

Center for Strategic and International Studies

Defense Reform in the 21st Century Panel 1: Guiding Principles for Reform

Opening Remarks and Moderator:

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President and CEO,
CSIS**

Speakers:

**Rudy deLeon,
Former Deputy Secretary of Defense**

**Michael Donley,
Former Secretary of the Air Force**

**Sean O’Keefe,
Former Secretary of the Navy**

**Jamie Gorelick,
Former General Counsel of the Department of Defense**

**Admiral William Fallon, USN (Ret.),
Former Commander, U.S. Central Command**

**General Norton Schwartz, USAF (Ret.),
Former Chief of Staff of the Air Force**

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JOHN J. HAMRE: OK, folks, welcome. When people get here on time, you have to reward them. And we're not going to wait. So we want to get started. I know we've got quite a few more people who will be arriving later. Thank you all for coming. My name is John Hamre. I'm the president here at CSIS. And I'm also going to be the moderator for this first session.

Let me just simply – when we have public events we always begin with a little bit of a safety announcement. And I'm your responsible safety officer. I'll take care of you, but I ask you to follow my guidelines. Our exits are right back here. We came in through that one here, and of course over here. That one is closest to the stairs that take us down to the street if we have to go down that way. If there's problem with the front we're going to go to the back, and we'll meet over across the ally – across the street at National Geographic. If the problem's in the back, we're going to go out the front, and we will go over to the St. Matthews Cathedral. And we will rendezvous there, we'll count heads, and then I'll buy lunch, all right? So – but nothing's going to happen. But just please follow me if we have to do something.

I would waste my time and your time if I tried to introduce these folks, so I'm not going to spend a lot of it with that. Let me move and sit down with them. The purpose of this discussion is to try to put some context to a debate that we're having right now. As you know, the Senate Armed Services committee I think has held 11 hearings, maybe 12 hearings, on reform agendas. The broad feeling is that 30 years after Goldwater-Nichols we very much need a change. It's a complex new world. We need to adapt to it. And we need to get on with it. Now, so let's start with that, because I think the starting question is – that I'd pose to each of you is this: Back in 1984, '85, '86, when we were working on it, it was clear we had problems. You know, we failed at Desert One, we just brute forced a working war in Granada by dividing the country in half. You know, we had a lot of things that weren't working well then.

I'd have to say that that – I don't feel that at all about today's military. I think we have a military that in the field functions quite well. Maybe the political decisions that got us there weren't right, but the confidence in the field is quite strong. I heard a Senator say to me that he thinks the department's all broken. I said, well, you know, if Kim Jong Un did something stupid today we'd have a thousand airplanes in the air flying there within two days. I mean, we're not broken. We're not a broken organization. But there are problems. So let me first ask, what is wrong that you would want to fix? And, Mike, I'm just going to start with you, and we're going to work our way down here.

MICHAEL DONLEY: OK. Thank you, John. And thanks to CSIS for bringing us together this morning.

So I guess I would start with first principles here. And there is—for DOD the context here is always an effort to get more effective and always to get more efficient. That goes back really to the beginnings of the department. And it's a common theme. So there's always an agenda to work on on the effectiveness side. And there always needs to be an agenda on the efficiency side to work. And most secretaries of defense and chairmen have an ongoing agenda of things that they're working institutionally to improve. So I think on the efficiency side there

are always issues, there's a long list of issues in the department that Congress and DOD have been collaborating on. Acquisition reform has been a continuing theme.

Many of the business operations of the department, the logistics system, the IT, the enterprise IT systems that provide the backbone for the business operations of the department and connect to operational issues always difficult. They take time. The financial management piece is getting clean audits. And so there's a long list of issues on the business side. I think the Congress is starting to dip into the issue of the retirement system last year, and thinking ahead toward the future force, and breaking down barriers between active, guard and reserve components, institutional barriers that inhibit the flexibility of the force. These are things that need continuing attention going forward, so on the business side.

On the effectiveness side, I think the – I would argue, I guess, the main issue right now is a sense that the department is not as agile and that the – and that the United States is not responding as quickly or as effectively as it may need to, given the current strategic environment. So I think the – I think the task – the big task in front of us is to figure out how to harness our national security community, including the department, and its strategic planning processes, which bring so much to the interagency, and harness the work of our interagency and decision making processes, including Congress, that would allow us to respond a little bit more quickly and a little bit more effectively to perhaps the most dynamic and complex international security environment that we have seen probably in our – certainly in our careers here.

