stonewall defense," Colonel Anderson had called it), rather than to go toward the assistance of Britain. Much of the impetus for assistance to Britain came from Roosevelt himself, who, after having received a message from Churchill a few days after the latter came to power, seemed committed to violating the neutrality laws then still current. When Churchill's first request for military supplies was received, General Marshall's response was negative.

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<sup>35</sup>Matloff and Snell, Strategic Planning, pp. 13-14.

At first, it seemed that Marshall had difficulty weighing the build-up of his own forces against the chances for the survival of Britain, which, according to his subordinates, were minimal.<sup>36</sup>

If Marshall envisioned support from his naval counterpart, Admiral Stark, he was mistaken. Stark, then Chief of Naval Operations, was a long-time friend of Roosevelt's and was "regarded in Washington as an able officer unduly responsive to Roosevelt's views."<sup>37</sup> When Roosevelt answered Churchill's initial wire on May 18, the President promised he would assist the Allies with aircraft, but he balked on giving Churchill the "45 or 50 old destroyers" requested, saying that Congress would have to authorize such a step. Roosevelt mentioned that Congress was not in the right mood.<sup>38</sup> It was essentially the thorny legal problems surrounding the transfer of destroyers that ultimately led to the Lend-Lease innovation later that year.<sup>39</sup>

The final transition to strategy as found in Rainbow Five had not yet been inexorably decided. The President's hypothetical projection was still under study for the rest of the year, and the ideas inherent in his position were meeting with particular opposition from Brigadier General George Strong, who had long maintained that Britain would fall shortly after the fall of France. But the President remained unmoveable, mainly because as negotiations for American equipment went on, so did the British defense together with its survival in the face of

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<sup>36</sup>Pogue, Marshall, II, 124. <sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Winston S. Churchill, Their Finest Hour (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), p. 25 (Hereinafter cited as Churchill, Their Finest Hour).

<sup>39</sup>FDR. Letters, pp. 1050-1, and 1061-2.

an increasingly hostile Germany.

It was, therefore, an eventful year so far as the planners were concerned. The culmination of months of planning was unbalanced by the insistence of the Commander in Chief to pursue a course very nearly opposite to the course recommended by many of his military advisors. Yet the Commander in Chief had more imponderables to deal with than the military planners, and these additions markedly affected his beliefs. While American strategy had been a fanciful abstraction in the old days of the Orange plans, world events had forced a change by those in the military staff and those who controlled them, such as Marshall and Stark. Because Roosevelt proved correct later, history will not fault his overriding the decisions of experienced military planners. On the other hand, herein was demonstrated a tendency of any staff--the tendency to become dogmatic regarding a particular line of thought which it had developed after long, tedious hours of deliberation. In all fairness, no military staff at the time would have hazarded a prediction that Germany would not attempt to invest the British Isles on the heels of the resounding successes they enjoyed on the continent that year. Hence, the survival of Britain was one of those imponderables upon which the military genius counts but which dismays the ordinary staff man. One inestimable benefit was derived from the prewar period by the politico-military system; those world conditions which forced a more realistic strategic appraisal were the same conditions which drove Army and Navy planners together and then forged them as one into



the larger politico-military system which was also then in the process of formation and adjustment. These new mechanisms raised from the old chaos were to be responsible for the conduct of the most total and global war known to man. By virtue of the same processes of regeneration and adjustment, old mechanisms of control and coordination withered away under the strain.

Into this maelstrom of activity and conflicting influences another influence was injected from afar, quite outside American control. This influence was to be no less effective in changing American strategic thought and doctrine than the disputes, revisions, and blank walls the planners had run into on their own prior to their eventual experience in coalition planning. This new pressure was the British Staff, which was looking more and more to the United States and its military for assistance as the European war became more pronounced. The Imperial General Staff was to be one of the great influences in the movement of the American military system toward unification.

In the early days of the Orange and Rainbow plans, the Joint Board and the JPC were forced to look upon the world situation with a jaundiced eye. The planners had found it necessary to assume that America would have to fight alone, but only one enemy at a time. When this faulty premise changed, the Rainbow plans superseded the Orange plans. Still, the early Rainbow assumptions were limited in that they did not make an allowance for alliances or coalitions. The many revisions of Rainbow and

Orange were results of such deficiencies. When the war drew closer, the number of international variants decreased considerably. The most important of these intangibles was the situation of Great Britain vis-a-vis America. The community of interests between the two countries was fairly obvious. Britain clearly had as much basis for concern over the western Pacific as did the United States. The safety of the Pacific demanded that the Panama Canal be kept open to sympathetic nations such as Britain. The safety of Panama likewise demanded that the Caribbean be protected. Neither could the vital interests of the Atlantic be ignored: the freedom of the shipping lanes was of utmost importance to both the British and American economies, and one of the earlier Rainbow plans clearly recognized this need. Concerning one strategic point after another, the vital interests of the United States and Great Britain were nearly identical.

As a result of the events which first sparked the first revision of the old Orange plan, there developed simultaneously a highly secret effort within the Navy to find out how best to serve these communities of interest between Great Britain and the United States. In December, 1937, there began quiet, "unofficial, and private" inquiries into the strategic state of mind in Britain. Some years later, the first of these missions was revealed in a testimony before the Congress.<sup>40</sup> While there were certain aspects of rivalry between the British and Ameri-

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<sup>40</sup>Admiral Royal E. Ingersoll, before the Joint Committee of Congress on the Investigation of the Pearl Harbor Attack, 79th Cong., 1st sess., in Pearl Harbor Attack (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1946), pp. 4273-77.

can navies since the Washington Conference of 1922, which limited naval armaments, cooperation between the two in World War I had inspired unofficial sentiments of rapport. On the basis of these "unofficial" sentiments, Captain Royal E. Ingersoll undertook a trip to London for conversations with the British Admiralty. The mission was described as "private and purely exploratory," yet there were several facets of the mission which indicated that such a trip as Captain Ingersoll's was certainly more than "private" or "purely exploratory," or, for that matter, "unofficial." The original purpose of the trip was to determine the feasibility of assumptions about Britain in the Orange plan, then under revision. Ingersoll himself was the director of the Navy's War Plans Division, and as such, a member of the Joint Planning Committee. Far from being the result of Ingersoll's own initiative, he was ordered on the mission to London by the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral William D. Leahy, later to become the first Chief of Staff to the President. The final blow to any contention that Ingersoll's trip was a casual one was the fact that the Captain had been given specific verbal instructions by the President.<sup>41</sup>

As payment for his travels to the Admiralty, Ingersoll returned to the United States with an "agreed record" in hand, which approved Anglo-American naval reciprocity in the event of a Pacific war. As an afterthought, "the serious problem which would arise if Germany was hostile was referred to."<sup>42</sup> That

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid.      <sup>42</sup>Ibid.

the mission was exclusively naval was not particularly unusual. One abiding belief then current was that the situation which faced the United States was preeminently a naval one--that of maintaining solvency in the western Pacific. For that reason, Army participation in the conversations would have unduly complicated the matter at hand. The British reciprocated with a mission of their own. Five months later the British Admiralty assigned a mission to one of their planners to continue the "exploratory" discussions which Ingersoll had begun the year earlier.<sup>43</sup>

The Navy was in an infinitely better position to carry on such international missions, whether they were in fact unofficial or not. The Army was still struggling with civil reluctance toward preparedness, admirably reflected in the record of attempts for increased prewar appropriations. The isolationist sentiment was instrumental in indirectly preventing any such mission by the Army. When Marshall took over the Army as Chief of Staff, he took charge of a force which was rated 17th among the world's armed forces; yet in that same year the Congress had allowed a 20 per cent increase in naval building.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, the President was a "Navy man" through and through, since he had been an assistant Secretary of the Navy during the Wilson administration. Roosevelt's Chief of Staff, Admiral Leahy, outlined the President's view of warfare in general; it was a naval view of power, and not

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<sup>43</sup>Watson, Chief of Staff, p. 99.

<sup>44</sup>Pogue, Marshall, II, 6.

unlike the naval doctrine, could have been found nestled in the pages of Mahan's Influence of Sea Power upon History.

Roosevelt was thoroughly devoted to the avoidance of war by every honorable means, but the lessons of world history with which he was so familiar had convinced him of the necessity for adequate naval preparation to prevent any invasion of the United States from overseas.<sup>45</sup>

By the winter of 1939-40, the Navy occupied by far the best position in relation to the ability to get a better hearing at the hands of Congress, particularly in areas pertaining to increases in size and materiel procurement. Because of its self-confidence, the Navy was able to send missions abroad such as that of Ingersoll's and in general to pretend to represent the military stance of the American government to the British. At the same time, the Army's Chief of Staff issued a report declaring that the Army would have to have two more years before it could be transformed into a full-fledged military power.<sup>46</sup> Much of the disparity between the strengths and influences of the two services was directly related to the obvious preferences of the White House. The emergence of naval programs at the precise time the Army was virtually standing still in the same areas well indicated which service the President's sympathies were with.

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<sup>45</sup>William D. Leahy, I Was There: the personal story of the Chief of Staff to Presidents Roosevelt and Truman (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950), pp. 3-4 (Hereinafter cited as Leahy, I Was There).

<sup>46</sup>General of the Army Malin Craig, The Annual Report of the Army Chief of Staff, July 1, 1938, to June 30, 1939 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1939), passim. A good deal of this report is given over to describing the lamentable state of military preparedness during this period, and what was needed to correct it. This was Craig's last report, but his protégé took several cues from it.

As Roosevelt was proposing his scenario to the Army and Navy intelligence chiefs in June, 1940, there was newly arrived in London an official American military and naval mission to the British. The purpose of the mission was to develop more fully American information about the British position. No doubt, the President wanted to confirm his notions about the British ability to survive the newly heated European atmosphere.

The U. S. military and naval mission was headed by Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley. The Ghormley mission, originally secret, was referred to as "The Anglo-American Standardization of Arms Committee." Lord Lothian, the British ambassador to the United States, had reminded Roosevelt of the World War I mission of Admiral William S. Sims to London in 1917.<sup>47</sup> While Lothian was deeply engaged in this matter, he was also privy to the Anglo-American negotiations for destroyers-for-bases arrangements which eventually were approved. Such an unorthodox system bypassed not only the American ambassador in London, Joseph P. Kennedy, but also the American Secretary of State, Cordell Hull.<sup>48</sup> Additionally, while General Marshall was pressing Roosevelt to be close-fisted with military supplies he wanted to give to Britain, Admiral Ghormley was sending glowing reports back to the United States. Churchill was favorably impressed with Ghormley, and he recalled that Ghormley was "soon

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<sup>47</sup>Watson, Chief of Staff, pp. 113-4.

<sup>48</sup>For an example of Roosevelt's response to at least one set of difficulties arising from his predilection to bypass echelons of civil authority, see a soothing letter to Ambassador Kennedy in FDR, Letters, p. 1061.

satisfied that Britain was inflexibly resolved and could hold out against any immediate threat."<sup>49</sup> Such reports from official naval observers then in England, as well as the continuing and deepening friendship between Churchill and Roosevelt doubtless operated against the Army stance for hemispheric defense.

By far the most important result of these several meetings of the Anglo-American military and naval elite was the implication they had for becoming something more than ad hoc, time-of-crisis meetings. The impetus provided by unofficial rapport between the British and American navies, as well as the obvious worth of missions such as those by Ingersoll and Ghormley, moved the two governments toward each other as world peace quickly disintegrated during the latter half of 1940.

As the Anglo-American Standardization of Arms Committee met in London, the British made it very clear that they did not regard the Ghormley mission as quite so "exploratory" as did the Americans, who insisted that their powers to discuss strategic matters in a binding way were somewhat limited. The British opposite-numbers on the committee included Admiral of the Fleet Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord; General Sir John Dill, Chief of the Imperial General Staff; and Air Chief Marshal Sir Cyril L. N. Newall, Chief of the Air Staff. One British member (Newall) was to say quite candidly that the views of the Americans "were fundamental to our whole strategy."<sup>50</sup> The

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<sup>49</sup> Winston S. Churchill, The Grand Alliance (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1950), p. 137 (Hereinafter cited as Churchill, The Grand Alliance).

<sup>50</sup> "British Minutes of the Anglo-American Standardization of Arms committee, August 31, 1940," quoted in Watson, Chief of Staff, p. 114.

Americans did not seem to know it at the time, but the reverse was also true.

Though the Americans were clearly outranked and lacking in power to negotiate meaningfully, no member was lacking in planning experience. Admiral Ghormley had been joined by General Strong and General Delos C. Emmons, the commander of the General Headquarters of the Air Corps, as well as the naval and military attaches already in London. While the British outlined their whole range of intentions to the Americans, the mission members were not sufficiently informed to hold a full-scale strategic conference. At this series of discussions the British pressed for consideration of an "Atlantic first" strategy, emphasizing that they would rather lose out in the Pacific than in the Atlantic.<sup>51</sup> Although the validity of such a position may be readily seen, Britain's blatant admission of it was surprising. This proposal descended upon the American planners at a time when it was not yet decided that America would defend anything other than her own hemisphere. The best these early American and British planners could produce was an agreement to a "periodic exchange of information."<sup>52</sup> There was at least one immediate and tangible benefit: General Strong, of the War Plans Division, formerly in favor of the hemisphere defense plans, returned from these discussions devoted to defense in the direction of the Atlantic. By converting Strong to their side, the British effectively turned one of their strongest and highest placed adversaries into a willing advocate in the

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid.      <sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 115.



councils of American strategy. From that time on, the Army pressed for the "Atlantic first" strategy. By so doing, the Army was going to take the lead in the determinations of grand strategy of the coming war. Along with the conversion of General Strong, General Emmons had also tendered a favorable report of the mission in London. That summer, while working out the details of Lend-Lease and general military aid with Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, Secretary of Treasury Henry Morgenthau, and other civilians, General Marshall also had been persuaded to assist Britain.<sup>53</sup>

By November, both Marshall and Admiral Stark had apparently become convinced that hemispheric defense would best be served by an Atlantic defense. Marshall composed a memorandum to Stark dated November 29, 1940, which stated that "our national interests require that we resist proposals that do not have for their immediate goal the...defeat of Germany."<sup>54</sup> Stark was not so sure on this point as Marshall was, and his reply rather equivocated, stating that Marshall and his planners should not preclude war in the "Far East altogether."<sup>55</sup> Because it was now evident that there was no suitable partner for a coalition in the Pacific, such a view as the Admiral's was more consistent with hemispheric defense as originally conceived; but the Admiral was not correctly reading the changing

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<sup>53</sup>Pogue, Marshall, II, 115.

<sup>54</sup>General George C. Marshall, Memorandum to Admiral Stark, November 29, 1940, untitled, JB serial 642-3, quoted in Legere, "Unification," p. 144.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

sentiments of the planners and the Commander in Chief. An Atlantic strategy was predicated upon the idea that action in those quarters meant that a coalition would be formed in which the United States was not expected to be a prime mover.

Thus, the Ghormley mission to London had indeed affected American strategic thinking. The principals of the mission had considerably unseated the high command's pessimistic views on the British ability to survive. The mission's reports had enabled American planners to develop Rainbow plans more fully, and more realistically. Finally, the mission laid the groundwork from which a full-fledged coalition was going to spring the very next year.

When the Army representative, General Strong, had returned to America in September, 1940, Admiral Ghormley had stayed on in London in his primary status as official naval observer. By the middle of October, the British began making proposals for more discussions on a higher level between staffs. On October 14, 1940, Prime Minister Churchill cabled a proposal to Lord Lothian in Washington for another American meeting. Two days later, Admiral Sir Dudley Pound also mentioned the possibility of further meetings to Ghormley. Lothian made sure the Prime Minister's message found its way to Roosevelt, and no doubt Ghormley reported his conversation with Pound, but there was no immediate reply.<sup>56</sup>

The next month the Americans became interested in such an idea. Admiral Stark produced a memorandum for the Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox. This long memorandum came to be known

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<sup>56</sup>Watson, Chief of Staff, pp. 118-9.

as the "Plan Dog" memo. Since it was well known by then that the British desired further discussion, the only problem that remained was how the Americans were going to reply to the cable. Stark's memorandum did much more than propose a meeting. He outlined the world situation as he then perceived it and sketched an American strategy to fit it; there were four variations roughly corresponding to the widely divergent schemes of the Rainbow series. The effect of this rather sweeping document was to distill the arguments and force the planner's hands as to which one should prevail in view of the prospect for increased cooperation with the British. According to Stark, the general purpose of his memorandum was "to reach agreement and lay down plans for promoting unity of allied effort should the United States find it necessary to enter the war."<sup>57</sup>

The first Anglo-British Conversations (ABC-1) took place between the British and American high commands from January 29, to March 29, 1941. Great care was taken by the highest ranking officials to avoid a leak that these negotiations were taking place. General Marshall and Admiral Stark put in a perfunctory appearance the first day of the meetings and prudently refrained from attending any more. Their idea at the time was to remain as free as possible from any binding agreements which might result from their presence at the conferences. Later, Marshall was accused of having been in

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<sup>57</sup>Admiral Harold R. Stark, "National Policy of the United States," OP 12 CTB, November 12, 1940, quoted in Watson, Chief of Staff, p. 119.

collusion with President Roosevelt to involve the United States in the war through these meetings.<sup>58</sup> In an interview with his biographer much later, Marshall explained the secrecy of the meetings, which had aroused so much suspicion, "the advantages of the talks were--they were done without regard to the President...It was done to find out what we needed to know without in any way involving him in any commitments of any kind."<sup>59</sup> Instructions issued by the JPC to the Joint Board during ABC-1 supported Marshall's contentions somewhat, stating "we cannot afford, nor do we need, to entrust our national future to British direction."<sup>60</sup> That the point regarding "British direction" was an admission of American anxieties over the conversations was apparently overlooked by the JPC. It was also an admission of the fact that the American planners believed that the British staff machine was very capable of doing just what they had implied. Their anxieties were not entirely groundless. By comparison to the well-oiled, battle-tested British staff, the American planning system, based upon "mutual cooperation," must have seemed a shoddy affair. The point was proven by the rapid American readjustment and adaptation in the staff system which was to be responsible for confronting the British across an ever-increasing number of conference tables.

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<sup>58</sup>A sketch of these accusations may be found in Pogue, Marshall, II, 429-38. The charges stemmed from the results of the Pearl Harbor Investigation, which found most of the civil-military high command derelict because they were not at more than one place at a time.

<sup>59</sup>Interview with George C. Marshall, January 15, 1957, quoted in ibid., p. 128.

<sup>60</sup>JPC, "Instructions to the JB," JB 325, ser 674, January 13, 1941, quoted in Watson, Chief of Staff, p. 371.

The first Anglo-British Conversations produced a document which set the stage for strategic cooperation and one of the most successful coalitions in the history of warfare. The document, simply designated "ABC-1," acknowledged mutual strategic problems, and concluded that "should the United States be compelled to resort to war," the United States and Great Britain would "collaborate." The so-called "first principle" of ABC-1 was the defeat of Germany, even if Japan should engage in hostilities. Specific responsibilities in terms of troops, geographical considerations, and logistics were formulated on the bases of the still-incomplete Rainbow Five plan, which was to be approved on the joint level and service level shortly thereafter. By June 2, 1941, the finished Rainbow Five was in hand at the White House, although Roosevelt hesitated to give a final approval to the document, lest it bind him in some further way to those "firm" commitments made solely by military officers of both nations.<sup>61</sup>

In reality, there was still much dispute and dissension between factions in the two services. Stark's "Plan Dog" memorandum met with opposition in November of the previous year from the chief of the Army War Plans Division, Colonel J.W. Anderson, who doubted the ability of the United States to carry out all the missions outlined in Stark's memo.<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, General Marshall "acquiesced" to Stark's proposal for a full-dress military conference; and indeed the ABC-1 did have the effect of synthesizing the divergent arguments between the two services into a united front on matters which

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid.    <sup>62</sup>Ibid.

came before the negotiators.

During the entire year of 1940, in fact, the Navy became quite adamant concerning the necessity for intra-service cooperation. The Navy had laid the groundwork for Anglo-American military cooperation, and substantially projected its views on the issue of unity of command. The first indication that the Navy intended to rectify the disagreement potential between the services was a letter to the Secretary of the Navy from the Chairman of the General Board of the Navy, Admiral W. R. Sexton. Entitled "Command Organization of the United States Armed Forces," Sexton's letter made three specific recommendations. The first of these was that a "Joint General Staff" be created and that it be governed by a high-ranking Army or Navy officer to act as chief. This staff's mission was to be the "preparation of general plans for major military campaigns, and upon their approval, with the issuance of proper directives to the War Department and the Navy Department...." Since the Chief of the Joint General Staff was to be "responsible directly to the President of the United States," this recommendation presumably by-passed the services' secretaries and, indeed, all civilian members of the politico-military network. No doubt, Sexton and other members of the armed services had been thoroughly acclimatized to the Executive Order of August, 1939, which ordered the very proposals Sexton had made. The second recommendation was that "any major military campaign" be assigned a "unified task force commander," a proposal which was to be duplicated at the Anglo-British Conversations of early 1941. The last recommendation was relatively minor, deal-

ing as it did with the establishment of unified commands in American coastal frontiers.<sup>63</sup>

There is every evidence that Marshall himself was quite concerned with the unstable framework within which he was forced to operate. Harry Hopkins, the President's chief advisor, shared this sentiment with Marshall, and he had determined to confront the President about the matter. Stimson was informed by Hopkins as to what he intended to do and Stimson told Marshall. Hopkins said he was going to see to it that the President was henceforth to be advised on military matters by no more than five or six men. Naturally, Marshall was pleased at such a prospect when Stimson told him of Hopkins' plans. Marshall and the whole Army staff were displeased at the method then employed in civilian strategic decision-making which, as Marshall put it, "made every man who slept in a tent during the last war...a military authority."<sup>64</sup>

Sexton's proposal did enjoy a wide support, but for a myriad of reasons. Certainly, the Navy had led the way thus far in maintaining an impetus toward organizational consolidation. When Pearl Harbor was attacked, a new urgency was lent to the whole procedure of formulating viable defenses through coordination. With the United States finally engaged in warfare, such strategic coordination could not be accomplished with the aid of the British. Accordingly, the first formal war-time conference (code-named ARCADIA) was for the expressed purpose of the consolidation of all the Allied defenses. On

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<sup>63</sup> Legere, "Unification," pp. 198-9.

<sup>64</sup> Pogue, Marshall, II, 131.

December 16, 1941, Prime Minister Churchill set sail aboard the H. M. S. Duke of York for the conference in Washington. With him on board were Lord Beaverbrook, of the War Cabinet; Admiral Pound, First Sea Lord; Air Marshal Portal, Chief of the British Air Staff; and Field Marshal Dill, until recently the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. If the British sailed with very clear notions of grand strategy, the Americans waited for them with nothing save anxiety. While at sea, December 18, the British sent ahead to Washington a proposal for a five-point agenda to be covered by ARCADIA. The British were particularly interested in a "fundamental basis for strategy." Once this first point was agreed upon, they proposed to settle matters pertaining to national forces of protection, logistics, and command organization. The last point of the agenda was to be especially pertinent to the ARCADIA meeting, for it led to the establishment of the Combined Chiefs of Staff committee.<sup>65</sup> From the time the message was received to the first meeting at the White House December 23, 1941, the Army and Navy planners had constructed a substantial number of recommendations; but the so-called "WPD Book for ARCADIA" did not approach the methods or the grand design of the British. Because the British were so well prepared and the Americans not so well prepared, little substantive strategy evolved aside from the reckoning of international interests, particularly in the Pacific area. No higher-ranking member of the British party came to America

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<sup>65</sup>Radio Message, British Chiefs of Staff, H. M. S. Duke of York, December 18, 1941, Item 5, exec. 10, quoted in Legere, "Unification," p. 209.



with a lack of ideas about what they wanted to accomplish. A fine example of British executive preparedness was that by Churchill as he crossed the Atlantic.

I produced three papers on the future course of the war, as I conceived it should be steered. As each document was completed after being checked, I sent it to my professional colleagues as an expression of my personal convictions. They were at the same time preparing papers of their own for the combined staff conferences...though nobody was committed in a precise or rigid fashion, we all arrived with a body of doctrine of a constructive character on which we were broadly united.<sup>66</sup>

No such "broadly united" front of strategic proposals greeted the British when they arrived in Washington. Field Marshal Dill was disappointed in General Marshall at first, although the two later became great friends. After ARCADIA was over, Dill commented that he had found General Marshall less interested in strategy than he had hoped and more interested in war production and Army organization.<sup>67</sup>

ARCADIA ended January 14, 1942; and though ARCADIA had settled very little of what the British had hoped to accomplish, there were several important advances not strictly within the field of grand strategy. The machinery to effect Anglo-American decisions was well on its way to formulation. The Combined Chiefs of Staff was created, composed of the British General Staff and the old American Joint Board, which posed as a "joint General Staff." The latter turned in an altogether lacklustre performance, which was revealed by the inadequate projections for logistics. The logistics problem was the child of the Joint Board's inability to coordinate its planners. The Joint Board

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<sup>66</sup>Churchill, The Grand Alliance, p. 645.

<sup>67</sup>Pogue, Marshall, II, 120.

system apparently was little better developed than it had been on its first day in existence in 1903.

As a consequence of the ARCADIA conference and the less than satisfactory showing made by the Americans on their home ground, Admiral Stark approached the subject of reorganization at a Joint Board meeting, citing the old Sexton proposal of several months earlier. Marshall replied favorably to the proposal, saying that he was "in favor of the...Joint General Staff provided it was not constituted as a committee." Marshall went on to say that "if it was the real thing," he was all for it. During ARCADIA, Marshall had made clear what he considered the "real thing," maintaining that:

If we do make a plea for unified command now, it will solve nine-tenths of our troubles. There are difficulties in arriving at a single command, but they are much less than the hazards that must be faced if we do not achieve this.<sup>68</sup>

The proposal made by Marshall at the time went back to the Joint Planning Committee. At the time, the committee was composed of only two members, Rear Admiral Richard K. Turner and Brigadier General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who was newly arrived in Washington and slated to take over the War Plans Division from General Gerow. Though Eisenhower and Turner worked on the problem for the better part of two months, they were not able to come to terms on the matter of joint staff operations. Turner believed that a Joint General Staff was workable, but that the transition time would be prohibitive during a war. Furthermore, Turner envisioned the staff as a cooperative venture--an unimpeachably naval cooperative committee, the type

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<sup>68</sup> ARCADIA Minutes, December 24, 1941, ABC 337, sec. 4, Tab. JCCS 2, p. 2, quoted in Legere, "Unification," p. 210.

that Marshall already had said he would resist. Eisenhower was much more receptive to Marshall's idea of the staff, contending that "coordination by cooperation is ineffective" and that, therefore, the present Joint Board was doomed to failure. Furthermore, Eisenhower maintained that the more "joint" the staff became, with joint responsibilities, the less the individual officers would embrace their particular services' points of view and special biases.<sup>69</sup> The report by these two planners was obviously less than satisfactory from the point of view of the Joint Board members, and the matter was destined to be held in abeyance for more than a year. Though it was not then considered to be so, the old Joint Board had in effect become a Joint Chiefs of Staff. During the ARCADIA meetings, the Joint Board was composed of the Chief of Staff of the Army, George C. Marshall; the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Stark; the Commander in Chief of the United States Fleet, Admiral Ernest J. King; and the Chief of the Army Air Forces, General H. H. Arnold. When the Joint Chiefs of Staff were tacitly approved in 1942 by the President, there was a significant tie-breaking addition to the group, Admiral William D. Leahy, who was appointed the "Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States." The inclusion of a naval "tie-breaker" in the JCS was momentous in that it recognized the naval bias in the White House, already suspected by the Army. At the time of Admiral Leahy's ascendancy, this bias confirmed suspicions of the Army by making

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp. 199-200.

it very clear as to who was to be favored. Yet, at no time did a memorandum, order, or authorization of any kind exist prior to the National Security Act of 1947, which legally supported the work of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Even so, the Joint Chiefs did not enjoy over-all operating responsibility until it was "approved by the President" verbally in 1942. Until then the American Chiefs of Staff operated only as opposite numbers to the British Staff, and this cooperative venture was limited until later that year only to the Pacific so far as control of combined operations was concerned.

Shortly after it became apparent that the American membership on the Combined Chiefs of Staff committee constituted the American Joint Chiefs of Staff, Marshall was given to write to Admiral King, "there appears to be little use in continuing the Joint Board if its composition is to be the same as the United States Chiefs of Staff," or General Staff.<sup>70</sup> The implication was, of course, that since the Joint Staff was already conducting operations in the Pacific, there was no reason that the same range of responsibilities should not extend to all Anglo-American military operations. By making this change, the old Joint Board could possibly approach the true function of the staff and totally eclipse the system, which rarely fulfilled the demands of new strategy.

The initial confusion over strategy and the intrusion of the British into American considerations (or vice versa) did much to alter significantly the whole strategic doctrine in the American military system. In the short span of little more than

a year the American military system had changed from a makeshift, over-formalized, and rather unrealistic debate committee to a full-scale coalition planning organization. Although it would be unwise to maintain that the American military system would have never coordinated itself in such a way had not the British become involved, it is a certainty that events incidental to the integration of the American high command would not have come with such speed. In such a light the arrival of the British acted as a catalyst in the evolution of the American military staff systems during the prewar period.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE MILITARY AND CIVILIAN INITIATIVE IN THE REORGANIZATION TREND

Until this point the discussion has centered around the various directions strategy took in the days prior to World War II. Perforce, using this vantage point has meant dealing with things almost exclusively military and investigating the civil-military sphere only perfunctorily. There can be little doubt that strategy was guided by the political sphere to an extent which would have made Clausewitz proud. As was his wont, Roosevelt as Commander in Chief had dabbled in the most everyday of matters, such as military production and procurement, as well as the construction of pseudo-military scenarios that revealed his prejudices in favor of Britain.<sup>1</sup> During the same period, the President also engaged himself in fields that, although not strictly military, were to have decidedly military repercussions, such as the embargo against Japan prior to Pearl Harbor.

After the war was declared, the matters which could potentially be controlled by the President complexified immensely, the result being that he controlled fewer of the prosaic affairs in favor of larger questions of politico-military strategy. That

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<sup>1</sup>For an example, see FDR, Letters, pp. 977-9.

the President attempted at first to do both was laudable from a personal standpoint, but less than satisfactory from the point of view of safeguarding the national security. Although Harry Hopkins was perhaps not the first to see this problem in command responsibilities, he was, in fact, in a much better position than anyone else to champion his views on the subject. It will be recalled that, in the last chapter, Hopkins expressed discontent over an open-door policy which dictated that persons with even the most nominal experience in the military could advise the President. Hopkins had also mentioned to Marshall that he intended to control this ill-coordinated method if possible.<sup>2</sup>

Coincident with Hopkins' discontent, the several military chiefs were also suffering under this method; and Marshall in particular did not work well in such an environment of conflicting military testimony. It is not known exactly when Marshall became attached to the idea of unity of command. We see him advocating a unified theater command as early as the first Anglo-British Conversations, and obviously he thought at the time that organization should take precedence over "grand strategy," much to the dismay of such grand strategists par excellence as Field Marshal Sir John Dill. Rather than viewing Marshall's conversion to the principle of unity of command as an instant one, based upon some isolated event, it is more likely that a great number of factors pointed him in this direction. Taken en toto, the debacle at Pearl Harbor, the lack of command fusion and consensus among the various staff mechanisms, as well as these

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<sup>2</sup>See supra, p. 52.

mechanism' difficulties in arranging themselves to discuss co-  
gently matters before the first Anglo-British Conversations--  
all effectively militated against the opposite principle of  
command by cooperation.

The principle of unity of command was not a new and ex-  
otic administrative solution which arose from the difficulties  
of technological warfare, but was a well-established tenet in  
the conduct of war. Neither was this principle a creature of  
the staff system. If anything, unity of command antedated the  
staff system considerably.<sup>3</sup> Yet, as the staff system was con-  
ceived by the Germans at the turn of the 18th century, it be-  
came apparent to all involved that the staff system did not work  
well without one man to control the staff. While the staff did  
represent, even in its earliest forms, the break-down of mili-  
tary endeavor into its constituent parts such as intelligence,  
logistics, planning, and others, it was diametrically opposed  
to unity of command; an element was soon added to prevent policy-  
making and strategy-making at this level--the Chief of Staff.  
Hence, the chief became all important to the staff, giving the  
staff directions in which to consider the details of warfare as

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<sup>3</sup>As a matter of fact, the heroic system of warfare prob-  
ably fades into pre-history; unity of command was one of the more  
fortunate features of this system, which, without a staff to re-  
ciprocate with its own special sort of controls, carried count-  
less liabilities. More recently, Wallenstein of the Thirty  
Years War became an adherent not so much of the heroic system  
as the principle of unity of command. In this case unity of  
command held much more importance for General Wallenstein than  
any sort of military glory. See B. H. Liddell Hart, Great  
Captains Unveiled (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1967),  
pp. 188-90.



he did. In effect, he was the driver of a team of horses--they could run as they wished--but only in the direction the driver wanted. Therefore, the principle of unity of command came to dictate that any successful staff system should be controlled.<sup>4</sup>

The American variation on this system before the war was actually that of a staff's being controlled by another staff. In the Army, for instance, the Joint Planning Committee controlled the War Plans Division to an extent. The JPC, in turn, was controlled by the Joint Board, which was a committee of equals, with no coordinating member. And while the committee of equals was sufficient to satisfy democracy, when the war came and swift direction was needed, the Joint Board was not sufficient to satisfy the needs of strategy-making in such a super-charged atmosphere. The matters on which the board was called to deliberate were innocuous and limited in effect before the war. The areas which military decisions affected before the Second World War were restricted to solely military affairs, or were thought to be so, and not intended or desired to be engaged in any other field. For the military to have done otherwise during the interwar period would have been to set the military system squarely in the way of what was believed to be the sentiment of the nation at the time. Fragmented and diffuse as the staff system was during the interwar period, it was not in a peculiar or unnatural situation. There was not, in fact, any central

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<sup>4</sup>An excellent treatment of the many early variations of the German staff system is to be found in Walter Goerlitz, The History of the German General Staff, trans. by Brian Battershaw (New York: Praeger Press, 1953).

object for the staff system to fix upon, and therefore, the system was merely reflecting the environment of peace in which it found itself.

The war markedly reversed this course. With the advent of war, the central object was found for the staff to focus upon; and the staff then rose to fulfill its original function: to plan and coordinate warfare. While the staff's problem was merely one of external devices in the military environment, the controlling board had to cope with a much more fundamental alteration: indeed, the whole character of the control over the staff had to be tailored to the environment which had allowed the staff such an easy conversion. By comparison to the adjustments which the controlling board had to make, the staff reforms were effortless. If the military systems were to be able to cope as one with the changed environment which demanded their best services, the crucial problem of command controls would have to be eliminated. The principle of unity of command is to the staff system as mass upon a point is to a tactical system--it allows movement to be well directed, applied in the most fortuitous place, and sufficiently manipulated to complete the remaining military task at hand.

However, since the principle of unity of command was a disputatious one, it is worthwhile to note that even the staff system had its critics as well as advocates. The German, Bronsart Von Schellendorf, put the function of the staff in this way:

Officers of the General Staff are invested with no military command...every now and then, when the aspect of affairs takes a disadvantageous turn, responsibility is placed on the shoulders of the General Staff officer, which the circumstances

of the case do not justify...this is often one of the drawbacks of his position. Another is, that he must always deny himself the true military instinct of wishing to take command in accordance with his military rank.<sup>5</sup>

The ideal type of such an officer in this position is reflected in the statement "that the General Staff officers assist their commander by giving him such assistance...as he would naturally do for himself...." while at the same time "trying to act in the name of and for their commander." The American General, Otto Nelson, described the staff situation during the earlier part of the conflict in the following manner:

When the War Department General Staff approached 700 in number toward the end of 1941, and when other demands on the Chief of Staff restricted drastically the time he could spend with even his top General Staff advisors, then as a practical consequence General Staff officers had to act according to their own judgment, often in complete ignorance of what might be the Chief of Staff's attitude. And when officers so act, they cease to be staff officers in the usual sense and become commanders.<sup>6</sup>

Other commentaries on the verities of the staff system and its expertise have been less kind. Major General J. F. C. Fuller, long a thorn in the British staff system's side and an advocate of "independent" command systems, drew the following picture before the Second World War:

How do these things affect the personal factor in Generalship? They obliterate it, and why? The staff becomes an

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<sup>5</sup>General Bronsart Von Schellendorf, The Duties of the General Staff, trans. by W. A. H. Hare (London: Harrison and Sons, 1893), p. 4.

<sup>6</sup>Otto Nelson, National Security and the General Staff, (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1946), p. 332 (Hereinafter cited as Nelson, National Security).

all-controlling bureaucracy, a paper octopus squirting ink and wriggling its tentacles into every corner. Unless pruned with an axe it will grow like the fakir's mango tree, and the more it grows the more it overshadows the general. It creates work, it creates officers, and, above all, it creates the rear spirit. No sooner is a war declared than the general-in-chief...finds himself a Gulliver in Lilliput, tied down to his office by innumerable threads woven out of the brains of his staff.<sup>7</sup>

Yet after the war began, the staff did begin to reform itself, even though much initiative came from above. The self-reform of the staff did, however, produce motivation later on for reforms concerned with the defense system as a whole. There is also every evidence to suggest that the pressure created by having to deal with the British staff in a coalition situation was motivation sufficient to create a reform spirit of one kind or another within the several staff systems. Of this pressure, Marshall was to write:

Out of the series of discussions which then followed ARCADIA resulted an agreement, not only regarding the immediate strategy for our combined conduct of the war, but also for the organization of a method for the strategical command and control of British and American military resources. Probably no other allied action, in the field or otherwise, has exerted as powerful an effect on the conduct of this war.<sup>8</sup>

When the war began, the President was no longer able to amuse himself with details which had been minor by comparison to those now confronting him. Because the war had proliferated, and because the war had, merely by the inclusion of American force, become astoundingly complicated, the strategic mechanisms of war-making took over certain elements of its own con-

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<sup>7</sup>J. F. C. Fuller, quoted in Nelson, National Security, p. 335.

<sup>8</sup>George C. Marshall, H. H. Arnold, and E. J. King, The War Reports (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1947), p. 73.

trol heretofore exerted by erstwhile military experts, not-so-fresh from Verdun and St. Mihiel. One such control, notably, was to be the high command's control of itself, and this structure was left to deal with itself even though it had no such reform impetus as did its subordinate staff.

Still another result of the complexification of the military affairs of this country was that the command structure was now as over-burdened as the Commander in Chief, since it had more immediate matters to deal with than its own reform. As a consequence, what can be seen is a further passing of the baton of military reform of its organizations to an agency not heretofore overly concerned with the subject--the Congress of the United States. This procedure might have been called "delegation by circumstance," since these responsibilities were passed from the President, to the military, and thence to the Congress to resolve in open forum that which had been previously debated behind very closed doors. It was the "open forum" aspect of the command reforms which lent to the unification movement its tone of bitterness and which will be investigated in detail later in this piece.

The American method for the strategical command of the war of which Marshall spoke was the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which began meeting formally as early as February 9, 1942, shortly after the British ARCADIA representatives left for home. The British left behind in Washington personal representatives of their staff system to deal with the Americans, and in this way, the British pressure imposed upon the American high command to

present a united front was perpetuated. The old Joint Board had never experienced external pressure such as the British presented, but the new Joint Chiefs of Staff system was little altered by the British at first. Even before ARCADIA, Marshall had been less than satisfied with the command structure within the War Department. Two days after Pearl Harbor, Marshall told his senior planners to quit the routine sending out of information without checking its necessity or validity. From that time on, said Marshall, they would have to "fight the fact that the War Department is a poor command post."<sup>9</sup> During ARCADIA Marshall revealed that he was committed to the unity of command principle, and just before he went into these conferences with the British, he had assigned Lt. General Joseph T. McNarney to investigate the problems which a reorganization of the War Department would entail and report recommendations to him. McNarney was an Air Corps officer, who enjoyed the respect of his peers, as well as British Allies, with whom he had just seen duty as a member of the Special Observers Group in London. On March 9, 1942, McNarney was to be appointed the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, a post which he would hold until 1944. During this entire period, McNarney would play a central role in the reorganization of all the armed services. It was to be McNarney who was to provide most of the plans which Marshall was to advocate

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<sup>9</sup>George C. Marshall, "Notes on Conferences in OCS," II, 441, WDCSA, n.d., quoted in Ray S. Cline, The U.S. Army in World War II; Washington Command Post: The Operations Division (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1951), p. 90 (Hereinafter cited as Cline, OPD).

during the unification battle, and who would become known as the chief Army spokesman, aside from Marshall, during the congressional phase of the conflict.<sup>10</sup> The Army reorganization project really began on January 25, 1942, with a special committee composed of McNarney, Colonel William K. Harrison of the War Plans Division, and Major Lawrence S. Kuter, an Air Corps officer. McNarney, however, was to be the driving force behind the reorganization which Marshall knew full well might encounter heavy resistance within the department.