So those are a couple things to think about going forward.

MR. HAMRE: Thanks, Mike. As you can see, we're trying to get a cross section of people with senior experience. Mike, of course, was secretary of the Air Force, but also was one of the early people who was involved in Goldwater-Nichols. So he brings a wealth of experience.

Bill Fallon was, of course, vice CNO, but also Pacific Command commander, as well as Central Command commander. So he sees the dynamics from two different domains. So, Bill.

ADMIRAL WILLIAM FALLON: Sure. Thanks, John. It's a pleasure to be here. A couple of thoughts. One is that reality – almost a decade and a half have gone past since this initial legislation. A lot has changed. My sense is that we have a significant shift in the way conflict is evolving in the world, that's different than 15, 20 years ago. The nation-states are still out there, but now we have a number of other actors and groups on the scene that are affecting our ability to maintain security and stability around the world. So how do we come at this?

The one that appears to be most vexing is one that's difficult to define today, and that's this, if you would, gray zone activity, where it's kind of ambiguous what's going on, who's up to what, what are the objectives, how is it impacting us. And just to walk around the world – Ukraine, Crimea, certainly the Middle East, and a number of places – it's a little different than it was back in the early days. So how do we come at this? The sense that we need, in my view, a faster process to recognize these threats and challenges and come up with recommendations to deal with them. The ability to formulate, in my opinion, coherent strategies to respond or, even

better and more importantly, to have in mind where we want to go and how we might get there five, 10, 15 years down the road I think is very, very important. And my sense is that process is kind of atrophied and kind of stumbling around.

So we have this interesting dilemma. On the one hand, we need to be faster and quicker at arriving at decisions that will show us the way ahead. And the other thing is – the reverse of that is, given the reality of communications today, the pressures on doing something right now I think are often pushing us into things that would probably benefit from a little bit of more study and thought. For me, in my career in the Defense Department, it's been about execution and the end state – where do we have to go and how do we get there. And what does this legislation have to do with that? We've made great strides in integrating the force, we're much better than the stovepipes that existed when this business began back in the '80s. But I think we've lost a few things too.

There was an idea that we would focus a lot on the joint integration and training piece. And that training involves many things. First, it involves the training of the leaders. And we have a slew of processes in place that are designed to try to get people joint thinking and acting. I don't think they work particularly well. We have too much emphasis on process and numbers and people X, and putting an X in a box. And we ought to be thinking about, in my opinion, the bigger issues of how we actually put the force together and train the leadership and get the experience to enable us to be successful.

The other thing is the inefficiency of activities today I think is a direct result of the natural bloat of staffs. I commanded a couple of those huge staffs. They're too big, in my opinion. We could be much more effective if we thoughtfully winnowed these down. But again, we need to keep in mind where we're trying to go. The last thing, very, very important, the acquisition process – just totally wrapped around the axle of inefficiencies. Too many steps. Too many processes. We're just not getting there. And the way that shows up is look at the size of the DOD budget still today. And how much are we getting out in terms of things that our forces need at the end of the process? And the answer appears to be less and less.

So it seems to me there's plenty of grounds to consider what we've been about and maybe come up with a few suggestions for change. Thanks.

MR. HAMRE: Thanks, Bill.

Norty Schwarz, of course, was chief of staff of the Air Force about – but he also was a specified command in a unified environment on the Joint Chiefs. So, Norty, your views here.

GENERAL NORTON SCHWARTZ: Thanks, John. Grateful to have the invitation to be part of this discussion this morning. I'm going to be a little bit more pragmatic, perhaps. And there are a number of issues with respect to the department that certainly warrant attention, from command arrangements to resource allocation to acquisition processes, overhead reduction, joint credentialing that you just mentioned for military personnel, the potential for consolidation, among others.

But I'd like to focus on three that I'm persuaded offer the greatest promise for particularly positive outcomes. One, they are the role and authority of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Second, the right-sizing, as you mentioned, of the combatant commands. And third, establishing a standing joint task force for execution of COCOM operational missions. I'll address only the first one this morning in these initial remarks.