In planning the reorganization Marshall had picked McNarney because he had the reputation of an "in-fighter." Marshall's temper and stern deportment moved his subordinates and peers alike to approach him with deference and a good deal of timidity besides. On one occasion some time before the reorganization, McNarney had gone to "the Chief" to get a paper approved. When Marshall suggested several substantive changes in the document, McNarney, no longer able to control himself, exclaimed, "Jesus, man, you can't do that!" Marshall was startled, but said nothing. McNarney's reluctance to pull punches, even when talking to his superior, may well have convinced Marshall that this was his man for putting the reorganization into effect.<sup>11</sup>

When Marshall gave his instructions to McNarney on January 25, Marshall painted a dark picture of the insides of the War Plans Division, saying that it was "taking too long to get a

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 90-1.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Joseph T. McNarney by Forrest Pogue, February 2, 1966, quoted in Pogue, Marshall, II, 292.

paper through the War Department" and that "everybody had to concur. About 28 people had to pass on matters. I can't stand it."<sup>12</sup> The recommendations Marshall had requested of the special committee were in Marshall's office only six days later. In brief, there were three distinct proposals made: (1) to "free the General Staff," (2) to create three commands--the Army Air Forces, the Army Ground Forces, and the Services of Supply--and thereby (3) to eliminate "unnecessary or obsolete headquarters" such as Cavalry, Coastal Artillery, and the like.<sup>13</sup>

Normally, this process of reorganization would have to have been submitted to the Congress for statutory approval; but the First War Powers Act of December 18, 1941, eliminated the necessity to do so. During the first part of February, 1942, General Marshall and his key aides considered McNarney's plan. One of those attending made notes of the meetings, which, along with some rather telling comments, revealed the general sentiment of the conferees. General Eisenhower wrote:

We are faced with a big reorganization of WPD [War Plans Division]. We need it! The GS [General Staff] is all to be cut down, except WPD--which now has all the Joint and Combined work (a terrible job), all plans and all operations so far as active theaters are concerned! We need help!<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>"Memorandum of opening session of Special Committee on Reorganization of the War Department," WDCSA 020, February 16, 1942, quoted in Pogue, Marshall, II, 295.

<sup>13</sup>Cline, OPD, pp. 90-1.

<sup>14</sup>Dwight D. Eisenhower, The Papers of Dwight D. Eisenhower: The War Years, ed. by Alfred Chandler (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), I, 101 (Hereinafter cited as Eisenhower, Papers).



Since the need for reorganization within the War Department was so apparent to Marshall, it met with little resistance from any quarter, mainly because most members of the War Department were taken by surprise. It was truly an administrative "blitzkrieg." There was some concern on Marshall's part about opposition from the Chiefs of Arms, such as the Chief of Cavalry and the Chief of Coastal Artillery; but Marshall vested such power within McNarney's committee that it could not be opposed. Marshall wrote to his old friend, John McAuley Palmer, about the committee:

It might amuse you to know that this committee to which I gave complete power, was referred to as the 'Soviet Committee.' Also what the public is not aware of, we had completed the major portion of the proposed organization readjustment before the plan was even submitted to the Secretary of War of War or the President.<sup>15</sup>

The only episode of official resistance was Secretary Stimson's preference to "strictly adhere" to the title of Chief of Staff rather than to use "Commanding General" for Marshall. There was no slur intended by Stimson upon Marshall. Stimson simply recalled the confusion over these terms when he was first Secretary of War from 1911 to 1913. Stimson vetoed the special committee's proposal to vest Marshall with the title of Commanding General in order to avoid some future embarrassment over the senior General's autonomy in the face of mere civilians. It was a minor point, but one which Stimson insisted upon having the final say about.<sup>16</sup> The Army had no reason to be too concerned about the

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<sup>15</sup>Letter, General Marshall to General Palmer, March 12, 1942, quoted in Pogue, Marshall, II, 294.

<sup>16</sup>Stimson, On Active Service, p. 450.

distinction made by Stimson between the Chief of Staff and the Commanding General. There was no loss of authority, and the two terms were considered, for all practical purposes, "synonymous," by the Army.<sup>17</sup>

The reorganization of the Army along the lines suggested by General McNarney was approved by executive order of the President February 28, 1942, which directed that the reorganization begin March 9, 1942.<sup>18</sup> There was no reason for Roosevelt to object, for this executive order was in accord with his previous order of August 1, 1939, which placed the high command in direct contact with the President. The order merely emphasized that the President was Commander in Chief in relation to matters of strategy, tactics, and operations.<sup>19</sup> Stimson's fears were likely to have been grounded in the possibility that if this order defined specific Presidential prerogatives, and at the same time defined specific prerogatives of the Commanding General of the Army, some conflicts would arise as they had in the past concerning prerogatives in matters of the conduct of the war. What the order did was to reaffirm by virtue of the First War Powers Act the manner in which Roosevelt would fit into the strategic system.<sup>20</sup> Every war President has had such a definition problem.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Cline, OPD, p. 93.

<sup>18</sup>Letter, President to Secretary of War, February 26, 1942, WDCSA 020, quoted in ibid., p. 92.

<sup>19</sup>For a thorough analysis of this order see Nelson, National Security, p. 348.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.      <sup>21</sup>See also, Legere, "Unification," p. 230.

One significant side-effect of the Army reorganization of 1942 was the granting of a nearly autonomous status for the Army Air Corps. Prior to the reorganization, the Air Corps had enjoyed an unparalleled independence with the Army system, but certain officers still agitated for independence. The earlier case of General William (Billy) Mitchell pointed to a hardened "old line officer" view on the matter of an independent air arm. When McNarney's plan was approved, and the "three great commands" of air, ground, and supply forces were organized, the Air Corps' moves toward autonomy were somewhat thwarted and de-fused. This movement toward autonomy of the air arm has been made much of by analysts of the unification conflict, and at least on one occasion has been cited as a major influence in unification developments.<sup>22</sup> Yet, after the reorganization of 1942, the Air Corps was rather satisfied with its elevation to a semi-independent status within the War Department. The official Army attitude toward the Air Corps and its independence had changed considerably since the days of the Mitchell court martial, and, even before the war, the high command was obliged to point this fact out to several senators and representatives who were still listening to dissident Air Corps officers beat the dead horse of autonomy. In so doing, a fairly succinct though comprehensive treatment of high command views was revealed, to wit:

In German military thought it is fundamental that the creation of a single high military command for all forces,

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<sup>22</sup>See, for instance, Tarr, "Unification of the Armed Forces," p. 61.

whether of the land, sea, or the air, is the first requirement of success in modern war...In fact, the key to the military success of Germany in the present war has not been the operation of the air forces on an independent basis but rather the subordination of air power to the supreme command of the armed forces...This system combining air, ground, and naval forces when required, under one commander for training and combat purposes has resulted in the marked German successes....

The British system [which the Army reorganization unashamedly imitated]...is intended to provide union of command...In reality the result is a three-way partnership which becomes increasingly less effective as the theater of operations is more distant from the Prime Minister's and Chief of Staff's immediate supervision and control...The recent disastrous setbacks in theaters of war other than the...British Isles are directly attributable to lack of a real unity of command, and have forced the establishment of a ground cooperation air arm to be placed under the direct tactical control of the commander of the armed forces.<sup>23</sup>

Actually composed in Marshall's office, this letter from Secretary of War Stimson maintained that the Air Corps was allowed "free and unrestricted development under the full control of qualified officers." Apparently, the importance of this doctrinal statement was not that the Air Corps would slip away from the War Department's control, but rather that such a scheme "would ...permit the very keystone of successful military operations, unity of command..." to continue in effect.<sup>24</sup> So long as the Air officers could control their own operations, they were satisfied. After the Army reorganization of 1942, this self-control within the framework of the larger requirements of warfare became a reality supported by the new executive order.

There was another movement in the command structure in 1942 which came to be particularly germane to unification's

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<sup>23</sup>Letter, Secretary of War to Senator Reynolds with a copy to Representative James O'Leary, OCS 16600-73, September 19, 1941, quoted in Watson, Chief of Staff, pp. 294-5.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

increasingly difficult and complex evolution, and unlike the Army reorganization, this movement had to do with joint organization itself, only recently created in a semi-permanent, if not legally approved, form. In all likelihood, the development of joint mechanisms, and their subsequent reforms from the first days of the war, was a direct ancestor of the unification battle which came closer to the surface with each reform movement. This particular development was the appointment of a Chief of Staff. Each service already had its Chief of Staff (In the Navy he was called Chief of Naval Operations) and these two men formed the most powerful elements on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Their relation to the President was clearly established by the Executive Order of 1939, and buttressed by the order just discussed. Although the latter dealt exclusively with Army organization, this order implicitly applied to Navy commands as well, in that a direct access to the White House was more open than ever. It should be recalled that the early Navy proposal for what amounted to a Joint General Staff was delayed by a split report turned in by Admiral Turner and General Eisenhower. Eisenhower's proposal was the most detailed, recommending a single General Staff under the President to consist of fifteen members, or five from each of the "services" (i.e. the Army, Navy, and Air Corps). The head of this conglomerate staff was to be the Chief of Staff, or, to put it another way, the over-all head of the American armed forces. This new Chief of Staff was also to serve as the American representative to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, or roughly the oppo-

site number to the British Chief of the Imperial General Staff.<sup>25</sup> The division on the formation of such a mechanism centered not on the creation of the Chief, but upon the composition of the General Staff itself. Since the Joint Chiefs of Staff and their subordinate planning committees were already in existence and were operating, the argument between the Army and the Navy seemed largely academic. The only problem they were unable to agree upon, however, was the need to consolidate military advice in the direction of the President by creating this new Chief of Staff. Of particular concern to Marshall and Stimson was their President's tendency to arrive at snap decisions that were based oftentimes upon nothing more than intuition. During ARCADIA, Stimson and Marshall were quite disturbed over several suggestions made by Roosevelt which, if actually carried out, would have ended in disaster.<sup>26</sup> As a consequence, both Marshall and Stimson worked assiduously to bring the President around to the idea of the Chief of Staff, an idea of which FDR was not particularly fond, since he felt that such a plan would limit his range of strategic initiative.<sup>27</sup> Throughout this campaign to convince the President of the need for a "military advisor," Marshall and Stimson had a powerful ally in Harry Hopkins, who had already expressed his preferences to the President.

Even before the War Department's reorganization was completed, Marshall suggested to Roosevelt in February that he

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<sup>25</sup>Eisenhower, Papers, I, 159-60. See editor Alfred Chandler's comments upon the evolution of the chairman of the JCS.

<sup>26</sup>Stimson, On Active Service, p. 414. <sup>27</sup>Ibid.

appoint a chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.<sup>28</sup> Though the term "chairman" was more innocuous than the Chief of the General Staff, or Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief, it amounted to the same thing. Marshall was simply trying to sugar-coat a bitter pill for the President to swallow. At that time the Joint Chiefs of Staff was composed of Marshall, as Army Chief of Staff, H. H. Arnold, who was the Commanding General of the Air Corps, Admiral Ernest J. King, the Chief of Naval Operations, and Admiral Harold R. Stark, who was the Commander of the Fleet.

Roosevelt's hesitance to appoint such a man was not shared by Secretary of War Stimson. To Stimson's way of thinking, the total influence of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the President's widely known lack of administrative discipline "had a rather salutary effect."<sup>29</sup> In any case, when Marshall proposed a Chief of the General Staff, a position designed to produce such an effect, the General had the unqualified support of his Secretary of War.

There was a difficulty in such a move that Marshall had not encountered in his reorganization of his own department, where he could command consensus if he so willed it. This time, Marshall had a formidable adversary in the person of Admiral Ernest J. King, a redoubtable enemy either in the conference room or on the open sea. Since Marshall was unsure of the Admiral's reaction to such overtures to the President, the General of the Army stepped lightly to avoid an open inter-service row. Part of the difficulty was that the other naval member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Stark, was about to leave for an

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.      <sup>29</sup>Ibid.

assignment with the Atlantic Fleet. With the Chief of Naval Operations lacking the Commander of the Fleet to back him up in JCS deliberations, Admiral King would be at a two-to-one disadvantage on the board. In addition, King was opposed to the principle of unity of command in the special way that Marshall viewed it. The principal difference on which the admiral and the general parted ways was that King believed in "cooperation," and Marshall believed in the command as being the only way in which to overcome human frailties. The unspoken corollary to King's insistence upon "cooperation" was that such cooperation implied no external control such as suggested by Marshall's concept of unity of command. Semantics apparently played a significant role in the misunderstandings of the day. Frequently, all-important concepts were couched in everyday terms loaded with meaning. From all appearances, not even Secretary of War Stimson understood Marshall's use of the term, "Chief of Staff."<sup>30</sup> Stimson saw the Chief of Staff as being in control of the armed forces and operating without much regard to the President. This may well have been the manner in which Marshall thought once, but he certainly had amended his views by this time. Perhaps Marshall's vision was a vision of the ideal, but when Admiral Leahy was appointed to the position, Marshall was no doubt confirmed in his beliefs about "human frailties."

Marshall had continued to press for the appointment of a

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. See also the Stimson Diary, February 25, 1942, as quoted in Pogue, Marshall, II, 473, fn. 23.



Chief of Staff to the President, who would also be the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. If Marshall could succeed in convincing the President of the need for such an officer, the man who filled the position could assist the President in military affairs based upon the broad knowledge of military developments as that knowledge was gained on the Joint Chiefs of Staff's level. In effect, such a man was to centralize the consensus of the JCS into bases for policy formations as well as strategic decisions. Marshall was to describe the difficulty he was having at this time in trying to convince the President of the need for such a man.

The President always answered my proposals...by saying 'But you are the Chief of Staff'...I said 'Mr. President, I am only the Chief of Staff of the Army...there is no Chief of Staff of the military services'...and he said, 'I am the Chief of Staff. I'm the Commander in Chief.' The trouble was that he didn't quite<sup>31</sup> understand what the role of the Chief of Staff would be.

While Marshall was attempting to educate the President as to the difference between the Commander in Chief and the Chief of Staff, he was also devising a proposal which would satisfy the Navy, now smarting from the impending loss of one vote on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In order to make up for the loss of the vote, Marshall "thought it would be wise if we had a chairman and one from the Navy, if one could be found that I thought was entirely impersonal and a man of good judgment."<sup>32</sup> Therefore, in order to dispel the doubts King certainly had about the motives for Marshall's advocacy of the new position,

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<sup>31</sup>Interview with George C. Marshall by Forrest Pogue, February 26, 1956, quoted in Pogue, Marshall, II, 299.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 298.

Marshall recommended the position, while at the same time saying that he would not take the job.<sup>33</sup> In time, Marshall recommended Admiral William D. Leahy for the post. Leahy had been Chief of Naval Operations before the war, and upon retirement, he had become the Governor of Puerto Rico. From that position, Roosevelt had dispatched him to deal with Vichy France as the United States Ambassador.

After Marshall discussed the matter with Leahy, the Admiral sought the advice of King, who had been "holding out against the idea of a White House military advisor. He was afraid that such an appointment would be detrimental to the interests of the Navy."<sup>34</sup> However, Marshall's forethought concerning King's hesitance was well reasoned; for, when Marshall told Admiral King that he had proposed Leahy for the job, King said, "if he will take it, it will be all right with me."<sup>35</sup> On June 6 and 7, Leahy conferred with the President. Leahy was to say later, "I do not recall that he recommended the actual title 'Chief of Staff,' but the duties he outlined...added up to the kind of post that we referred to in the Navy as a 'Chief of Staff.'"<sup>36</sup> In his memoirs, Leahy pointed out that his concept of Chief of Staff was different from the Army concept. Leahy viewed the Chief of Staff's position as an advisory one, particularly where the President was concerned, whereas Marshall saw

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<sup>33</sup>Stimson, On Active Service, p. 414.

<sup>34</sup>Leahy, I Was There, p. 96.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid. <sup>36</sup>Ibid.

the Chief of Staff as a commander. It is true that the Army view departed somewhat from the traditional definition of the staff officer, as pointed out at the beginning of this chapter; but Marshall did not attempt to impose his credo on the new "Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States," which was the title finally agreed upon for Leahy. Leahy recalled that he and Marshall conversed on this point after his conference with the President, "the question of designation of the office arose and I think I suggested the title 'Chief of Staff.' Marshall thought that a very accurate designation and we all agreed on it."<sup>37</sup> In claiming to be the originator of the position's title, Leahy was apparently unaware of the groundwork Marshall had been doing for some months prior to the Admiral's appointment. Doubtless, Marshall chuckled inwardly at this conversation. This little irony was only the beginning of what must have been a disappointment to Marshall, who obviously expected something quite different to result from the appointment than what actually happened.

In the first place, Leahy did not have a well-formed (or even an ill-formed) idea as to what the Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief did. Marshall was in England when the announcement was made by the President June 21, 1942, at a press conference. Leahy wrote that the President was "cagey" at this news conference, "as he always was in dealing with the newsmen, and did not tell them very much."<sup>38</sup> In all likelihood, the President was being "cagey" only in that he was refusing to

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid.      <sup>38</sup>Ibid.

display his ignorance to the newsmen there assembled. When he was queried by one of the more persistent of the reporters as to how big a staff the new Chief would be allowed to accumulate, the President replied that he did not have "the foggiest idea."<sup>39</sup> The possibility existed that Leahy himself did not have the "foggiest idea" either. Marshall returned from his trip to find Leahy "very much at a loose end. He didn't quite know where he stood."<sup>40</sup> When Leahy asked his advice, Marshall took him under his wing, found and outfitted Leahy with an office, and quite literally told him where to sit when the Joint Chiefs met, "I proposed to him that when the next meeting came, which I think was the next day, he just calmly sit down in that chair...."<sup>41</sup> Leahy did not effectively sit in that chair for very long. Since Leahy did not look upon his new post as one which was invested with command, possibly because King was still piqued at the appointment, he became more and more an advisor to the President than Chairman to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This arrangement suited King just fine, no doubt, but tended to neutralize in part the original purpose Marshall had in mind when he made his proposal to the President the previous February. In terms of power, the end result of this reform on the joint level meant that the Navy was to have a more direct

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>George C. Marshall interview with Forrest Pogue, February 26, 1956, quoted in Pogue, Marshall, II, 299.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 300.

access to the President than the Army, although Marshall "trusted" Leahy because he thought Leahy would be a "neutral chairman."<sup>42</sup> In reality, Leahy was no chairman at all, and the only reform accomplished was that the once erratic President would now be slightly controlled, although Leahy was not the man who would challenge the President in many matters. Though this reform was to have far-reaching effects later during the actual unification conflict, the original design was almost completely changed and succeeded in doing little more than raising the ire of the already hostile Navy in the person of Admiral King.

Secretary Stimson disagreed with developments as they became known even though he had backed Marshall's proposal. His source of discontent was the feeling that Marshall was "a far better man than any man in sight" for the position.<sup>43</sup> Stimson's respect for Marshall was equaled only by the well-expressed disdain he had for "the Admirals," whom he considered a hide-bound and self-seeking lot. To Stimson, "the Admirals" were part of a continuum of ill-will between the services, arising from the "peculiar psychology of the Navy Department, which frequently seemed to retire from the realm of logic into a dim religious world in which Neptune was God, Mahan his prophet, and the United States Navy the only true Church." In Stimson's view, the problem was that "the Admirals" had not had their Elihu Root to reform them. "The Admirals," said Stimson, "had never been given their comeuppance."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 299.

<sup>43</sup>Stimson Diary, February 25, 1942, quoted in Pogue, Marshall, II, 299.

<sup>44</sup>Stimson, On Active Service, p. 506.

The Navy presents a situation very much like that which confronted Elihu Root in the first part of the century. The Navy had never had the benefit of the changes which Root made in the Army and which had removed from the Army the bureaucratic service officers who used to dominate the Department and defy the Secretary of War and the Commander in Chief.<sup>45</sup>

In remembering these old reforms, Stimson did not seem to realize that there was a reform going on under his very nose. Marshall had been able to accomplish in a few months what Root and others had taken several years to do imperfectly. An especially relevant comment upon the changing character of the military is the fact that the first great military reforms of this century, conceived and conducted by a civilian, Elihu Root, were accomplished over the greatest howls of discontent from within the Army, and that the second great series of Army reforms, only forty years later, were carried out by a military man with a minimal amount of distress in either the political or military sectors. In this respect, General Marshall was the creator of the military system we have today. And though these reforms he had just instituted were of great moment, Marshall was to push ahead relentlessly into an area as yet untouched by military reformers of any age. The direction in which he travelled was only the most logical move forward from the point he had just reached. Until this time, Marshall was building an organization; both his own department, as well as the new Chief of Staff, were to be merely the basis for further reforms of the American military system. Yet, as Marshall moved forward into the next phase of his reforms, the attempt was to be wrested from his hands almost entirely.

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 507.

Though there were disagreements even within the War Department during 1942 over matters of strategy as well as organization, and disputes between Allied leaders over the strategy of a European offensive, the dispute between the Army and Navy seemed to occupy Secretary of War Stimson's mind at the time. Stimson may not have been as well informed in other military matters as he would have liked to have believed, but in gauging Army-Navy hostility, he was exceedingly perceptive. One dispute which he cited in his diary as being indicative of growing Army-Navy strife was the matter of the Pentagon. When the massive building was complete, Admiral King suggested that the services share it. The proposal was approved by Marshall, Stimson, Secretary of Navy Frank Knox, and the President. What Stimson believed was unmitigated greed moved subordinate staffers in the Navy to insist on more space in the building than they had been offered, although the Army and Navy were to be given equal shares to begin with. Stimson felt very strongly that the American public now needed a "demonstration of genuine Army-Navy solidarity" and remarked that "this Naval obstinacy seemed particularly irresponsible." In November of that year Stimson would lament:

The Bureau Admirals are holding Knox up and he is as helpless as a child in their hands. As a result, it seems as if this really important improvement of having the Navy come into our building and share it with us in such a way as to assist united command will break down simply from the crusty selfishness of some Bureau officers....<sup>46</sup>

Compared to the other problems facing the armed services, the matter of building space and the hurt feelings of the Secretary

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

seem to border on the picayune. However, the sentiments imparted in such a small matter did reveal the tip of the proverbial iceberg.<sup>47</sup> The full dimensions of inter-service suspicions were to be aired publicly not less than two years hence and were to continue unabated for three years beyond that.

Those problems which the Army reorganization tended to correct in early 1942, such as empire-building by staff officers, overwork of the staffs, lack of experience and training, and lack of delegated responsibilities, moved certain staff officers to view the joint organizations as something less than the best. The success with which the Army reorganization was executed by McNarney led the Deputy Chief of Staff and Marshall to believe that many of the problems which had been ameliorated on the service level could also be cured on the joint level. But there were problems to be faced at the joint level that the Army's reform never posed. Marshall and his fellow-reformers, for instance, were dealing with an entirely different constituency, over whom they exercised less than command control. This situation meant that any resistance which would rise to meet the

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<sup>47</sup>At a time when Marshall was resisting naval pleas to rush reinforcements and materiel to the Australian area, there occurred an episode which certainly detracted from any inter-service harmony which might have existed. During the first days of June, the Central Pacific exploded with the decisive Battle of Midway. While both Army and Marine aviators from Midway first met the Japanese attack, the Americans took a severe drubbing on June 4. The next day, carrier-based aircraft of the Navy wrecked three Japanese carriers in a vicious air-naval battle. Although it was evident to Marshall and King that the naval air squadrons had saved the day, the Army pilots claimed a larger share of the victory than was actually theirs. Additionally, the Battle of Midway occasioned further Army-Navy disagreement over strategy. King views the victory as an opportunity to press an attack on Japan, while Marshall saw Midway more as a device which would allow him to increase the build-up in Britain.



reforms would have to be dealt with by negotiation, rather than fiat, as in the case of the Army. Since the changes envisioned by the Army reforms were so substantive and fundamental to the over-all organization of the high command, the changes could not, in all likelihood, be carried out within the legal framework that effected the Army's reorganization. Therefore, the reorganization which was contemplated by the Army would have to be dealt with through the legislative process, which to many (including Marshall) was a sobering thought indeed. Consequently, in addition to doing groundwork to get the Navy into line with Army views, there was also necessitated a similar campaign to garner congressional support. From January, 1943, when McNarney first proposed that a "comprehensive study be made of joint organization, with a view to reforming it," there developed two roughly simultaneous movements which would continue until the advent of a full-dress congressional hearing; these movements would wind their way within the services themselves and within the Congress, with Army help.

As soon as McNarney made his proposal in January, a special joint committee was created by the Joint Chiefs to investigate the idea. It may be noted that the proposal did not advocate the rather far-reaching reform of unification, but instead relied upon constructing a workable organization at the joint level which would service the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Originally, no doubt, the conception of joint reform had depended upon who would be selected for the chairmanship of the JCS, and whether he would fit into the Army vision of the Chief of Staff qua commander. Then as Leahy assumed the post, Marshall became

rather disappointed at the manner in which Leahy fulfilled his duties.

The matter became very much confused later on because he became more what you might call Chief of Staff to the President, which was not my intention in making the proposal and urging that he be brought home. It was excellent to have him in contact with the White House. It would have been excellent if he had kept us straight on all of the political goings-on...anyway, he became more the Chief of Staff to the President and less the chairman of the Chiefs of Staff as time went on....<sup>48</sup>

Perhaps the development in Leahy's call to duty which Marshall most regretted was that Leahy did not provide as effective a buffer between himself and Admiral King as he had hoped. Marshall got along well with Leahy and had been close to Admiral Stark before he left for England, but Admiral King presented a different case entirely. Marshall was later to comment upon what he had initially expected of Leahy's position:

It would never have done to have tried to have gone right straight through the struggle with Admiral King in a secondary position and me as the senior where I was also the senior of the Air. It was quite essential that we have a neutral agency, and Leahy, in effect, was that so far as the Army and Navy requirements and positions were concerned.<sup>49</sup>

Through his own diplomacy, Marshall was generally able to curb the hot temper of Admiral King, though many times the senior Army General had to "eat crow" in order to do it. A case in point was an occasion in early 1942 when King had come to see Marshall at his office, and because the General was held up by an irate Australian diplomat, the Admiral was made to wait an inordinately long time. The Admiral finally stomped out of Marshall's office

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<sup>48</sup>George C. Marshall interview with Forrest Pogue, February 14, 1956, quoted in Pogue, Marshall, II, 300.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid.

disgustedly, and Marshall tailed him to his own office when he heard what had happened. Marshall explained to King patiently, adding,

If you or I begin fighting at the very start of the war, what in the world will the public have to say about us? They won't accept it for a minute. We can't afford to fight. So we ought to find a way to get along together.

King took his time and then answered, "We will see if we can get along, and I think we can."<sup>50</sup> But the problems during the war between the Army and Navy were not solely based upon differences in personalities. There were countless areas where the two services ran afoul of each other, such as tactics, strategy, roles and missions, credit for battles lost and won, ad nauseum.

For these reasons, the McNarney proposal for joint reform was innocuous in every respect possible. Similarly, the report of the special committee to investigate the possibilities of the proposal, which was submitted to the Joint Chiefs on March 25, 1943, stipulated that its main object was to "reduce the number and range of problems crushing the Joint Planning Staff." By this time, it was apparent, to all within the Army at least, that the joint planning mechanisms had something wrong with them.<sup>51</sup>

The recent staff debacle at the Casablanca Conference of January, 1943, had proven the need for reform beyond doubt. The Operations Division (the old War Plans Division and the Army agency which supplied members to the Joint Planning Staff), in particular, had turned in less than satisfactory performance. Albert C. Wedemeyer, the Brigadier in charge of the Operations Division who was on hand at Casablanca, put the experience with

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid.    <sup>51</sup>Legere, "Unification," p. 228.

the British planners this way: "We came, we listened, and we were conquered." At the same time, Wedemeyer wrote a friend that:

They [the British] swarmed down upon us like locusts with a plentiful supply of planners and various other assistants with prepared plans to insure that they not only accomplished their purpose but did so in stride and with fair promise of continuing in the role of directing strategically the course of the war...if I were a Britisher I would feel very proud. However, as an American I wish that we might be more glib and better organized to cope with these super negotiators. From a worm's eye viewpoint it was apparent that we were confronted by generations and generations of experience in committee work and in rationalizing points of view. They had us on the defensive practically all the time.<sup>52</sup>

If the Army planners had gotten superior feelings after their reorganization, this painful experience had been enough to bring them back to earth and stimulate further reforms. The British were still radiating their influences from afar, and it was clear the effect they were having upon staff development even at this advanced stage of war. As a consequence, the improvements suggested by the special committee were effected during April and May, 1943. For all practical purposes, this reorganization would last out the war, although minor changes would be made in some of the subordinate committees and special-area planning groups. The committee which had worked under the supervision of the Joint Planning Staff was named the Joint War Plans Committee (JWPC). One effect of the further joint consolidation and formalization of this new staff was to deal a blow to service partisanship in these joint subcommittees. In the Joint Planning Staff, a senior committee, assignments were

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<sup>52</sup>Letter, Brigadier General Wedemeyer to Major General Handy, Paper, 5, Item 1 A, Exec. 3, January 22, 1943, quoted in Cline, OPD, pp. 235-7.

were still made on the basis of service affiliation and reported or investigated by individuals with a strictly service point of view, instead of the "joint" point of view.<sup>53</sup> In effect, this reform did nothing to permanently arrest the problem of service partisanship.<sup>54</sup> Each service was possessed of its own training, tactics, strategy, doctrine, tradition, and mythology. After allowing partisanship to develop for over a century and a half, it was rather vainglorious to expect something which had its roots this deep in service identity to be eliminated by a mere change in administrative methodology. There are indications that the crux of the problem was actually not realized by any but an exclusive few, including Stimson, Marshall, and McNarney. The Navy, as revealed by the General Board proposal of 1941, viewed the problem as one of cooperation and coordination; but Marshall was to make a suggestion later in 1943 which would reveal that he, at least, knew very well that the problem was more substantive than just lack of cooperation. Therefore, even the manner in which each service perceived the problems to begin with was a considerable hurdle to overcome.

While the special committee of January, 1943, made its recommendations and carried them out in a relatively calm atmosphere, its task was made easier by the fact that none of the changes which it proposed significantly altered the power structure of the high command or threatened any alteration of the high command's substructure, the joint committees. This move may well have been Marshall's preface to his main attack for the

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<sup>53</sup>Legere, "Unification," p. 299. <sup>54</sup>Ibid.

idea of unification. Even before the special committee was constituted in January, three colonels in the War Department, W. W. Bessell, D. P. Armstrong, and P. W. Caraway, were assigned by the Operations Division to write a study, although a note on the cover of the study disclaimed any connection with official views. The study was entitled "Unified Command for the Armed Forces of the United States." General recommendations made by the trio of colonels were far removed from the limited reforms then being considered by the Joint Chiefs. The chance exists that Marshall did not know of the study then being conducted in his own operations center, but given the high degree of interest he had displayed in all areas of consolidation, the possibility is a remote one indeed. The plan suggested the creation of a Department of National Defense, headed by a civilian secretary, a Chief of the United States General Staff, and a United States General Staff. Alternate plans were provided, which depended upon the status of the two services' air arms.<sup>55</sup>

During mid-year, a Special Planning Division was created within the War Department to investigate post-war planning problems. Though the SPD was ostensibly constituted to deal with demobilization and the size of the post-war Army, the SPD quickly wandered away from the detailed planning by requesting some indication of the "over-all composition" of the whole military establishment after the war was over. The questions it felt the need to ask were the same that the study of the three

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 240.

colonels in January would have answered, had their study been official. Instead, the director of the Special Planning Division tried but failed to obtain a formal answer from the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the question. It is possible that the JCS did not know how to answer such a question, but it became apparent that Marshall was going to find out such answers in November of that year.<sup>56</sup>

However, it should be made clear that the Special Planning Division was not the only group investigating questions which were to relate to unification later. There was a study of the Joint General Staff by the Joint War Plans committee, and the ad hoc roles and missions inquiries, just to begin with. After this time, studies solicited and unsolicited, yet couched in semi-official terms and conceived in official atmospheres, began to be produced during the summer of 1943.<sup>57</sup> The increased activity of these several study groups and their proliferation might well have been directly related to the similarly increasing work load of the Joint Planning Staff, which during that year was responsible for preparing for the Casablanca Conference in January, the Washington Conference in May, the Quebec Conference in August, and the Cairo and Teheran Conferences in November. Therefore, quite apart from Marshall's prejudices in favor of military integration, there were very real and pressing conditions which forced the high command to look for changes which could somehow cope with the quantity and complexity of war planning and war control.

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid.      <sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 241.

On November 3, 1943, General Marshall submitted a memorandum to the Joint Chiefs of Staff entitled "A Single Department of War in the Postwar Period." Marshall did not consider the memorandum to be a formal proposal, but merely a draft which would serve to break the ice in the JCS on the subject. The paper which Marshall presented that day to his fellow Chiefs of Staff was the same which has been highly touted as the paper which "broke with long-standing tradition of unyielding opposition by official service Department [sic] spokesmen to the principle of unification of the armed forces."<sup>58</sup> Yet, as we have seen, the movement toward unification proposals was a long one and was influenced by much more than the change of mind by one man or several. As for Marshall, his commitment to ideas of consolidation and integration both within and between the two services became noticeable on the very day he began his tenure as Chief of Staff of the Army. From that time until the time he laid his memorandum on the conference table in the JCS meeting room in the Pentagon, Marshall was steadily progressing along a continuum as straight as the creases in the General's trousers. To assign that November meeting as the birth place of the unification controversy is to misread totally the developments up to that point and disregard the progressively intensifying influence of pressures of the war as it had been conducted thereto.

Marshall's memorandum was his own, but it served to preface the study which had resulted from the assignment of the Special Planning Division. In his memorandum, Marshall intro-

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 250.



duced the subject of the appendix (i.e. the study) by stating:

The lack of real unity of command has handicapped the successful conduct of this war...A system of coordinating committees, although probably the best method possible with separate Departments, cannot be considered as a satisfactory solution. It necessarily results in delays and compromises and is a cumbersome and inefficient method of directing the efforts of the Armed Forces....

Because the full import of combined operations in a global war was not recognized, this war found the United States relatively [sic]unprepared to provide command and staff officer personnel who are trained and accustomed to supervise the operations of combined forces. A permanent single department, with combined staffs in habitual operations not only at the top level, but also in overseas garrisons and on all other occasions where coordination of the basic forces is necessary, would provide the remedy.<sup>59</sup>

The Special Planning Division study recommended in detail what Marshall had generally proposed. Under this plan, the two armed services would merge, then be split into three "forces," much like the triple forces of the Army Ground, Army Air, and Army Supply Forces effected by the War Department's own reorganization. Each of these forces was to have a civilian Secretary, a Chief of the General Staff, and each was to contribute a member to a Joint General Staff. Two days later Admiral E. J. King, having approved the further study of this plan, dictated a memorandum in which he formally approved of the submission of the idea for further study, but qualified his stand on the unification idea by saying that the study might or might not necessarily lead to a merger of the services into one gigantic military organization.

When, on March 21, 1944, the JCS took up the matter once more, it was still under study by committee; the JCS concluded that since unification was essentially still a post-war problem,

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

the energies of the high command would be best directed on matters of war, rather than planning for matters of peace. One week later, Admiral King further outlined his position in another memorandum, stating his case in much stronger terms. King wanted the mission of the study group on unification to change, insisting that the group redirect their work toward the investigation of the feasibility of one, two, or three separate departments. In addition, he wanted an omission of all references to any principle concerning the establishment of a single Department of Defense. Marshall gave into the demand by King, and the study group continued anew, pursuing a now sterile proposal. King's change of mind had seemingly killed the proposal, dooming it to lie forever in the clutches of a joint study group, where the Admiral could control what the Navy members did. But he miscalculated by thinking that this was the only front on which he would have to fight unification. During the meeting of March 21, mention was made of a new congressional proposal then pending which purported to investigate the very area they were discussing.<sup>60</sup>

The congressional movement into the area of potential conflict between the two services may have given King false hopes that unification would be resolved quickly, but it is difficult to understand how Marshall could have been ignorant of the move. The resolution introduced in the House during that session was authored by Representative James W. Wadsworth, (Republican, New York) who wanted to call a "Select Committee

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<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

on Post-War Policy" to explore basic considerations of peacetime politico-military policies. According to Wadsworth, the purpose of the committee was to "investigate all matters relating to the post-war military requirements of the United States."<sup>61</sup> Wadsworth had had a long and varied career as a staunch congressional champion of the War Department. He had been a Senator in 1919 when he chaired the Senate Military Affairs committee which heard testimony on War Department reorganization as a prelude to the National Defense Act of 1920. In 1941, the well-known military analyst Brigadier General John McAuley Palmer had dedicated America in Arms to Wadsworth, recalling in the process how he first came to know the Senator:

Late in the summer of 1919 I attended a meeting of the Military Training Camps Association...in Washington. The principal speaker was James W. Wadsworth, chairman of the Senate Military [Affairs] Committee. I had never seen the Senator before and was greatly impressed by him...He explained what his committee was doing. It was determined to erect a sound and permanent military system upon our costly experience in the recent war.<sup>62</sup>

Later, Palmer was to testify before this committee, as was Marshall. Even at the time, Palmer was an intimate and trusted friend of Marshall's and both came to know Wadsworth well. During the prewar era, Marshall had occasion to call upon the assistance of Wadsworth. He had been returned to Congress in 1933 as a Representative. The extension of the Selective Service Act was in trouble in the Congress and across the country. Though Marshall commanded wide respect in the Congress by virtue of his

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<sup>61</sup>H. Res. 465, 78th Cong., 2nd sess. (1944).

<sup>62</sup>John McAuley Palmer, America in Arms (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), p. 167.

candid and succinct testimonies, his popularity could not overcome reluctance on the part of the Republicans to pass a pro-military bill in an isolationist atmosphere during a year of elections. In an attempt to gather support for the extension, Marshall contacted Wadsworth, and together the General and the Representative gathered forty Republican congressmen in a meeting with them at the Army-Navy Club. As the bill came up for vote, Wadsworth's and Marshall's meeting with the solons allowed Wadsworth to deliver twenty-one Republicans in favor of the measure. In one of the most crucial legislative moves prior to the outbreak of the war, the Selective Service extension passed by a single vote.<sup>63</sup>

Wadsworth's unification resolution went to the Rules Committee of the House, where, according to the New York Times of March 11, 1944, the committee chairman, Adolph Sabath consulted with the President and the service secretaries as to whether they considered the proposal an invasion of their prerogatives.<sup>64</sup> Apparently Sabath encountered no opposition from these officials, for on March 24 the resolution was favorably reported out of the committee. Representative Clifton A. Woodrum was to chair the Select Committee, which would include seven representatives each from the House Military Affairs committee and the Navy Affairs committee, along with nine representatives not connected with either. Hearings got underway on April 24, 1944.

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<sup>63</sup>Pogue, Marshall, II, 153-6.

<sup>64</sup>New York Times, March 16, 1944.

From the rapid chain of events and the solicitous treatment of the proposal by the Rules Committee chairman, it appeared that the Marshall-Wadsworth team was operating again, although there is scant evidence in support of such a conclusion.<sup>65</sup> Though the committee was eventually weighted with military affairs committeemen on the one hand and naval affairs committeemen on the other, with several "neutral" members, the Woodrum Committee Hearings, as they came to be known, were widely regarded as an "Army show." This general attitude, especially in the Navy, may have resulted from the general knowledge of at least two factors: first, Frank Knox, the Secretary of the Navy, had surprised his old friend Stimson by telling him that he was in favor of the unification idea, so long as it did not operate to the detriment of the Navy.<sup>66</sup> The Secretary of Navy's admission to Stimson was tantamount to placing his office in direct opposition to the stated policy of "the Admirals," who maintained that the Bureau system was quite sufficient for their organization and that joint systems that were motivated by "cooperation" rather than legislation were flexible and therefore far better suited to the conduct of the war. The second factor was merely one

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<sup>65</sup> Marshall's official biographer and trustee of the General's papers, Forrest Pogue, writes that "Marshall was an old friend of Representative Wadsworth's (the friendship went back to hearings on the National Defense Act of 1920 when Wadsworth was a Senator--the friendship was strengthened by their work together on the Selective Service Act). Wadsworth was perfectly capable of initiating this measure, but my guess is that the suggestion may have come from Marshall." Letter from Forrest Pogue to author, October 28, 1970.