And my experience as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and on the Joint Staff as a functional combatant commander as well as a service chief, I've come to the conclusion that the chairman's informal role in supervising the combatant commanders and the JCS is insufficient for the demands of our times. While it is true that delegated authority from the secretary of defense is an alternative, there should be no doubt in the armed forces about the directive authority of the chairman, subject to the close and continuing scrutiny and oversight of the secretary of defense.

Strategic guidance for force employment, force allocation tradeoffs between combatant commands, and establishing strategic priorities for the armed forces should not be the result of bureaucratic negotiation or exquisite application of personal persuasion, but rather the product of strategic leadership. Thank you.

MR. HAMRE: We'll come back to that, Norty, thank you.

Let's shift now. Sean O'Keefe was both a comptroller, the undersecretary for finance at the – for OSD, but then also became the secretary of the Navy. So he's got a unique perspective in the department. Sean.

SEAN O'KEEFE: Yeah, thank you, John. This is – I've been looking forward to this opportunity. I think it's a really important phase to debate this question, now 30 years after the enactment of the seminal Goldwater-Nichols Act itself. But it's also daunting to realize it's been 30 years. I mean, we've been working through this for this period of time and have had some association with it since that period. As Mike mentioned, we both served on the Hill during that time. And I don't think any of us – Mike, I don't want to speak for you at all on this – but I don't think maybe most of us would have imagined that this act would have had the sustaining, enduring features that it has. I mean, this has been a really powerful shift in the way the Defense Department has been organized, as well as the clarity of a couple of very, very significant features.

And the first of which I think is to clarify with absolute certainty what the chain of command is, how this works operationally, military commanders, how that sorts its way through, the debates, the negotiations, frankly, that Norty refers to that are ongoing in certain aspects of this went on with great regularity over just operational activity prior to this time. There is no ambiguity on this point. You know, the operational combatant commander, regardless of what kind of uniform they wear, once charged with a task for that particular part of the world, its geographic location, or its responsibility directly for functions of national security have absolute clarity in terms of where that original command authority begins – from an operational standpoint. That was a really seminal change in the process that eliminated much of the ambiguity that existed.

The second one I think, as other's have referred, the elements of jointness, of really looking at this and eliminating – no, I shouldn't say that; you'll never eliminate – to minimize the stovepipes of excellence, as it were, that have grown up throughout the course of our rich history of 200-plus years, really looked at this from the standpoint of where are the capabilities best employed, how are they made, and who decides how that ought to be done from an operational standpoint? And that also provided an enormous amount of clarity rather than constant internecine, fractious kind of circumstances, that certainly still goes on, but nowhere near to the degree that it had.

And I think the third major reform, if you will, is to really describe with greater specificity how operational intelligence needs to be employed for the activities of operational commanders, and how do you disseminate that information, where it starts, how it needs to be available, and where, again, the paramount authority originates for the acquisition of said intelligence. And I think that really did an awful lot to clarify what otherwise would have been varying lanes of excellence that otherwise wouldn't necessarily be required to share it, unless it was a coalition of the willing among services, or something else.

The downside of some of this, though, that I think has been alluded to here, that I fully agree with, is some of the challenges of trying to instill this sense of jointness, I think as Admiral Fallon referred, has created a bit more – a lot more of a bureaucratic structure. And the intent was – and certainly expressed very clearly – was to make sure that there was an appreciation on the part of uniformed personnel, as they moved through the various ranks and capacities within their career, understand that there is a broader defense objective involved, rather than the very specific lane of their service, or their function, or their community, or their – you know, however you want to describe it – within each of the military departments.

And that was a tremendous blow for freedom in that respect, but it also created a series of processes which to give, I think, even a more specificity than the very important point that Admiral Fallon observed, it in some cases created a circumstance where this means that what you need is four of everything or five of everything or even, in this case, six of everything to be represented fully. Now, this is not a – this is not a NATO conference. (Laughter.) This is an opportunity for the purpose of assuring that there be a great clarity and understanding of what the capacity, capabilities, and means are to carry out objectives, to evaluate what those capacities are that are resident within those communities, those military departments, whatever, those stovepipes of excellence, could be, and in turn employed in the appropriate circumstances, in some cases even unilaterally if necessary, at the direction of the unified commander.

And so as a consequence, that has gotten muddled a bit. It has created the bloat that I think Admiral Fallon refers to. It has also created a really unwieldy military personnel process of rotations, in which in order to attain the promotion and the opportunity for ascendancy in opportunity as well as in rank and responsibility and leadership, there needs to be a specified number of checks made on your way to that opportunity. And in doing so, this is almost a race from the moment there's a commissioned officer in place to the point of retirement of how fast you can get through that process, check all those blocks in order to meet the jointness objectives,

your own military service requirements, all the various gates that are required that are typically viewed by promotion boards for the purposes of advancement.

And ultimately for consideration in the highest levels of leadership in the national security establishment, such that by the time at the end of that career you have a perfectly honed capability. Then they're invited to retire, because otherwise they're holding up the process for those who want to accede to them. So it almost is a flawed process whereby we've created this determination that there must be some specified number of exposures during the course of a career. And in doing so, it diminishes the capability to really understand fully what the scope of the current job you're in entails and how it needs to be really employed most effectively. And this is one of the most frequent observations of military commanders, is the loss of the senior leadership in each of those capacities, in too short a span of time to really accommodate that level of expertise.

So the combination again, just in sum real quick, is the opportunity for chain of command clarification is a real positive. Jointness is a mixed bag in terms of its applications, but its objectives were very good. And in terms of operational intelligence, that has been, I think, a very, very clear success story in terms of how that's employed most appropriately for the unified commanders.

MR. HAMRE: Thanks, Sean.

Rudy deLeon – Rudy was, of course, deputy secretary of defense. He was the undersecretary for personnel and readiness, undersecretary for the Air Force, chief of staff for the secretary of defense, staff director for the House Armed Services Committee. So he's seen this department from five very important different vantage points. Rudy.

RUDY DELEON: Well, thank you, John. And thank you, everyone, for coming in. This is very much an audience of exceptional expertise. We can pull in the NST and the service perspectives and the strategy piece as well.

1986, it was about this time when Goldwater-Nichols moved through the House. The Senate had moved an earlier version. One of the things to always remember is Goldwater-Nichols was written during the Cold War. We did not see what was yet three years away. And it was also, though, the beginning of the way from just simply focusing on the Cold War and looking at contingency missions that would be surfacing.

Now, since Goldwater-Nichols we've balanced the budget, the Cold War has ended, we've had the largest terrorism attack, 9/11, our troops have been almost continuously deployed since 9/11 in one form or another. The force has changed from being forward deployed to being expeditionary, requiring much more sophisticated policy on rotation. And continuous combat has really tested both the financial and the operational elements of having an all-volunteer force.

So basically, three suggestions in terms of moving forward. And perhaps we can take General Schwartz' views on chain of command and add one. I think we need to make sure that

the military advice of the Joint Chiefs is as important as their obligation under law to organize, train, and equip the force.

Gordon Sullivan, who was chief just as Goldwater-Nichols came on the line and during Desert Storm, said that in his interviews it was a 51/59 percent proposition. Fifty-one percent of your time was going to be as a member of the Joint Chiefs. Forty-nine percent in terms of chief of your individual service. I don't think we have that right now. At the same time, we now have the new chiefs just been appointed who, from an operational point of view, have exceptional credentials. And if we don't pull them into the broader policy debate, I think we'll be missing something crucial.

Second, you know, acquisition was a big issue in '86 and it's remained a big issue here in 2016. Just in our little warm-up conversation, we talked a little bit about the Reagan buildup, how important it was. We have lived off that equipment for 35 years. And it's important to know that that was really the accomplishment of three administrations, I think. One, it was remarkable, all of the systems that were ready to go into full-rate production with the Reagan budgets – M-1, Bradley, Apache, F-15, F-16, DDG, CVN, Nimitz-class. All of these things didn't require a continued R&D cycle.

Part of that was during the Carter years you had a secretary of defense who had actually been a DDR&E, Harold Brown for President Kennedy, and then you had this young upstart out of something that is now called the Silicon Valley but then was simply the suburbs of Stanford, Bill Perry. So, you know, the DDR&E I think – and if we look at those systems, it was the combination of requirement budget and technology that all came together. Our biggest problem today in terms of the next generation and the modernizing of the force is how difficult it is to get programs to full rate production.

Third point, joint duty credits, whether you're at personnel and readiness or at Capitol Hill, remain controversial to this day. But I do think that we need to always be cognizant, in fact, that even with all of these changes, at its core the Goldwater-Nichols has been a significant management plus for the Department of Defense these last 30 years. Now, just one story because I think I know a lot about DOD and about the Goldwater-Nichols, but I was talking – I was trying to understand the planning process for Desert One.