<sup>66</sup> Stimson, On Active Service, p. 519.

of homework. While the Navy was quite satisfied with its system and had not reorganized since well before the outbreak of the war, the Navy was not particularly concerned with reform of its high command. For that reason, staff studies on the subject of unification simply did not exist, for the most part, in the Navy's planning sections. In contrast, the number of staff studies in the Army by this time was considerable, and these were used to good effect by the Army when testifying before the Woodrum Committee. By all evidences, the strongest testimony in behalf of the Navy (or, rather, the Admiral's) point of view was that of the Undersecretary of the Navy, James O. Forrestal, who in the future was to prove himself an implacable foe to the Army vision of unification.<sup>67</sup>

At the outset of the hearings, Chairman Woodrum introduced the proceedings by apparently trying to assuage the anxieties of the Navy. Woodrum reiterated that the purpose of the committee was not to recommend legislation, but only to make continuing reports to their colleagues in the House of Representatives. Continuing, he said that his committee had

No purpose or intention whatsoever to suggest any organizational change in the military establishment that would affect its operation during the present war. Our concern is purely for the post war period.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>U.S. House of Representatives, Select Committee on Post-War Policy, 78th Cong., 2nd sess. (1944), pp. 121-37 (Hereinafter cited as Woodrum Committee Hearings). Forrestal's testimony begins on p. 79. Just a few hours after Forrestal made his impressive appearance before the committee on April 24, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox died as the result of a heart attack he had a few days before, thus leaving Forrestal in charge of the Department of the Navy.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

With that comforting note by Woodrum, the committee turned directly to the third item on the agenda: "A Study of the development of unity of command as practiced during the present war, with a view to determining to what extent that unity of command and administration may be developed and applied as a part of future military policy."<sup>69</sup> It should be pointed out here that though this was supposedly a "balanced" committee, the proceedings definitely were not. The first four days of testimony were totally absorbed by Army statements, and not until April 28, did the Navy have a chance to testify. In the meantime, the members of the Army who testified ignored the basic premise as drawn by Woodrum and conducted themselves in the exposition of their proposals as though the committee was empowered to legislate. This breach of hearing objectives may have been a tactic to see how the Navy would react. The only reason Stimson approved of the move at this early time was Frank Knox's disclosure to him that he was not opposed, but Knox suffered his heart attack at the start of the hearings and was replaced by Forrestal. Nevertheless, the Army proceeded to present its views, well-organized and well-researched in every respect. In the War Department, it was accepted already that there would be a terrific fight over the subject and that it would be aired fully in public before the committee. This fear was confirmed when, but five days after he testified, Forrestal asked Stimson to see if he could stop the proceedings.<sup>70</sup> There

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Paul Y. Hammond, Organizing for Defense (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 196.

was no explicit threat, but Forrestal's message got through to Stimson and reawakened the anxieties he had felt before Knox's announcement of advocacy. With Forrestal in the secretary's seat, Stimson soon was impressed that the proceedings were going to be quite different. Yet the proceedings of the Woodrum Committee were not stopped. For the rest of the hearings, it was to be the "Army show" that the Navy had feared.

The testimony on the opening day set the mood for the hearings with remarks by the again active General Palmer, a man of prestige and a tireless lobbyist for the Army. His old friend, James Wadsworth, sat on the committee, listening. Palmer did not, however, say anything before the committee that he had not said before. His book, America in Arms, published in 1941, lambasted the traditional American attitude toward the standing Army and the historical reliance on "volunteers" of little training to fight its wars; and Palmer's testimony was largely a reiteration of what he had to say in his book about the matter of preparedness. At this time, Palmer was serving as an advisor to the Special Planning Division in the War Department (the same SPD which produced the study of unification which Marshall had used the previous November to make his proposal to the JCS). Calling his brand of unification "an essential part...of the permanent peace establishment," Palmer advocated that "the post-war Military Establishment should be headed by a single executive having control over all of the armed forces." Generally, Palmer avoided specifics and adhered to the strategy used by the Army in their proposals before the Joint Chiefs of Staff--



that is, if the top command were unified now, actual integration later on would be much simpler.<sup>71</sup>

As the Army testimony wore on, it became evident that the Army officials considered this committee's hearings the real thing. During its testimonies, the Army advocated a particular line of unification, and above all, pushed for "an agreement in principle" to the unification idea. Stimson was to say, "it seems to me of the greatest importance that the general principle of consolidation be determined upon as soon as possible." The only consideration, obviously, was to be able to pressure naval acceptance of the idea in order to be free to institute later reforms. Stimson continued:

The importance of considering this organization of the armed forces from the standpoint of fundamentals rather than details [is imperative]. If the basic plan of centralization can be determined upon, hundreds of vexing problems will fall into their proper perspective. They will lose much of their controversial aspect and be decided as matters of specific planning rather than of primary policy.<sup>72</sup>

But if Stimson's testimony were an indication of the entire Army plan, it was certain at the beginning of his testimony that the Army, though presenting a scheme for reform, was not going to go all the way and recommend a basic revision of service machinery during the war. This stand, no doubt, was predicated upon the prior decision in the Joint Chiefs of Staff meeting the month before not to pursue radical change during the war, lest it consume too much of their energies. The possibility also existed that, since Knox had fallen out of the picture,

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<sup>71</sup>Woodrum Committee Hearings, pp. 15-17.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

Stimson and Marshall felt less secure in the advocacy of unification. Certainly, Forrestal's communication with Stimson a few days following his testimony indicated that Stimson's fears were confirmed: the Navy could be expected to put up a stiffer fight than had been foreseen. Perhaps Stimson was counting on such developments when he took a rather less than firm stand during his testimony, commenting:

I do not believe that any such fundamental reorganization could take place at a critical period in this war without difficulties, danger, and complications which would more than offset its advantages.<sup>73</sup>

The day after the hearings opened, the Army proposal was presented in detail by none other than General McNarney. McNarney, now Deputy Chief of Staff, was the logical man to present the official Army view, since he was responsible for the creation of an overwhelming portion of it. The plan McNarney presented to the committee was identical to the one he had given to Marshall to propose to the JCS in November. There were to have been a Secretary of Armed Forces; civilian secretaries over the three service entities of Army, Navy, and Air; and a military "director" over a common supply service. Included in the plan were provisions for Chiefs of Staff for the three arms and a Chief of Staff to the President, who would be the senior to all the other Chiefs of Staff in as yet nebulous and ill-defined matters. An inspection of the McNarney plan reveals that the scheme was hardly so much an attempt to change the way the military was managed as it was an attempt to describe

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<sup>73</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

the way things were at the time. For instance, in his description of the Chief of Staff to the President, McNarney made it clear that essentially what the Army was trying to do was gain statutory approval for the function then being served by Leahy.<sup>74</sup> In mentioning the Chief of Staff to the President, the only function advocated by McNarney corresponded to the function Leahy served at the time--that is, as a liason man to the President for military matters which bordered on the political sphere.<sup>75</sup>

As for the proposed Secretary of the Armed Forces, the obvious model used for the description of this position was Secretary Stimson. The recommendation put the Secretary of the Armed Forces in administrative limbo, for all practical purposes, with little power to affect policy or even budget. Stimson's tenure as Secretary of War was characterized by his lack of insistence upon control in matters which he considered outside his expertise. He was well known by his statement that the Secretary should have direct control over only the Public Relations of his department, and apart from that, should "dip down" in the infra-structure of the military only on occasion.<sup>76</sup> By virtue of two executive orders, the first in 1939, the second in 1941, the Secretary had been excluded from much of what went on between the military and the White House. In this respect, McNarney's proposal for the new Secretary of the Armed Forces as an official who "would be able to resolve many of the administrative difficulties which in the past have been troublesome to handle," and who would be "the principal

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<sup>74</sup>Ibid., p. 41.    <sup>75</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>76</sup>Stimson, On Active Service, pp. 453-6.

advisor to the President and the Congress on political and administrative matters" was a particularly apt description of the present Secretary of War.<sup>77</sup> Yet, in describing the influences of the new Secretary, McNarney made no mention of budgetary control; and this topic was to become a salient one as these and other hearings progressed. The plan stipulated, rather, that:

The United States Chiefs of Staff would have the sole duty of submitting recommendations to the President concerning matters involving military strategy and the general determination of budgetary needs and allocations involved in their recommended strategic policy. They would also, after final approval of the military budget, recommend to the President the general breakdown or allocation of funds to the several armed forces and for common supply.<sup>78</sup>

Even at the time, in McNarney's view, the question of unification of budgetary methods was of utmost importance. When questioned as to what really new recommendations he had made aside from the legalization of the organization now in effect, McNarney replied that the "one very great thing is that it will unify the budget."<sup>79</sup> While McNarney's presentation was detailed in several respects, he did seek to avoid some questions which directed the Army into opposition with naval sacred cows. When asked about the place of the Marine Corps in his organizational scheme, he said that he did not care to comment on that detail. McNarney was equally circumspect on the new status of naval aviation.<sup>80</sup> Therefore, while the Army was intent upon introducing its recommendations to the committee, it was just as in-

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<sup>77</sup>Woodrum Committee Hearings, p. 36. <sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 43. <sup>80</sup>Ibid.

tent upon avoiding open warfare with the Navy, which, with the death of Knox, became more of a possibility.

When the Navy's turn came to testify, Forrestal wanted not to oppose the Army program outright, but said instead that he was "not prepared to say that the Navy believes that the consolidation into one department is desirable."<sup>81</sup> Throughout the hearings, this was the tone of the naval testimony. The Navy was not prepared to accept any of the premises upon which the Army recommendations were made. The Navy, through various witnesses, stated that it was not convinced that the duplication of effort which the Army said would be eliminated by consolidation, would, in fact, be eliminated. Forrestal also questioned the feasibility of military control over military budgets by saying that he wondered whether:

...the Congress would want the preparation of the budget to flow solely from a military authority? I do not know. I just raise that question. It runs somewhat counter to our concept, I think, of government.<sup>82</sup>

There was an exchange of directly opposing views between the Assistant Secretaries of War and Navy, both of whom spoke for the air arms of each service. Robert Lovett of the Army made mention of the fact that he did not think the Navy should continue its aviation program, and Artemis Gates of the Navy hotly defended the rights of naval aviation as being necessary to the total Navy mission.<sup>83</sup> While very little was accomplished at the Woodrum Committee hearings aside from the exposition of the Army plan, several predictions could be made as a result

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 124.      <sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 133.      <sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 225.

of the testimonies. First, the Army had committed itself from the Secretary of War to the staff officers to the principle of unification. They were insistent upon enabling legislation which would allow the organization then actually in effect to continue during the post-war period, with a few salient changes. The Army made its strategy clear from the beginning by maintaining the reorganization would eliminate duplication of effort, reduce cost, silence the internecine strife which had characterized the two services' histories, and assist in protecting the national security through cogent, centralized planning. On the other hand, the Navy was not ready to accept any of these laborious a priori assumptions; and the only real commitment made by the Navy was that the problem should be studied further in order to determine the validity of these assumptions by the Army. This reluctance by the Navy was translated by the Army as a willingness to fight out the problem before Congress. Stimson remarked later that it became "at once apparent" that "the hearings might become a free-for-all in which nothing but bitterness would be produced."<sup>84</sup>

The Woodrum Committee's report was as non-committal as the Navy's position at its hearings and thereby gave the first round in the continuing acrimony to the Navy's "wait and see" attitude. Although the Army's attack was blunted considerably by the committee report, which maintained that it did not consider "that the time is opportune to consider detailed legislation," there was no question that the Army would give up after

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<sup>84</sup>Stimson, On Active Service, p. 519.

having gone this far.<sup>85</sup> Forrestal was not convinced that the matter would lapse into dormancy until after the war; two months later he wrote to Carl Vinson, the Chairman of the House Committee on Naval Affairs, that he did "not think for a moment we can take this [unification question] lightly, and I have so told Admiral King."<sup>86</sup>

Throughout the hearings, there was an uncharacteristic silence from the White House. The New York Times reported rumors to the effect that the President was behind the Navy opposition to the Army plan, or rather such opposition as had been thus far expressed.<sup>87</sup> Admiral Leahy was later quoted as saying that Roosevelt, in his opinion, was not in accord with Army views on either unification or the single Air Force.<sup>88</sup> Stimson was apparently aware of the development of Presidential resistance, having been told by Marshall at this time that it appeared "the President was siding against us on this consolidation of departments" and that the Navy was "running wild."<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>H. Rept. 1645, 78th Cong., 2nd sess. (1944), p. 4.

<sup>86</sup>James Forrestal, The Forrestal Diaries, ed. by Walter Millis (New York: Viking Press, 1951), p. 9 (Hereinafter cited as Forrestal, Diaries).

<sup>87</sup>New York Times, May 15, 1944.

<sup>88</sup>Legere, "Unification," p. 338. See also a citation in Demetrios Caraley, The Politics of Military Unification (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 295 (Hereinafter cited as Caraley, Military Unification), which cites a letter in R. Earl McClendon, The Question of Autonomy for the United States Air Arm (Maxwell AFB, Alabama: The Air University, 1950), pp. 233-4, by FDR to Senator Patrick McCarran in which the President opposes a separate air arm.

<sup>89</sup>The Diary of Henry Stimson, May 12, 1944, quoted in Caraley, Military Unification, p. 32.

Even if this information had not come out of the Washington rumor mills, Stimson and Marshall should have been prepared, if not for outright Presidential resistance, at least for obstructive apathy on FDR's part. Both men by that time were no doubt well versed in the President's administrative modus operandi, which dictated that there was "something to be said... for having a little conflict between agencies." Arthur Schlesinger's Age of Roosevelt quotes the President as saying that "a little rivalry is stimulating, you know. It keeps everybody going to prove that he is a better fellow than the next man."<sup>90</sup> Marshall, especially, should have sensed this after his difficulty in getting Leahy appointed as Chief of Staff to the President in 1942. Though Roosevelt made no public pronouncements on the matter of unification, his actions, if correctly reported, were perfectly consistent with the Rooseveltian credo of "competitive administration."

Just after the Woodrum Committee closed its hearings on May 19, 1944, there was appointed yet another committee whose mission was to gather information relative to the issue of unification from among the ranks of commanders both in Washington and in the field. The study group was known as the Richardson Committee, after the man who headed it, Admiral James Richardson.<sup>91</sup> Richardson had been a member of the Navy's General Board

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<sup>90</sup> Arthur M. Schlesing, Jr., The Age of Roosevelt (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1958), II, 522-3, 527-8.

<sup>91</sup> The Richardson Committee's Report, though a JCS study, is reprinted in the U.S. Senate, Department of the Armed Forces, Department of Military Security, Hearings on S. 84 and S. 1482 before the Senate Military Committee, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (1945), pp. 411-39 (Hereinafter cited as Hearings on Military Security).



in 1941 when the Navy had made its "unification" proposal and was considered a man not given to embracing mythologies or preconceived notions. The Richardson Committee was the belated result of the March meeting of the JCS which agreed that the matter of unification be studied on a joint level by a bi-service committee. As agreed by the JCS, Richardson was the senior member of the committee, composed of two Navy and two Army officers, including Richardson.

Beginning in June, the committee met throughout the summer in Washington. In the process, the committee drew different plans for a one-service, two-service, or three-service system of defense, and at the same time concluded that a common supply agency was not feasible. Finally, before it began its round of interviews with the high command in Washington and the theaters, it concluded that some form of a Joint Chiefs of Staff was necessary. By October the committee had canvassed the high command, and the next two months were spent in Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Pacific. Those interviewed from each service included Admirals Halsey, Kincaid, Nimitz, Stark, and Spruance, as well as Generals MacArthur, Eisenhower, Clark, Bradley, Kenny, and Spaatz. It was not until April 11 of the following year that the Richardson Committee tendered its report to the Joint Chiefs. While the committee was meant to serve as a means of arbitrating the dispute, the report was far-reaching in that it recommended considerably more consolidation and elimination of the service identity than any proposal heretofore. At the same time,

the report advocated much less civil control over the services by vesting over-all commanding power in the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Richardson himself did not agree with the report and issued one of his own which detracted from the majority view. The remaining members stated that of the officers in the field they interviewed, their view for more consolidation was shared by MacArthur, Eisenhower, Nimitz, and Halsey, and "by the great majority of Army officers and almost exactly half of the Navy officers."<sup>92</sup> But the field interviews which the committee made that winter were somewhat misleading. There was, for instance, a great confusion of the terms "unity of command," which was practiced in the theaters of war, and "unification," which implied something far different. When asked whether the field operations should be more "unified," any field commander would undoubtedly maintain that they should. A perennial problem during the war was the lack of air support and coordination with ground operations. MacArthur, from the earliest days of the war, wished for more naval support; and the Navy wished to give it to him, but the "Atlantic first" strategy had higher priorities to be obeyed. The subjects of the Richardson Committee interviews suffered from not being in Washington where the lines were drawn concerning concepts of which they had never heard. Eisenhower, when faced with the committee's arrival, lamented that he did not take better notes on Marshall's views when he was in the War Department. As was characteristic of the other interviewees, Eisenhower was influenced by his ex-

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid. See also Legere, "Unification," p. 282.

perience in the actual conduct of operations; and he wrote Marshall that he would "largely limit [his] comments to higher organization in the field."<sup>93</sup>

The consensus that the majority members of the committee believed existed among the field commanders led them to propose a radical course quite distant from the original purpose the JCS had in mind when it gave the four officers their assignments. The majority report of Major General Harold L. George, Major General William F. Tompkins, and Rear Admiral Malcolm F. Schoeffel recommended that there be no civilian secretaries for the separate services and one super-secretary of the over-all organization. The proposal included a provision for a separate air arm, which would not integrate the naval air arm. As far as the high command itself was concerned, there was to be a Commander of the Armed Forces to be in charge of both strategic planning and operations in the field. The chiefs of the ground, air, and naval arms were to be stripped of all operational authority and relegated to an "advisory" position. The super-secretary was vested with little power. The committee stipulated that the civilian would handle matters on the "business end" of national defense, particularly with regard to procurement and industrial coordination.

The defects of the report were fairly obvious to all but those who were responsible for them. Admiral King, predictably, did not approve of the majority report; and just as predictably, Generals Marshall and Arnold did approve. In this respect, the

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<sup>93</sup>Eisenhower, Papers, IV, 2267.

report was valuable because it indicated just how far Marshall was willing to go with unification. This was not the end of the Richardson Committee's report. It was to be bandied about by the Army in hearings on two unification bills before the Senate later that year. Far from ending, the unification battle had only just begun in earnest. Increasingly, since the advent of the Woodrum Committee hearings, the positions of the Army and Navy were hardening. Thus far, the Navy position was merely one of opposition; for no plan as yet had been evolved to counter the Army scheme. In this pre-congressional phase, the dispute was simply taking shape. The conflict had only surfaced, and it had yet to become a salient public issue. But, with the beginning of the hearings in the Senate in later 1945, the issue of unification was to become an element of the full-fledged debate over just what the nation's post-war policy was going to be, who was going to be responsible for that policy, and how it was to be carried out. In this final stage of the evolution of unification, the debate was to be characterized by protracted acrimony, and an inter-service struggle the intensity of which the nation had not seen since the days of the reforms of Elihu Root.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE CONGRESSIONAL PHASE: UNIFICATION BECOMES AN ELEMENT OF THE DEBATE OVER POST-WAR NATIONAL SECURITY

From the first day of its meeting, the Woodrum Committee made it clear to all concerned that it was to have no real part in recommending legislation. It would be an error, however, to maintain that the Woodrum Committee served no function because of that fact. By the time the Richardson Committee report was made to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the spring of 1945, the Woodrum Committee was much a thing of the past. Nevertheless, the effects the committee's hearings had on the unification question cannot be overlooked and must be cited briefly here. From the time the Woodrum Committee opened its hearings in April, 1944, until the 1945 Hearings on Military Security<sup>1</sup> started, a number of substantial changes in the character of the dispute had been made.

Foremost among these changes was the fact that the unification dispute was no longer an internecine feud among organizational siblings. With the airing of views in open committee hearings in 1944, the basic questions concerning unification had been asked. In the process of attempting to answer a number of these leading questions, the Army had gone on record as being

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Senate, Hearings on S. 84, and S. 1482, Department of Armed Forces, Department of Military Security, before the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (1945) (Hereinafter cited as Hearings on Military Security).

in favor of a certain brand of unification. The enunciation of such an official stance in an open forum tended to lock the Army into a doctrinaire position, which was, in turn, supported by views having their origin in the very existence of the Army, including a self-judgment as to just how useful it had been in the Second World War. In reply to the comparatively well-presented case of the Army before a sympathetic House Committee, the Navy succeeded in forstalling during testimony before that same committee what then promised to be an unqualified Army victory for its unification play. What has been called a "tactical victory" by some analysts who maintain that the Navy won the first round was, in fact, due to no efforts of the Navy.<sup>2</sup> Certainly, its presentation before the Woodrum Committee was less than substantive; thus far, the Navy had done little more than oppose the Army plan.

This problem was recognized within the Navy at the time. The death of Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, on the day he was to testify was a blow to the Navy. But, if a death can be fortuitous, Knox's untimely death was eventually to strengthen the Navy's hand. The Army had presented its views on the strength of Knox's agreement in principle to unification.<sup>3</sup> Before Knox's death, the civilians had arrived at a private accommodation, and the agreement had become all-important to the Army's strategy. Of course, when Knox died, this supposed consensus was shattered. His successor, James O. Forrestal, was in no position to accept

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<sup>2</sup>Caraley, Military Unification, p. 34.

<sup>3</sup>See Chapter III.

the Army view out of hand because of the resistance of "the Admirals" to the proposal; and later Forrestal was to develop his own particular ideas about the principle of unification. On such short notice, Forrestal did well considering that he did prosecute the basic Navy view with success before the committee. At that time, Forrestal advocated a wait-and-see attitude. No longer certain of civilian consensus between the secretaries of the two services, the Army position became somewhat more tenuous. Perhaps for this reason, the Army, having presented its more basic views before the hearings, agreed not to press the matter until the war was over. The bi-service Richardson Committee began its work at the same time, and since there was much concern on either side as to just what the final report would be, Forrestal's suggestions made sense.

Therefore, the unification dispute was held in limbo for the remainder of 1944 and the better part of the next year as well. In the meantime, the Richardson Committee did its work, the war ran out, and the Navy did more homework on the issue. There was little hope at first that the Navy would be able to stem the advances of the Army with its well constructed program. In September, 1944, while the Richardson team was still in Washington, the new Secretary of the Navy was to voice his apprehensions over the chances of the Navy to withstand the Army onslaught:

I have been telling King, Nimitz, and Company, that as of today the Navy has lost its case, and that either in Congress or in a public poll the Army's point of view would prevail.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Forrestal, Diaries, p. 60.

With the issuance of the Richardson Report to the JCS there was also another blow dealt to the Navy position. The day after the report reached the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the President died.<sup>5</sup> Until that time, Roosevelt had offered no public resistance to the Army proposals and had not come out openly in favor of the Navy in the dispute. In Washington the supposition was that Roosevelt did back the Navy in the conflict. Roosevelt's background tended to put him on the Navy's side, and this fact was considered that service's main strength. In the case of Knox's and Roosevelt's deaths, the whole matrix of support for either side had been altered.

With the death of Roosevelt, the Army acquired a hitherto unexpected advocate. In August of the previous year, Harry S. Truman had written an article for Colliers entitled "Our Armed Forces Must be Unified;" and with this disclosure, the question of whether there would be unification was changed by the new President to read, "what kind of unification shall there be?"<sup>6</sup> Truman was an Army veteran of World War I, and in the Navy this was considered tantamount to advocacy of the Army's position. Had his article not been published until after he became President, Truman's views on unification would not have surprised the Navy in the least. Truman's succession to the Presidency, therefore, more than tended to offset for the Army the loss of Knox's

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<sup>5</sup>The Richardson Report was sent to the JCS April 11, complete with a pro- and anti- statement on unification. The JCS was split on the validity of the reports and ultimately sent the report to Truman with four differing views of their own. See Legere, "Unification," pp. 315-21.

<sup>6</sup>Harry S. Truman, "Our Armed Forces Must be Unified," Colliers, August 26, 1944, pp. 16, 63-4.



support.

Forrestal did not delude himself that the moratorium on the unification question could last forever, and he was quite convinced that when the battle was joined once more, he would have to have a more substantial plan of his own than mere resistance. Moreover, it was clear to Forrestal that the whole matter was slipping out of the control of the military services and, in fact, threatened to be incorporated into a much larger dispute, some facets of which were only peripherally related to the military but were vital to the total question of the composition of the post-war national security machinery. This development meant that consensus would have to be sought out not only in the councils of the executive branch but in the halls of Congress, and possibly in the media of the country. To the military, already nervous about post-war appropriations and universal military training, this prospect could hardly have been pleasing.

When it became apparent to Forrestal that he was now obliged to work in other areas to build his case, he began a campaign of his own to put together a vigorous opposition to the Army program. Not long after Roosevelt's death, Forrestal and King met with the President; and one of the matters on the agenda was the Navy's opposition to the unification idea. The Secretary of the Navy had decided to attempt to dissuade the President from supporting the Army.<sup>7</sup> Indicative of the Navy's position was Forrestal's suggestion to the President that he

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<sup>7</sup>Forrestal, Diaries, pp. 46-7.

read the old Morrow Board Report of 1925.<sup>8</sup> Forrestal may have believed that the reading of this anti-unification report by the President could open his mind on the question, but it is highly doubtful that Forrestal expected to change his mind with one old report. More reasonably, Forrestal was only trying to acquire an indication of how the President would react to steadfast Navy opposition. At the same time, Forrestal appeared to tempt the President by suggesting that the Navy was not considering a reorganization of the high command along the lines of a staff system.<sup>9</sup>

Less than a month later, Forrestal made an attempt to inspire consensus among the high command at a luncheon in his home. Admiral King, General Marshall, and Harry Hopkins visited with Forrestal about the "possibility of the Army and Navy reaching an agreement as to the form of our post-war national defense," as Forrestal put it.<sup>10</sup> Forrestal attempted to play down the question of unification by saying that "it was not a very wise use of our time to be conducting a debate between the Army and Navy on this question," but such a statement did not appreciably alter the views of those present. Marshall told

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<sup>8</sup>See Caraley, Military Unification, pp. 11-12, for an analysis of the early movement toward air autonomy. The Morrow Board effectively quashed hopes for a separate air arm. The main contentions of the board reflected the Army-Navy dogma, to wit: 1) the airplane was overrated as a military device, and 2) the airplane was not sufficient to change the ways in which the services controlled themselves, and the services were doing quite well with what organization they then had, and, finally, 3) a third service would only complicate coordination between the service branches. See also, Hearing before the President's Aircraft Board (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1925).

<sup>9</sup>Forrestal, Diaries, pp. 46-7. <sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

the group that he was "unshakably committed to the thesis of a single civilian Secretary with a single military Chief of Staff."<sup>11</sup> Marshall's plain statement was certainly no surprise to anyone present, but Marshall supported his stand by a long verbal harangue on the difficulties of the Army after World War I and "continued to express his fear of the starvation of the Army in another period of peace."<sup>12</sup> The outcome of the luncheon was predictable. Forrestal ended the debate by stating that he did not agree on Marshall's concept of the single Chief of Staff, but that he would, nevertheless, "go a long way to meet the Army's view on any reasonable system of cooperation and coordination," which was the official Navy euphemism for continuing independence, both within the military system and in the fight for appropriations before the Congress.<sup>13</sup>

Forrestal recognized, especially after the luncheon, that the issue had become more extensive than the now simple question of unification. If Forrestal had not become committed to another method of opposing the Army plan as it then stood, a letter by Senator David I. Walsh less than two weeks later moved Forrestal to make the transition from intractability to creativity a complete one.<sup>14</sup> As the Chairman of the Senate Naval Affairs committee, Walsh was as close to the affairs of the Navy as Wadsworth was to the affairs of the Army. Walsh ventured to the new Navy Secretary that it would perhaps be better to seek out some grounds for consensus rather than to merely oppose the plan. In the process, Walsh indicated that

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.    <sup>12</sup>Ibid.    <sup>13</sup>Ibid.    <sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

he did not think the Army plan "would...coordinate the efforts and plans of our military establishment with other departments of the government concerned."<sup>15</sup> Walsh also suggested that Forrestal might properly be thinking at the same time about a much more comprehensive scheme of coordination than anyone had ever proposed. He doubted, for instance, whether the Army plan was large enough to facilitate the proper utilization of "intelligence," as well as to marshal "the scientific data which had been accumulated in the past few years...and which will undoubtedly be made in the future."<sup>16</sup> Much more to the point of what he had in mind, Walsh closed by mentioning that the Navy Department give consideration to a "much higher organization of the whole field, under which the two service departments would be integrated under a 'Council of National Defense' with civil-military coordinating organizations."<sup>17</sup>

There is no evidence that this suggestion by Walsh, far-reaching though it was, took Forrestal unaware. He wrote Walsh that the Senator's suggestion "corresponds substantially to what is taking shape in my own mind." Forrestal outlined briefly what he envisioned as the new Navy basis for opposing the Army's plan in a more constructive manner, writing, "the Navy Department cannot be in the position of merely taking the negative in this discussion, but must come up with positive and constructive recommendations."<sup>18</sup>

With the rapidly expanding American involvement in foreign affairs, brought about as a direct result of the war, Forres-

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.    <sup>16</sup>Ibid.    <sup>17</sup>Ibid.    <sup>18</sup>Ibid.

tal continued to develop his ideas of "higher integration" of the entire national security system. Less than two weeks after Forrestal replied to Senator Walsh, he wrote in his diary:

I am more impressed than ever as things develop in the world today that policy may be frequently shaped by events unless someone has strong and clear mental grasp of events sic; strong enough and clear enough so that he is able to shape policy rather than letting it be developed by accidents.<sup>19</sup>

As if to convince himself further, Forrestal quoted a letter that had been sent by Admiral Halsey to the Woodrum Committee the year before, which pointed out the need for "wise, trained, men to minister the National Policy." Halsey had recommended also that a civilian force be gathered to deal with questions involving national security, of which the military was only a constituent part. Halsey wrote:

We must find and train...outstanding civilians who have served their country under arms, and outstanding military men who have studied to understand the civil aspects of government and international relations.<sup>20</sup>

By this time Forrestal had decided that his views, along with those expressed by Walsh and Halsey, should be put into effect in an effort to stem the tide of Army unification. To that end, Forrestal contacted Ferdinand Eberstadt, then a New York stock broker. Forrestal and Eberstadt had been friends when both were at Princeton, and they had continued their friendship throughout the war. Eberstadt had served during the war as the chairman of the Army-Navy Board of Munitions and as the vice-chairman of the War Production Board; he was, therefore, well known to high ranking officers of both services in Wash-

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

<sup>20</sup>Admiral Halsey quoted in ibid.

ington. Forrestal wanted Eberstadt to do a study of the possibilities of post-war national security and to determine the soundness of the Army proposals for unification. By choosing Eberstadt for this task, Forrestal had made a wise decision; though Eberstadt was known to be a friend of Forrestal's (and presumably, therefore, a friend of the Navy), he was on good terms with the Army high command and was considered to be as fair and as impartial as any civilian official could be in the unification dispute. When Eberstadt was first approached by Forrestal, he asked the Secretary, quite characteristically, "do you want an advocacy of the Navy's position or do you want a study of this question, letting the chips fall where they may?" Only after Forrestal insisted that the latter was exactly what he wanted did Eberstadt accept the assignment.<sup>21</sup>

Though Eberstadt did his work within the Navy Department and was provided with a staff of thirty Navy officers for assistance, there is no indication that Eberstadt was pressured in any overt way to report in favor of the Navy or that he deliberately set out to destroy the Army's plan. In a letter to Eberstadt from Forrestal on June 19, 1945, the Secretary of the Navy gave his friend three leading questions he wanted answered. These questions were as follows:

1. Would unification of the War and Navy departments under a single head improve our national security?
2. If not, what changes in the present relationships of the military services and departments has our war experience indicated as desirable to improve our national security?

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<sup>21</sup>U.S. Senate, Hearings before the Senate Committee on Naval Affairs on S. 2044, Unification of the Armed Forces, 79th Cong., 2nd sess. (1946), p. 181 (Hereinafter cited as Senate Naval Committee Hearings).

3. What form of postwar organization should be established and maintained to enable the military services and other governmental agencies and departments most effectively to provide for and protect our national security?<sup>22</sup>

Worth noting here also is the fact that Forrestal's questions contained no reference to any point of view thus far expressed by the Navy in opposition to the Army plan. Forrestal's posing of these questions to Eberstadt indicated that the Secretary of the Navy was quite convinced by this time that something more in the way of a national defense organization should be recommended, and his questions revealed that Forrestal was much more interested in the implications of unification in a broad sense than merely stopping the Army.

Eberstadt was not totally convinced that he could do what Forrestal wanted. In an interview with Demetrios Caraley, Eberstadt recalled that when he paid a courtesy visit to Carl Vinson, the chairman of the House Naval Affairs Committee, the chairman asked him, "what do you know about the subject?" Eberstadt had replied, "nothing." This answer had apparently encouraged Vinson, who said, "you'll be all right. You don't know all the answers already."<sup>23</sup>

Even Forrestal's views were not entirely predicated upon his beliefs, or even those of Walsh or Halsey. A week before his letter on objectives had gone to Eberstadt, Forrestal had gone to see Truman and "asked the President to express his

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<sup>22</sup>Forrestal, Diaries, p. 63.

<sup>23</sup>Interview of Ferdinand Eberstadt, n.d., quoted in Caraley, Military Unification, p. 40.

wishes on the question of consolidation of the Army and Navy departments."<sup>24</sup> Forrestal's intent in asking the President outright was an attempt to preserve some measure of administrative integrity. Forrestal did not want to go against the views of the Chief Executive, but neither did he "want to let ourselves be rushed into something through the organization of public opinion by the War Department, which might end up forcing his hand, as well as ours."<sup>25</sup> Truman replied, recalled Forrestal, that:

He had definite views on a plan for national security which would capitalize on the experience of this war, but he did not contemplate the abolition of the War and Navy departments.<sup>26</sup>

Forrestal had suggested in the same conversation a scheme which would incorporate the State Department into a matrix of civil-military control over a national security organization, to which the President agreed, but lamented that "there wasn't much in the State Department to work with."<sup>27</sup> Forrestal left the conference much enthused by the President's revelations and agreeing "heartily" with the impression he received from Truman that he was thinking of an organization "more or less along the lines of the British War Cabinet."<sup>28</sup>

Shortly after this meeting with Truman, Forrestal informally contacted Eberstadt and, together with him and Walter Haves of the Bureau of the Budget, laid down the ground rules for Eberstadt's study at a luncheon on June 18, 1945. Five separate but interconnecting bases for the study were agreed upon:

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<sup>24</sup>Forrestal, Diaries, p. 62.      <sup>25</sup>Ibid.      <sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.      <sup>28</sup>Ibid.



1. There must be some conscious place in the government for making of policy.
2. There is need for much greater exchange of information and knowledge of what governmental policy is, so that all hands can move in conformity therewith.
3. There is a need in government for two grand divisions to head up (a) the creation and definition of national policy (State-War-Navy), and (b) a national body to examine and keep informed at all times on national resources for war--stockpiles, mobilization plans, etc.
4. There is a need in the Cabinet for better administrative procedure--a secretariat and an agenda.
5. It was agreed that this, if possible, should be done within the framework of the Cabinet and existing governmental organization.<sup>29</sup>

On the next day, Forrestal's formal letter of instructions went to Eberstadt, incorporating the views settled upon at the lunch, the impressions received as the result of the conferences with the President, and the ideas of Senator Walsh. From the beginning, Forrestal approached the unification issue not so much as a Secretary of the Navy, as a non-partisan and a rather objective synthesizer of differing viewpoints on the perpetuation of national security mechanisms that had informally evolved during the war. Compared to the past episodes of rabid partisanship by the Army and Navy, this new approach was rather refreshing. Forrestal's involvement in the unification controversy also underscored the fact that, though partisanship did still exist at the service level, it was no longer going to govern the processes of the dispute. The question of unification had now become one part of the larger problem of national security. This is where unification was to rest until the final passage of the National Security Act of 1947. There was, however, a good deal of work to be done on the construction of reasonable alternatives before the final act was to be passed; and Forres-

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 87.

tal's task was not going to prove an easy one.

Forrestal was not the only civil official with emerging notions on unification, as his earlier conversation with the President revealed. After Forrestal had set Eberstadt to work with his Navy staff, the Secretary had another conference with the President. Truman had taken a strong stand on unification when he was a vice-presidential candidate in 1944, and since that time he had come to rather more definite notions about post-war national defenses. With Forrestal on June 30, 1945, Truman intimated that what he had in mind was, in Forrestal's words, to "wrap up the entire question into one package and present it to Congress."<sup>30</sup> Truman was especially interested in the relation the new order would have to officer education and universal military training as means of further democratizing the military services. Forrestal reported that "he [Truman] talked a good deal of what he called the citizen sources of officers in both Services and of the destruction of 'political cliques' that run the Army and Navy."<sup>31</sup> The President was definitely in favor of a single Department of Defense by this time and said so to Forrestal. Forrestal replied to the President with a refrain which was to become familiar as the unification conflict proceeded into more congressional hearings: that no one man could effectively run an organization so large.

I said that my own experience had been that it took about two and a half years to have a fractional knowledge of the Navy alone. The President would not give on the point, but only admitted some misgivings.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 88.    <sup>31</sup>Ibid.    <sup>32</sup>Ibid.

At about the same time, the Army was holding the Richardson Report in abeyance until the end of the war, which came during the first part of August. Shortly thereafter the pro-unification report by the Richardson Committee was combined with the old McNarney proposal as presented at the Woodrum Committee hearings and became, in turn, the Collins Report. Since McNarney was now on duty in Europe, the job of presenting the Army plan was taken over by the new Deputy Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Lawton Collins, who was also the commander of the Army's Ground Forces. The old Richardson Committee report reached the President on October 16, 1945. The day before in the Senate, two bills had been introduced which proposed similar unification schemes. The bills, S. 84, and S. 1482, were the creatures of Senators Edwin C. Johnson, and Harley M. Kilgore, respectively, and more than likely were introduced to bring hearings into being. The bills were rarely referred to in the proceedings, as it turned out. The real bones of contention were to be the determinations concerning the validity of the Collins Plan versus the validity of the Eberstadt Report. Eberstadt had finished his report on September 25. Now the Navy had a plan of its own to oppose the Army, and the new hearings were to be shot through with acrimony from their beginning.

The hearings were to be held before the Senate Military Affairs Committee, which was chaired by Elbert D. Thomas of Utah. That the hearings were before the Senate Military Affairs Committee left some doubt in the minds of the Navy that a fair

hearing would result. The beginning of the testimony, like the Woodrum Committee's hearings, was dominated by Army presentations. Secretary Stimson had retired from public service and had been replaced by Robert P. Patterson, who was the first Army witness to testify October 17, 1945. Patterson's main line of attack was an attempt to bolster one of the basic Army premises: that unification would increase economy and cut duplication of effort. Patterson did not equivocate on the matter of a single department; rather, he promoted the single department as a panacea for all the ills of waste, maintaining "with a single Department of the Armed Forces, the overlapping... should be eliminated."<sup>33</sup> Carl Vinson, the House Chairman of the Naval Affairs Committee, was an unofficial guest at the hearings and questioned Patterson on this point rather bluntly, asking:

What you were striving for was elimination of duplication and confusion by consolidation, so when you have three factors to deal with it naturally follows you have more trouble than when you have two factors, does it not?

Patterson replied to this line of questioning rather testily, "not if they are under a single command."<sup>34</sup>

Marshall fared much better under the committee's questioning because of his tremendous prestige and because he presented his proposal more specifically than did Patterson, whose intent was to introduce the general Army view and then let the officers of the high command back him up with the enunciation of the actual program. In his first public statement directly

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<sup>33</sup>Hearings on Military Security, p. 71.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

addressing the issue of unification, Marshall concerned himself with the workings of the Joint Chiefs during wartime and considerations as to how they might now work during peace. Marshall began by singling out contentions heretofore made by the Navy and directly attacking them, saying that:

The proposal has already been made that we depend upon the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other joint agencies for the necessary coordination and the elimination of overlapping duplication.

I do not consider that such a proposal provides an effective substitute for the necessary unified direction.<sup>35</sup>

Marshall further contended that the cooperation which had been enjoyed during the war by the Joint Chiefs had been occasioned by only the gravest aspects of national peril, and that even then, the cooperation which did result was less than acceptable.

Even under the stress of war, agreement has been reached in the Joint Chiefs of Staff at times only by numerous compromises and after long delays, and coordination...has largely been forced by circumstances arising out of the war.<sup>36</sup>

Marshall doubted whether, since the JCS did not function at their peak efficiency during the war, the Joint Chiefs would be able to perpetuate such a faulty system into an era of peace, saying that, "with the end of the war there is no longer a compelling necessity to reach at least compromise agreements on major matters." In concluding his testimony, Marshall was to characterize what was to prove to be one of the hidden issues in the unification controversy: the matter of competition for peace-time appropriations.

During the war, time was the compelling factor--not money. In peace, money will be the dominating factor, and the most difficult factor in the maintenance of a security establishment, that will command the continuing respect

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 50.      <sup>36</sup>Ibid.

of the world, which is its great--almost its only--purpose...The greatest economy consistent with our military necessities is the best guarantee that we will be able to maintain an over-all organization of the type and strength clearly required by our responsibilities.<sup>37</sup>

Both Marshall and Patterson urged an early approval of the "principle of unification," with details to be worked out later. In seeking enabling legislation for the Army's organizational scheme, Marshall followed the line first laid down by Stimson at the Woodrum Committee hearings the year before.<sup>38</sup>

On October 30, General Collins presented the detailed Army plan to the Senators. It did not differ from the old McNarney plan except in certain minor instances. The Collins plan advocated a cabinet-level secretary for the armed forces, but no undersecretaries to head each of the branches of the Army, Navy, and Air. Collins maintained that such undersecretaries were unnecessary because it was "believed that the military staffs can administer military components."<sup>39</sup> There was also to be a Director of Common Supply and Hospitalization whose status and function were the same as those of the Director of Common Supply under the McNarney plan. There was to be added to the JCS a new Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, thus enlarging the JCS to include the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Naval Operations, the Commander of the Fleet, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and the new over-all Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. The distinction made between the Chief of Staff to

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 51-2.