And remember, it's the Cold War. It's 1980. The hostages are taken. And so diplomacy is the first effort, but it's clear by early 1980 that there is not going to be a breakthrough, that therefore a contingency mission needs to be put together. There is no special operations command. There is no sense of joint operations. And so this is the SECDEF talking to the joint chiefs. And sort of a plan is kludged together. And we all know the elements. It was exceptionally bold, but they had never practiced it.

But one of the new things I learned in this process was after the helicopters had traversed the Iranian desert, after taking off from the ships, and military personnel would have sort of entered into Tehran to find and get the hostages, there was a rocket-powered C-130 that was going – it had rockets both to break and to accelerate. And it was going to land in a downtown

soccer stadium. It had successful tests, three of four. One of the test pilots of the rocket-powered C-130 is to my left. And we just need – (laughter) –

MR. O'KEEFE: Way to the left. (Laughs.)

MR. DELEON: We need to acknowledge that, you know, the one thing that we can always count is the ingenuity of our military personnel to think out of the box if we give them the tools. And so I just want to acknowledge Norty Schwartz and all of the brave Air Force, Navy, Army, Marine Corps personnel who were involved in that Desert One planning because the lessons from that really allowed the mission to get Osama bin Laden in the heart of Pakistan, which was just an audacious measurement of how skilled our military personnel are today.

MR. HAMRE: Mmm hmm. Rudy, thank you.

I never did anything in the Pentagon without my lawyer. And so I came to be very close to Jamie Gorelick. And she saved me from a lot of embarrassment. She was the general counsel when I was the comptroller, and then left to become the deputy attorney general. But she remains active in the defense orbit, and we serve together on the Defense Policy Board now. Jamie, thank you.

JAMIE GORELICK: Thank you, John. And I will add just a few comments to the very good comments of my co-panelists.

You know, my view is the historical one, which is that things were clearly broken when Goldwater-Nichols was passed. There was a clear statement of the problem. I'm not feeling that there is such a clear statement of the problem today. There are problems, but I don't know that there is consensus as to what those problems are. I think there's no doubt, as everybody has said, that Goldwater-Nichols improved military effectiveness, but I don't know that it did much for, and may have undermined, agility and managerial elements of the department. I mean, how many people in this room have worked at the Pentagon. Quite a few. Would you associate the word agile with decision making? You probably would not.

And one of the reasons is that we have built up these large, large fiefdoms all over the place, which I don't think were anticipated – maybe anticipatable, but I don't think it was one of the things that we looked at as part of the – as part of the danger. So like anything that's – you know, any piece of legislation that's been around for 30 years, it's a good moment to take a look. Now, I think that, you know, what are your goals? Your goals have to be, you know, maintaining civilian control. That has to be absolutely key. You have to ensure the independence of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs. You have to make the process more inclusive of the service chiefs.

And I think one of the things you're hearing is that the service chiefs are in funky position and it needs more clarification and more – and more authority so that they don't become third or fourth wheels. And then, I think, layering is really important. I mean, we're taking down the size of our – of our forces without a proportionate decline in the management resources. And anybody who's ever been in a company or any organization will tell you that's a

recipe for disaster. So I think we need a critical look at the layers and what they do to agility. I mean, it's just obvious. If you have lots of centers of power with lots of resources around those centers of power, they are going to gum up – gum up the works.

So I would – I would – if it were me, I would do a couple of things. I would reduce layers and staff size at pretty much all levels. Two, I would remove the considerable duplication from the – between the Joint Chiefs and OSD. You just need to look at what has happened to the numbers, and they're pretty incredible. So you end up with more decision making by consensus than you would like an organization that you would want to be agile. I would increase the service chief's voice in operations and acquisitions. And I would try to focus the combatant commanders on war fighting.

Anybody who has served with, or in, or as a combatant commander, or has visited combatant commands sees an entire operation which in many ways duplicates the entire structure of the Pentagon and the Defense Department writ large. I think we need to tilt them back to war fighting. And that may give us greater agility as well.

MR. HAMRE: Good. I think we've got a splendid span of insights. I'd like to take – I'd like to pick up on – Norty introduced this question, but that's the role of the chairman. And I'd like to really dig down here on this. Back in 1986 there was – I only remember the debate in the Senate Armed Service Committee. Rudy, of course, has it in the House Armed Service Committee. But we spent a great deal of time in the Senate about how strong a chairman. How strong a JCS? It was the – you know, at that time the room was divided. I mean, the Pentagon was divided. The Army and the Air Force were kind of leaning forward and the Navy and the Marine Corps were leaning back.