<sup>38</sup>Statement of General Marshall in ibid., p. 51. Statement of Secretary of War Robert Patterson in ibid., p. 22.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

the President and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces was merely the same distinction between what Marshall originally wanted the Chief of Staff to be and what Admiral Leahy had become. In the case of the Chief of Staff to the President, the primary function of that officer would have been to act as advisor to the Commander in Chief. The new Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, on the other hand, would function in a position of command and coordination of the services, or to put it another way, as the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Collins did not differ with the basic stipulation of the McNarney plan concerning the over-all function of the Joint Chiefs as a body. The JCS under both plans were to have the authority to make "recommendations only as to military policy, strategy, and budget requirements," which would flow upward to the Secretary of the Armed Forces, where further recommendations would be made before they were passed on to the Commander in Chief.<sup>40</sup>

No doubt much of the bitterness between the two services during the unification controversy was directly related to the rather chauvinistic stand by the Army aviators, who, of all the interested parties, had the most to gain. The Second World War had done much to perpetuate and enlarge upon the allegations of the usefulness of air supremacy and, thereby, the efficacy of air in the national defense. All the representatives of air power who appeared as Army witnesses before the hearings favored the new Army plan, but only because it served as a stage to plead their own case for independent air power. The Army

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., pp. 157-8.

aviators were only for unification insofar as it served their ends successfully.

Rather than addressing themselves directly to the issue of unification, Air Corps Generals held forth on the uses of "air power come to age" in the American national defense system. General Arnold was to enunciate the most conservative of the Air Corps stances by saying that "no one can doubt that the third element--air--will henceforth be that from which war first comes...it can and probably will occur hundreds or thousands of miles from any ground or naval operation."<sup>41</sup> Implicit in such an assumption, of course, was the contention that in the next war, the ground and naval forces would have very little to do. The Navy had traditionally claimed to be the country's first line of defense, and the Air Corps' officers now challenged such a view with the assertion that the Air Corps had replaced the Navy. General James H. (Jimmy) Doolittle, the much-touted hero of the Tokyo Raid, ignored the fact that he was carried within striking distance of Japan by naval carriers and stated the case for an Air Force in less kind terms than did General Arnold. Not only did he imply that the Navy was obsolete because of the Air Forces' recent "successes" but also that the Navy was no longer of any use. Doolittle testified before the committee:

I feel that the battleship has been obsolescent for the past 20 years, and obsolete for the last 10....

The carrier has reached, probably, its highest degree of development. I feel that it has reached its highest usefulness now and that it is going into obsolescence. The carrier has two attributes; one attribute is that it can move about; the other is that it can be sunk.

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 74.



Thus, in one fell swoop, Doolittle enraged the old-line Navy commanders with his remark about the battleship and underlined fears about the separation of aviation from the Navy with this statement on aircraft carriers. His testimony was a notable, if provocative, performance, apparently calculated to anger the Navy into become chauvinistic in the presentations of its own proposals; and it fairly well succeeded.<sup>42</sup>

On October 22, Secretary Forrestal stepped into the pit of testimony, surrounded by a now-seething inter-service conflict which promised only to burgeon. For the most part, Forrestal refused to be drawn into extravagant claims about the Navy such as those made by the Air Corps, and he presented his testimony couched in terms lacking emotion and embracing what seemed to be objectivity. The testimony of Air Corps officers before the hearings had already drawn unfavorable comment in the press, and Forrestal was to make sure that the Navy would not fall into the trap of responding in kind to Air Corps claims of invincibility. Though Forrestal had the Eberstadt report in hand, he did not try to rely upon it during his testimony. The lines of naval resistance to unification had been laid down during the Woodrum Committee's hearings, but they had lacked substance enough to confront the Army plan. Forrestal sought to use the skeleton of the Navy's position the year before and fill it out with substantive and sagacious questions about the Army plan. That being done, Forrestal went on to the Eberstadt plan.

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 290, p. 308.

Forrestal began his testimony by saying that he appeared not "simply in opposition to unification of the War and Navy Departments," but to "present a comprehensive and dynamic program to save and strengthen our national security." He first attacked the Army allegation that unification was desirable. The Eberstadt report had questioned that unification was the cure-all that the Army said it was. Generally following the arguments of the old Morrow Board report, Forrestal contended that the job done by the existing system far surpassed any episode of military cooperation in the annals of warfare. There had been but one unified effort prior to World War II, and that had been Britain's combined assault on the Dardanelles, which had ended in a notable disaster. While admitting the validity of the principle of "unity of command" in field operations, Forrestal did not accept the contention that such unification was necessary in Washington. To support this objection, Forrestal cited the dispute which took place in the JCS over the validity of the "Europe first" strategy and commented that it was "most fortunate...that Admiral King was free to insist upon the Navy's point of view within the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

Contained throughout Forrestal's testimony was the thoroughly naval view of "command by cooperation." To Forrestal's mind, the forcing of consensus by majority rule (for which the Collins plan provided) was detrimental to a proper direction of war. In this respect, Forrestal had been far preceded by Admiral King, who, because of his insistence upon such a command system, frequently seemed to play the role of maverick in the

deliberations of the Joint Chiefs. Finally, one surprising criticism made by Forrestal was that the Army plan was limited in that it failed to come to grips with the necessities of national security coordination with the other civilian parts of the defense system.

Eberstadt had recommended that lines of institutionalized coordination be established between the civil and military elements of the war system. His report indicated that there had been a serious breach in communication between the State Department and the services, and between the industrial sector and the services. Eberstadt's plan proposed that this problem be solved by the establishment of a National Security Council, which would be composed of the President and the Secretaries of State, War, and Navy. A National Security Resources Board was also provided for; this board was roughly similar to the old War Production Board. Additionally, provisions were made for the coordination of national intelligence with the proposal for a Central Intelligence Agency. Though Forrestal and Eberstadt both favored the formation of such agencies, Forrestal intimated that a further study should be undertaken to determine even the validity of these proposals. By all evidences, the Navy proposals had, with the assistance of Forrestal and Eberstadt, become a national proposal, having much more to do with the national security than with the simple matter of military reform.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>The preceding summary is based upon Forrestal's statement and testimony before the committee, which may be found in ibid., pp. 97-118. See also an insertion of a portion of the Eberstadt Report, "Personnel," Chapter 5, in ibid., pp. 334-52.

Forrestal's devastating attack was given a vital assist by his undersecretary, H. Struve Hensel, who directed his comments almost exclusively to the problems presented by the Collins plan, which he said frankly excluded civil authority from important positions. Hensel commented that "the main effect, if not the objective, of the plan seems to be the reduction of civilian control over the armed services."<sup>44</sup> Such an attack, coupled with Forrestal's comprehensive statement before the committee, drew a sympathetic comment from the chairman of the committee, Edwin Johnson, who said,

It seems to me that if Congress is drafting a law on this subject they are going to have to be very careful, unless we get away from civilian control, the civilian control that we traditionally have had in...America.<sup>45</sup>

Though the Army attempted to soothe the committee by offering to soften the tone of the Collins plan with respect to civil control, it was obvious by Johnson's statements that the Army had miscalculated as to how much innovation the Congress would stand for. At the same time, Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy took several swipes at the Navy's position which did little more than underline the already well-developed dispute.<sup>46</sup> The hearings ended on December 17, 1945. The relative views of the Army and Navy had developed considerably in the heat of testimony, and while the Army was becoming more intractable, the Navy seemed to have come out of the hearings with considerable credit. The program proposed by Forrestal, based on Eberstadt's report, promised national security reform rather than

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 245.      <sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 377.      <sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 462.

limited military reform which the Collins plan portended.

In the meantime, Truman concluded that he was ready to present his own case to Congress. On November 11, he called for a meeting with Senator Walsh, Congressman Vinson, Secretary Forrestal, and Admiral Denfield. Truman indicated to these men that he was tired of all the bickering between the services. Truman gave the impression that he believed the dispute was based more on semantics than substance. This was a partisan group which Truman had called before him and, since all the men in the meeting were on the Navy side, Truman's remarks seemed to point at the Navy as the source of trouble in the dispute. Senator Walsh and Mr. Vinson, knowing of the President's intentions, told Truman that if he hazarded to send a bill on unification to the Congress, it "would not pass either this winter, next winter, or the winter after." The President insisted that he was indeed going to send the proposal to the Hill but that in the meantime, the Navy was not going to be threatened as an entity, nor was it obliged to halt the presentation of its case. Truman implied by this statement that whatever he proposed, the plan would be closer in composition to the Army plan than the Navy's.<sup>47</sup>

The matter was taken up once more in a cabinet meeting December 18, 1945. Again, Truman was advised against sending the proposal for unification to Congress. He was told that both the Senate and House Military and Naval Affairs committees were opposed to a presidential plan and that he was insisting

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<sup>47</sup>Forrestal, Diaries, pp. 115-6.

on a fight if he sent the bill after being forewarned by Walsh and Vinson. Forrestal later reported on the meeting:

The President said he felt it was his duty to send the message because it represented his convictions; the Navy had ample opportunity to present its case, that nobody had been muzzled. I said that that was true with the exception that (a) the Navy's case had not yet been fully presented, and (b) the committee before which it had been presented was a highly prejudiced body which had reached a conclusion in advance.<sup>48</sup>

On the next day, December 19, 1945, President Truman sent a message on unification to Congress.<sup>49</sup> Though broad, Truman's plan was not particularly damaging to the Navy's position. The President recommended much more civilian control in the form of a central secretary with undersecretaries for each of the three different services. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were relegated to an "advisory" capacity, and the Secretary of the Armed Forces emerged with the most over-all power, with no limitation upon the amount of communication with any and all service commanders about any subject deemed germane to strategy, policy, or budget. Though Truman did not threaten the existence of the Navy's air arm or the separate existence of the Navy itself, he did brush aside the Navy's suggestion that further study be performed on the question, saying that "studies of the general problem will serve no useful purpose. There is enough evidence now at hand to demonstrate beyond question the need for a unified department."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>49</sup>H. Doc. 392, 79th Cong., 1st sess. (1945) (Hereinafter cited as Truman, Unification Message).

<sup>50</sup>Ibid.

While Truman's message on unification was getting a mixed reaction on the Hill, a bill was in the process of being written by Senator Elbert Thomas, the chairman of the Senate Military Affairs committee, with the aid of Senator Lister Hill and Senator Warren B. Austin. From shortly after the President's message until their final report of April 9, 1946, these three senators were intent upon incorporating the President's views as contained in his message with those prevalent in the War Department.

While the Thomas-Hill-Austin bill was in the process of preparation over the Christmas recess, Forrestal was not idle. Convinced that the Navy had not gotten a fair hearing at the hands of the Senate Military Affairs committee, Forrestal began to seek a forum in which the Navy would be treated more equitably; or, in other words, he arranged a hearing before the Senate Naval Affairs committee. Shortly after Truman's message went to Congress, Senator Ernest W. McFarland called on Forrestal to assure the Secretary of his support. Forrestal took this opportunity to tell McFarland that:

The greatest help he could be to us would be to assist Senator Walsh in his efforts to insure that the bill was referred to the Naval Affairs committee for consideration. He said he had already talked to Senator Walsh on this and would continue to be of as much help as possible.<sup>51</sup>

As soon as the Thomas-Hill-Austin bill (S. 2044) was introduced, the Navy went on record as being unalterably opposed to it. The bill proposed the abolition of the Army and Navy departments as entities and would create in their stead, Army, Navy, and

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<sup>51</sup>Forrestal, Diaries, p. 121.

Air "arms." The iron-clad civilian control advocated by the Truman message was incorporated, as were Eberstadt's recommendations for a National Security Council and a National Security Resources Board, both of which were the sole representatives of the Navy plan that the bill advocated.<sup>52</sup>

The pronounced, adverse Navy reaction to the proposals inherent in the bill caused Truman to caution those within the Navy who insisted upon lobbying in the press for their particular points of view. Forrestal had already announced to his officers the ground rules for resistance in December, declaring that:

...it was not appropriate for them, once the message had been sent to Congress to make public appearances in opposition, but that we considered ourselves free to present our untrammelled point of view to the committees of Congress, such as the Naval Affairs committees of the House and Senate, when they began hearings.<sup>53</sup>

Forrestal himself could not countenance the reforms promised by S. 2044. He felt no compunction, apparently, to limit his expressions of opposition to the bill. In March Forrestal had commented to the President on a rough draft of the bill, calling it "totally unworkable." Naval officials as well made their views so well known on the subject that Truman admonished the Navy publicly on more than one occasion, promising to "shake up" the Navy if it did not see fit to fall into line.<sup>54</sup>

The Thomas-Hill-Austin bill was reported favorably out of the Senate Military Affairs Committee by May 13, 1946. In

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<sup>52</sup>S. 2044, reprinted in Senate Naval Affairs Committee Hearings, pp. 5-9.

<sup>53</sup>Forrestal, Diaries, p. 118.

<sup>54</sup>New York Times, April 12, 1946, p. 4, and April 18, 1946, p. 1.



the meantime; however, Senator McFarland had made good his promise to do everything he could to get the bill before Senator Walsh's committee. Walsh's committee began hearing the bill on April 30, and much like the "Army show" at the two previous hearings, the Walsh committee's hearings was to be a naval review for expressing its "untrammelled" views on what was wrong with the Army and Presidential brands of unification. On April 30, the authors of S. 2044, Senators Thomas, Hill, and Austin, testified before a decidedly hostile Senate Naval Affairs Committee. Aside from these three senators, no witnesses went before this committee to defend the bill or any of the Army proposals it incorporated. The other witnesses were Navy, or had interests in the Navy. Thus, before this sympathetic committee which was to hear no hostile witnesses, the Navy began to develop its arguments against the pending unification bill.

Forrestal appeared May 1, to present the overview of naval unification. The Secretary first questioned the bill on the grounds that it did not represent the best thinking on the subject. To Forrestal, S. 2044 left gaps in the power structure of the massive department it proposed, particularly with regard to the various secretaries and undersecretaries which had been proposed. Forrestal questioned whether their duties were properly defined in the bill, which "specifically eliminates the existing undersecretaries and Assistant Secretaries from the War and Navy Departments without any orderly reallocation of their complicated responsibilities."<sup>55</sup> The bill had advocated

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<sup>55</sup>Senate Naval Affairs Committee Hearings, p. 33.

a "Secretary for the Common Defense" and four assistant secretaries for training, procurement, research, and intelligence. In addition, the bill provided an undersecretary each for the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Forrestal viewed this prospect with alarm; as he told the committee, "I think it is immediately apparent how illogical, administratively, this organization would be and how many cross currents of authority--in some cases vacuums of authority--would exist."<sup>56</sup> Attempting to analyze the entire bill, the Secretary of Navy objected to S. 2044 on several general grounds.

First, said Forrestal, the bill "establishes a Single Department of Common Defense, and then reduces our present Departments of War and Navy to the status of agencies."<sup>57</sup> By so doing, argued Forrestal, the bill would restrict service access to the President and the Congress, a proposal with which Forrestal sharply differed. The Secretary was particularly disquieted at the likelihood of no longer being able to prosecute his budgetary requirements before the committees in Congress. With such responsibilities and power vested in the office of one super-secretary, he said, "I don't see, frankly, what the Secretary of the Navy would have to do. I can't conceive of any man who valued the use of his time as taking the job."<sup>58</sup>

While voicing objection to the Secretary of Common Defense, he also took exception to the bill's proposal for a Chief of Staff, contending that he thought that "the conception of the Army is that the Chief of Staff would really be the execu-

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<sup>56</sup>Ibid., pp. 32-3.    <sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 32.    <sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

tive head of this Department."<sup>59</sup> The objection Forrestal made was based principally on the differences in perception of the method of command between the Army and the Navy. He said he "mistrusted" the idea that any organization should be directed by a "single genius." He then went on to explicate these differences in Army-Navy command arrangements.

Forrestal's third primary objection to the bill was expressed in the very real anxieties he and the Navy had concerning the future of naval aviation and the Marine Corps. The chauvinistic statements made the previous year during the hearings before the Senate by the Army aviators had been supplemented by frequent statements in the press, the gists of which were proposals to dismantle naval aviation and absorb the Marines. Forrestal addressed himself directly to this press campaign by the Air Corps and said, "Basing our opinion upon the testimony of the Army Air Force we have grave doubts about the future of naval aviation if this bill in its present form should pass."<sup>60</sup> Admiral Nimitz, in a later testimony, was to develop this final point of Forrestal's more fully, maintaining that he believed that "the ultimate ambition of the Army Air Force is to absorb naval aviation in its entirety and set up one large air force."<sup>61</sup>

Clearly the most agitated member of the Navy group against unification was Alexander Vandergrift, the Commandant of the Marine Corps. The Army's position on "the Corps," hesitatingly expressed at first during the Woodrum Committee's hearings, had

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 37.      <sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 45.      <sup>61</sup>Ibid., p. 100-101.

developed considerably since then. Admiral Nimitz quoted General Eisenhower as being convinced that so long as the Marines remained limited to units no larger than a regiment, they were not encroaching upon the Army's functions. When a Marine Corps unit reached division strength, it was overstepping its province of operation, according to Eisenhower. At the time Nimitz disclosed this opinion, it was still a classified Joint Chiefs of Staff paper; but Nimitz apparently felt justified by his mission before the committee.<sup>62</sup> Vandergrift cited this same JCS paper and struck out at the Army, saying that:

The War Department is determined to reduce the Marine Corps to a position of studied military ineffectiveness--and the merger bill in its present form makes this objective readily attainable.<sup>63</sup>

The Marine Commandant behaved as though he were before a Star Chamber rather than before a Congressional committee. He called on Congress to exercise its influence to "save the Corps" as it had done "five times since 1829," adding,

The Marine Corps feels that the question of its continued existence is...a matter for determination by the Congress and not one to be resolved by departmental legerdemain or a quasi-legislative process enforced by the War Department General Staff.<sup>64</sup>

With such moving testimony to its credit the Navy inspired the press to sensational reportage, and the Navy tended to be presented more often as the protagonist than not. The Army proposals which comprised a major part of S. 2044 caused the Army, on the other hand, to be depicted as the "heavy" in the dispute; and, since Truman was by now squarely behind the Army,

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid.      <sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 106.      <sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 118.

the President's position was not to be favorably described. Earlier in the spring, Truman had been accused of "muzzling" the Navy; and the Navy's impassioned pleas before the Senate Naval Affairs committee bolstered the accusation. Apparently the relative merits of the bill were about to be decided in the press rather than in the Congress.

Consequently, in May, Truman was moved to engage in executive intercession in the dispute between the Army and the Navy. By so doing, he was acting more as a mediator than a Chief Executive or a Commander in Chief. On May 13, 1946, there was an extraordinary meeting at the White House of all the principal antagonists. Among those present were Secretary Forrestal, Secretary Patterson, Admiral Leahy, Admiral Nimitz, General Spaatz, and General Handy.<sup>65</sup> At the meeting, Truman tried to mix oil and water. "He said he would like the Army and Navy to get together and identify their points of agreement and disagreement," recalled Forrestal, who recorded the proceedings.<sup>66</sup> Truman, rather untruthfully, mentioned that he "was not prejudiced in favor of one service or the other," and attempted to spark a discussion on just what the basic points of difference were.<sup>67</sup> There was considerable discussion of the Thomas-Hill-Austin bill's proposal for an over-all Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces. Admiral Leahy was asked by the President to comment on his position during the war, and the

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<sup>65</sup>Forrestal, Diaries, p. 160. <sup>66</sup>Ibid.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid.

Admiral replied that he thought the Chief of Staff concept was dangerous and that "had he wanted to secure power for himself during the war he could have aggregated a great deal for himself."<sup>68</sup> Such a contention was, in fact, far from the truth, since Roosevelt had resisted the appointment in the first place and seemed particularly adept at delegating responsibilities rather than power. Moreover, Leahy did not ever seem to secure the perception needed to do the job as it was originally conceived by Marshall. This failure on Leahy's part to do so no doubt precipitated the earlier Army proposals for a Chief of Staff to the President as well as a Chief of Staff to the JCS. There is no evidence that Leahy was ever a deciding influence upon the deliberations before the Joint Chiefs of Staff, nor that he ever attempted to be. He never filled a position beyond that of high-titled advisor, and so far as the JCS was concerned, as time went on, the Admiral had less and less to do with the Chiefs and more to do with the White House. Therefore, Leahy was not particularly qualified nor sufficiently informed to hold forth on the subject.

Leahy's argument against the Chief of Staff idea was that it approximated too closely "the man on horseback," or the concept of a military takeover of government by powerful generals. Though there was a good deal of conversation during the executive conference on the matter, fears expressed by Leahy and Truman were groundless and hardly to the point. Such a move by anyone at anytime then or in the future would have been fool-

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

hardy. That one man or group of men would have the power or even the temerity to attempt to seize control over such a sprawling bureaucracy is unimaginable. The power in such an arrangement was simply too dispersed. The solving of this problem of dispersed power was one of the key reasons for the impulse of military readjustment. But the fact that Truman was now backing away from the idea of the single Chief of Staff was a point in favor of the Navy's position.<sup>69</sup>

The matter of naval aviation was discussed, as well as the future of the Marine Corps. Concerning the latter, Leahy reminded those present that Eisenhower had issued a new statement on the Marine Corps which clarified that General's views as they were revealed by Admiral Nimitz before the recent Naval Affairs Committee hearings. Eisenhower's moderation of his supposedly secret statements was no doubt inspired by Nimitz's revelation of those views before the committee. Eisenhower had amended his statements simply by arguing against duplication, but he also maintained that he would never advocate the abolition of the Marine Corps. With the powerful Eisenhower statement now amended to a more palatable position, Admiral Leahy expressed confidence that some sort of compromise agreement could be worked out. Seeing that very little would be concluded by sitting in the White House and arguing, Truman told his Secretaries of Army and Navy to try to accommodate their divergent views and report back to him on May 31.<sup>70</sup>

After over two weeks of discussions, the two Secretaries

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid.    <sup>70</sup>Ibid.

composed a joint letter to the President in which they stated that they had been able to agree on eight separate points concerning what had been substantive disagreements. These points were as follows: (1) there should be a Council of Common Defense composed the three service secretaries (Army, Navy, Air Force) and the new Secretary of Defense; (2) there should be a National Security Resources Board patterned after Eberstadt's recommendations, which would serve an advisory function; (3) there should be a Joint Chiefs of Staff approved by statute--this proposal was meant to do nothing more than legalize the system then in operation; (4) there should be no single Chief of Staff; and the Joint Chiefs of Staff would remain the "highest source of military advice;" (5) there should be a Central Intelligence Agency, which would act as a "clearing house" for all foreign intelligence and as a coordinator for intelligence operations; (6) there should be an agency to centrally coordinate national security-related scientific research and development, composed on the same order as the National Security Resources Board; (7) there should be a centralized control agency over procurement and supply affiliated with the Office of the new Secretary of Defense; finally, (8) there should be a central military agency to coordinate all military education and training.<sup>71</sup>

Forrestal and Patterson pointed out to the President in their letter that though they had been able to agree on these eight items, there were as yet four other areas on which they had not come to consensus. The single military department was the first

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<sup>71</sup>The Forrestal-Patterson letter is reprinted in full in Senate Naval Affairs Committee Hearings, pp. 203-7.



of these areas. The War Department advocated a single, integrated department composed of three services, supervised by a secretary of cabinet rank. The Navy favored "unification, but in a less drastic and extreme form," which stipulated an individual service secretary with access to the President, as well as cabinet rank. This disagreement over the single department led to the second major problem area: the status of the three services. Foremost among the differences was the exact status of the services' secretaries. As revealed in the first item of disagreement, the War Department favored a super-secretary and subordinate secretaries, the latter of whom would have access to the President, but not hold cabinet rank. In other words, these individual service secretaries would be suzerain to the over-all secretary. The Navy sought to retain cabinet rank for all these secretaries. Aviation presented the next problem, which the Army insisted was the special province of the Army Air Corps when it became the United States Air Force under unification. The Navy wanted to retain land-based reconnaissance, anti-sub aircraft, and aircraft to protect shipping, none of which the War Department would accept. Finally, under the Navy plan, the Marine Corps was to be kept status quo; the Army wanted to limit the Corps to Fleet Marine duties and amphibious operations. The Secretaries of War and Navy closed their letter to the President by saying that their

...failure to achieve complete unanimity is due to no reason other than our respective views on the points of difference are as sincere as they are divergent.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>The foregoing summary is based upon ibid.

On June 4, 1946, the two secretaries were called to the White House, where they did battle once again on their points of difference, but to no avail. Forrestal later wrote in his diary:

My own conduct in this matter has been governed by three main considerations: (1) to try to keep the Navy intact as a service as distinct from merely a subordinate branch of a vast department; (2) to obtain the improvements in our national defense organization which the war indicated should be made but without sacrificing the autonomy of the Navy; (3) to discharge my responsibilities to the President as a member of his Cabinet, which means that I must go as far as I can in accepting and promulgating his views, always having the alternative when I can no longer do so honestly, of resigning.<sup>73</sup> (*Italics are Forrestal's*)

By the middle of June, Truman took his own stand on the points of difference between the secretaries. In his letter to both of the secretaries and to the chairmen of the Senate and House Military and Naval Affairs committees, Truman advocated the Army's view on every point save that concerning the functions of the Marine Corps.<sup>74</sup> Closing his letter with a classic display of gamesmanship, Truman wrote that

...it was gratifying to have both of you and General Eisenhower and Admiral Nimitz assure me that you would all give your wholehearted support to a plan of unification no matter what the decision would be on those points upon which you did not fully agree. I know that I can count on all of you for full assistance in obtaining passage in the Congress of a bill containing the 12 basic elements set forth above.<sup>75</sup>

Of course, neither Forrestal nor Patterson had made such assurances. Forrestal was especially piqued over the President's presumptions. Whether such assurance had been given was now irrelevant, because Forrestal had been backed temporarily into a corner. In an attempt to clarify to Truman naval opinion with

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<sup>73</sup>Forrestal, Diaries, pp. 166-7.

<sup>74</sup>The Truman letter is reprinted in Senate Naval Affairs Committee Hearings, p. 209.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.

a letter of his own, Forrestal composed what must have been a deliberate misstatement of Truman's views in order to further press the President on the matter of maintaining naval aviation. Forrestal wrote,

...one of the points in your letter of June 15 relates to the subject of land-based planes for naval reconnaissance, anti-submarine warfare, and protection of shipping. I am glad to note that the Navy is to have a continuing part in the future development of these operations, so that a full advantage may be taken of its experience in this field and of the lessons learned in the late war. Admiral Nimitz joins me in this expression.<sup>76</sup>

Truman had specifically stated in his letter with regard to the elements of naval aviation, "land-based planes for naval reconnaissance, antisubmarine warfare, and protection of shipping can and should be manned by Air Force personnel."<sup>77</sup>

When the Senate Naval Affairs committee resumed its hearings of S. 2044, the bill incorporated Truman's letter to the chairman, Carl Vinson, which outlined those twelve points which had been "agreed upon" by the secretaries. Though the executive branch had been engaged in bargaining within its own ranks, the Congress had ideas of its own concerning unification. Chairmen Walsh and Vinson of the Senate and House Naval Affairs committees had made their views known to Forrestal in a joint letter to the secretary as early as May 15. Vinson and Walsh specifically pointed out that they would have nothing to do with compromises between Forrestal and Patterson if they included 1) a single Department of Common Defense, 2) a single Chief

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<sup>76</sup>Forrestal's reply to Truman may be found in *ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 209.

of Staff, 3) the emasculation of the Marine Corps, 4) the dilution of naval aviation, or 5) the divestment of budgetary controls enjoyed by the services' secretaries.<sup>78</sup>

There was also every evidence that Forrestal intended to fight the revised Thomas-Hill-Austin bill. He had said as much in his meeting with Truman during the middle of June, even though Truman was apparently trying to get a consensus from his secretaries and military leaders in order to present a united front for the pending bill.<sup>79</sup> When the hearings resumed in the Senate, Forrestal was away in the Pacific, observing the atomic tests at Bikini; the Admirals who testified--Kinkaid, Spruance, Towers, Turner, Mitscher--made their objections known. As a body, the admirals objected most strenuously to the threat to naval aviation's missions of reconnaissance, antisubmarine warfare, and protection of shipping.

On the day the testimony ended, July 11, 1946, Forrestal sent a telegram to the committee in which he expressed his continued disagreement with the contention that the bill was well written or that it incorporated the President's wishes into its revised framework, which it purported to do. Forrestal then ended his missal, calling the bill's proposals an "organizational monstrosity."<sup>80</sup> Though the bill was now passed through its principal committees, it did not reach the floor during that session of Congress.

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<sup>78</sup>Joint Letter by Senator Walsh, and Congressman Vinson to Forrestal, May 15, 1946, reprinted in ibid., pp. 348-51.

<sup>79</sup>Forrestal, Diaries, pp. 168-70.

<sup>80</sup>Forrestal telegram, July 11, 1946, reprinted in Senate Naval Affairs Committee Hearings, p. 348.

When Congress reconvened that fall, another conference of antagonists was called at the White House. Truman concluded that he was going to write another bill there in his office. After he wrote this bill, Truman said that he would expect consensus on the matter before the Congress after everyone interested had an opportunity to look at it. After all the interested parties saw the new bill, it would become the "doctrine of the administration."<sup>81</sup> So began a flurry of conferencing between civilian and military officials which was to last until the end of the year. By November 7, as a result of a meeting in Forrestal's home between the secretary and Admiral Radford, the Deputy CNO, Admiral Sherman, General Lauris Norstad, and the Assistant Secretary of War for Air Stuart Symington, a compromise was struck.<sup>82</sup> A single department was agreed upon, as was the idea of three autonomous services; and, finally, the Marine Corps and naval aviation were to be protected in their present status. After much bickering which added up to poor inter-service relations more than any substantive differences on unification, a joint letter was drafted for Forrestal and Patterson by General Norstad, Admiral Sherman, and Assistant Secretary Symington. The letter of January 16, 1947, to Truman stated that all previous disagreements which had caused them to fail to reach consensus the previous summer had been resolved.<sup>83</sup>

The compromise was a frail one, however. From January until the end of February, General Norstad, Admiral Sherman, and Presidential Assistant Charles Murphy drew up the legisla-

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<sup>81</sup>Forrestal, Diaries, pp. 203-4. <sup>82</sup>Ibid., pp. 221-3.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 229.

tion. There was still a good deal of suspicion by the Navy that it would have to "face continued efforts on the part of the Army to enforce their conception of a single Department and a single Chief of Staff."<sup>84</sup> Congress was ready to receive the plan with little hesitance. The Senate Majority Leader, Wallace White, Jr., observed that "if the three branches of the armed services have reached an agreement on unification, that creates a substantial presumption in favor of the plan."<sup>85</sup> By February 26, Truman sent the bill to Congress asking for its enactment.<sup>86</sup> Though there were still doubts about the new plan, the major combatants had finally agreed upon all the salient differences. Such agreement on Forrestal's and Patterson's part did not preclude several nervous moments being suffered on either side.

One such moment was precipitated by General Eisenhower, now the Army Chief of Staff, who decided to extemporize on some of the more tenuous threads which held the unification compromise together.

Now, distinguishing my personal conviction as opposed to what I now believe we should recommend, I did recommend and I believed in the single professional Chief of Staff... time may bring it about, and it may show that this is the better system.<sup>87</sup>

However, Eisenhower went on to tell the new Senate Armed Services Committee that he preferred to have the bill pass as it was rather than undergo another delay.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid., pp. 230-1.      <sup>85</sup>New York Times, January 17, 1947.

<sup>86</sup>Congressional Record, XCIII (1947), 1413.

<sup>87</sup>U.S. Senate, Hearings on the National Defense Establishment before the Senate Armed Services Committee on S. 758, 80th Cong., 1st sess. (1947), p. 99.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., pp. 113-5.

Several Navy witnesses objected to the nebulous provisions made for the Marines and naval aviation, but they were not central parties to the conflict. For the most part, these new objectors were retired officers, and their stands were not "official." With all these divergent views cropping up, it was fortunate indeed that Forrestal, Patterson, and the other principals of the affair were in agreement. Both Forrestal and Patterson stood behind the bill before the committee, sometimes under rather pointed questioning from the Senators, who continued to probe for weaknesses in the bill and in the convictions of the secretaries. Forrestal gave a strong statement before the committee in behalf of the bill.

Neither this bill nor any other can legislate a spirit of unity among the branches of our armed forces, but this bill is the result of a spirit of accommodation which is a better augury of unity than any legislative fiat. Therefore, our defense potential will be increased without endangering the corps spirit of any branch of the services and without weakening the democratic concept of civilian control over the military establishment.

I hope this bill becomes law.<sup>89</sup>

Similarly, Patterson declared from the outset of his statement before the committee that he was giving his "unqualified support to the bill...I might say that I was present during the statement and testimony of Secretary Forrestal, and I concur in everything that he said...."<sup>90</sup>

Perhaps the most cogent testimony of all given during the Senate Hearings was that of Ferdinand Eberstadt. Eberstadt had chiefly remained in the background during the entire conflict, and even after his report had been issued, Forrestal had been

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 26.      <sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

left to champion its merits and defend its liabilities throughout the hours of testimony before hostile and sympathetic interviews alike. The plan evolved by Eberstadt had survived reasonably well. Aside from writing the original Navy program for unification, Eberstadt had been instrumental in effecting the beginnings of the mediation which had begun the fall before. Seeing that his original plan would never be approved by the Army, he had redrawn a number of considerations and presented them to Admiral Sherman and General Norstad. He had been on hand for many conferences with Forrestal and had generally served as his alter ego during the final debates when they hit that high pitch of bitterness and acrimony. Quite possibly, Eberstadt was the only character in the entire play who at any given time realized what the ultimate stakes were. His testimony before the Senate Armed Services committee deserves mention, if only because it reveals how well developed his views were and how much of an influence he was in the unification conflict without becoming embroiled in the starkly contrasted service partisanships.

In his testimony of May 9, 1947, Eberstadt recommended to the committee that a preamble to the act might be fitting, which would logically and succinctly outline just what the act attempted to do. Eberstadt had already written such a preamble, and he was allowed to read it before the committee.

In enacting this legislation, it is the intent of the Congress to provide a comprehensive and continuous program for our future safety and for the peace and security of the world; to coordinate under civilian control the departments and agencies of the Government and their functions relating to the common defense; to provide permanent machinery for



the establishment of integrated programs for the maximum use of the Nation's military, human, natural, and industrial resources in the interests of common defense; to realize the economies that can be achieved through unified control of supply and service functions; to prevent duplication and overlapping of functions; to establish the most advantageous framework for a unified system of training for combined operations for land, sea, and air forces; and, on the basis of past knowledge and experience, to integrate all elements of our Nation into an alert, smoothly working, and efficient organization for the protection of our national security. In time of peace it is essential that well-laid plans be formulated and kept up to date, ready, at an instant's notice, to be put into effect in the event this Nation is again threatened with or forced into war. The maintenance of such an organization in a continuous state of full alert for (a) the security of the Nation, (b) the preservation of peace, (c) the removal of the causes of war, and (d) the suppression of aggression at its first appearance; but it shall nevertheless be fully able at all times to protect our national security boldly and effectively.<sup>91</sup>

Within this "preamble" to the unification bill, Eberstadt had presented at once all the compromise solutions of the conflict and connected them with the higher purposes of the unification idea, which were admittedly at times lost sight of in the clouds of service partisanship. With service consensus achieved, the bill passed in the Senate and House with relative ease. For all practical purposes, the most protracted and substantive issues of the debate had been met and disposed of during the previous compromising which had gone on unabated for nearly four years.

Truman signed the bill as soon as it came to him on July 26, 1947, whereupon it became the National Security Act of 1947. The act did not create the form of national defense which the United States has today, but the act did enable it to become a reality. Much like any law, the systems covered

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<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 685.

by the act had to be brought slowly into being and then undergo an evolutionary process much like the one which preceded the act. There were also legislative adjustments after the act was passed, and, in fact, less than two years later the National Security Act was amended by the Congress to account for the adjustments which had to be made as a result of its enactment. These principally aimed at enlarging the controversial Office of the Secretary of Defense. Since then, the Office of the Secretary of Defense has been defined in its functions to a large extent by the man who first held the office--former Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, who played at once the roles of devil's advocate and principal architect of the final form of unification.

What then resulted from this act? Superficially, a Secretary of Defense and a separate Air Force were created; and the Joint Chiefs of Staff now had statutory approval. More importantly, however, the conflict over unification and the events which comprised its genesis were but one more evolutionary rung on the ladder of continuing military reforms in the 20th century.

The need to tailor military force to correspond with the necessities of democracy is one of the great problems of our form of government. The fact oftentimes lost sight of is that such a requirement just as frequently poses one of the great problems of the conduct of warfare as well. The unification conflict dealt with this problem, and in so doing the military high command of the United States was tested as it had never been tested. To begin reform in any bureaucracy is bound to be an unwieldy task, but if that system is a military system

in the midst of a war so vast that it very nearly is overwhelming, the test becomes simultaneously more protracted and more difficult. In the attempt to face up to the requirements of military adjustment, the military systems of the United States, controlled by civilian and military men alike, had to utilize every means of bargaining available to them in order to reach a solution. Unification, therefore, was tried not only within the military system, but later in strictly public, strictly civilian arenas. Perhaps for that reason, unification ultimately strengthened rather than destroyed the military system of this country.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

The series of military reforms which resulted in the National Security Act of 1947 were very possibly the most vital adjustments made in the military sector of this nation during the course of its history. Yet, unification could have no more occurred without the thousands of events, incidents, opinions, legislations, and executive fiats which went before it than it could have dropped from the moon. As a military reform of the highest order, the National Security Act was very much a product of its own history. Without the individuals who contributed from the beginnings of this nation to the accommodation of military and democratic requirements, the act would never have been made.

The act marked a dividing line in both the history of the methods of warfare and the history of national involvement in the conduct of war, which, heretofore, had been largely two separate and distinct entities in a democratic state. In this country the precept that the military and civilian power be divided has been a cardinal one. Of manifest importance to this idea of separation has been the insistence that the civilians control the military in various ways at all times. This prin-

ciple is easily as important as the principle of separation of civilian powers. The "man on horseback," a familiar figure in the history of some nations, has never been known in ours. Given the dispersion of military powers in this country today, he may never be known here. Unification and the National Security Act are but two reasons why this tradition may be allowed to continue.

The dispersion of military power has worked in two identifiable ways. The first effect of this dispersion was revealed during the Second World War. The true limits of national security became known during this conflict when the nation directed its total power, both real and potential, toward the augmentation of the military machine. Hence, the military influence became a pervasive one in America; and the national existence became, for a time, truly a military existence. That the military leaders of this country rose to new levels of responsibility, influence, and power was not out of the ordinary; for such an occurrence has been a traditional element of this country's history since the Revolution.

When peace, always an imperfect and relative international situation, was eclipsed by war, the national environment determined that the military be called upon to exercise its function--to come out of hibernation. Previously, when the environment reverted to a comparatively peaceful one, the military was consigned once again to garrison duty to be denied its war-time power and influence and to become a constituent part of the society consistent with the needs of a peace-time democracy. During the aftermath of the Second World War, this historical

trend was not obeyed. Whether or not the condition of uneasy peace was a new one for America is irrelevant; that the international environment America perceived was not the same as the pre-war environment had, on the other hand, great meaning. War and peace, once so very separate, had blended with each other and worked their effects upon the world situation. Even if the perceptions were false, they were quite enough to force a new military requirement. These reasons dictated that the military not retire to its former resting place, but that it blend, like war and peace, with the other system of government to perpetuate the national existence. Thus, the instruments of war and the instruments of peace merged, making ever more dim the once sacrosanct dividing line between them. The aim of each instrument in their old environment--the working of national desires upon the world stage--was the same; it was no less the aim of each instrument after they were combined. The recent conflict had provided valuable experience upon which to base this new combination of instruments of peace and war. The extension of the military into heretofore civilian arenas, such as industry, transportation, and communications, as well as its effect upon the character of the American society, was unparalleled in the history of the modern state or the history of warfare. The reverse was also true: during the war, the military was influenced by civilians and civilian mentality to a greater extent than ever before; Clausewitz' dictum that the political objectives in warfare determine the force to be used was borne out once more. By determining the level of violence in warfare,

one perforce determines the method by which the conflict is fought. Civilian determination of military objectives was, therefore, the second effect of this dispersion of military power.

Since military objectives are, and always have been, determined by the political objectives inherent in warfare, the environment which gives rise to those objectives is of import. The character of the international environment acts upon the civil-military balance in this way: the more war, the more military influence upon the country; the more peace, the more a civilian influence prevails. The adjustment just chronicled in this thesis stands as an example of an attempt to strike a balance between military and civilian power in order to cope with an international balance heretofore unknown to this nation, or at least, heretofore not perceived by this nation.

Whether the balance has been struck is another matter entirely. The question is a most contemporary one, and not possible to resolve, or even fully state in this small space by so amateur a "scholar." Admonitions by President Eisenhower in his farewell address concerning the "military-industrial complex" have fostered a new, often paranoid and largely uninformed awareness by large segments of the American citizenry of each and every military move. Such anxiety has led to a re-evaluation of the place of a military system in a democratic society on quite a large scale.

Whatever the final verdict on this question, the fact which must be remembered is that the military can indeed be

tailored in such a way that it does not threaten the existence of the democratic society which it serves. Unfortunately, democracy is a term which applies only to the interior of this country. The anarchy of international relations does not oblige any other country to be cognizant of this country's sensibilities. The problem, then, is best solved by a military system which is both reflective of democracy and sufficiently expert to insure the continuance of that democracy in its international environs, which are rarely of its own choosing or responsive to its attempts to control. In either case, the raison d'etre of the military should be the survival of the chosen system of government of the people of this country. From 1939 until 1947, the processes of the conflict over the idea of unification of the armed forces were directed to that end.



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