And one of the crucial questions revolved around this: What is the role of the Joint Staff? And you know, the Navy guys were saying: We just can't have a German general staff. And I thought of it at the time as just kind of a cheap tactic to blunt the momentum of the discussion. I didn't appreciate how important it was. And we came up with a compromise. You know, the chairman was not going to be in the chain of command. But the chairman was responsible for giving independent advice to the president. And that was a compromise, to be candid. But there might be some genius in it.

So let me first start with Rudy, just to comment on that, and then I'd like to pick a few people, because Norty may have a little bit different view about where the others are right now, and I would like to frame this a bit. So, Rudy, let me start and ask you your reflection of this when you were on the committee.

MR. DELEON: Well, you know, to get to '86 and the reforms, you actually have to step back to the Georgetown CSIS of the early '80s, but there was actually a taskforce that was meeting. Norm Augustine and Jim Woolsey were really focusing on the acquisition piece. But on the chain of command piece, David Jones had come forward, arguing that the chairman should at least have additional input on operational issues.

This struck to the heart of the Desert One mission, but also fresh in the minds of the members of the House and Senate is the Marine peacekeeping mission to Lebanon. It wasn't a Marine Corps mission. The SECDEF was not actually the advocate of it. It came from the White House and the NSC. But when the bombing occurred, the only person in the Pentagon who would step forward and help the Marines was the Commandant P. X. Kelley. He didn't have responsibility for the mission. He didn't have command and control. But yet, he came forward. And that was a clear problem, that the chain of command had failed the peacekeeping mission.

So what came out of the Jones recommendation was that for the chairman to have input on this issue of being the senior military advisor, and I think at the time it was translated on operational issues, so that you would have a recommendation on the right kind of helicopter to take off the Nimitz. You know, the first chairman to implement Goldwater-Nichols was Admiral Crowe. The second was General Powell. General Powell had just been the national security advisor to the president, so he had a broad sense of what that mission would look like.

But I'd say up through the '90s the chairman, while being the first among equals, clearly is connected to the members of the Joint Chiefs. I think for both Secretary Aspin, Perry and Cohen the Joint Chiefs were some of the regular participants. And I recall John Hamre being in the middle of this big meeting at the National Defense University in 1998 where, with the president, the chiefs and then the combatant commanders of the chiefs were really able to make the case on increasing the rate of growth in the defense budget after the decade of balancing the budget.

So I think from 9/11 forward we've had a different set of practices. I think the Joint Chiefs feel they're no longer in the dialogue on what to do, but just simply now focusing on the resourcing piece. And I think that that is military advice that is to the benefit. Sometimes it might slow us down. Sometimes it might speed us up. But that that's a real reality check in terms of the planning of military operations.

MR. HAMRE: Bill, should the chairman be in the chain of command? You were a combatant commander. You reported to the secretary. Should the chairman be in that chain?

ADM. FALLON: Short answer, no, my opinion. It isn't – of course, this is really complex. Many, many moving parts at every level. You're getting a sense of the true complexity of this. And I think there's another major factor. No matter how you might try to legislate this, at the end of the day it comes down to people and personalities that have the biggest impact. From my view, the combatant commanders are tasked with the execution of the policies of the department and the nation, both in the political mill arena and in the operational execution of military activities. As I mentioned in my comments earlier, this is becoming much more complex, much fuzzier than it used to be back in the Cold War days.

And so it's tough enough, in my experience, to actually try to implement these plans for strategy and for military operations. Introducing the chairman – because with the chairman comes the Joint Staff – is another level of comprehensive review and kibitzing – I don't want to overstate the negatives here because there are some very, very positive things. Now, the

chairman, as the position of the advisor to the president, hopefully gets close enough to the boss, to the commander in chief, so that he'll actually listen and take these things on board along with the other political and economic and Cabinet factors that come in. And I think that's pretty good.

The chairman, in my experience chairmen, have not been shy about going up or coming down. I've had lots of help, and some of it very, very helpful in shaping where we go. So I don't think that particular change would be particularly helpful, and certainly wouldn't be anywhere near the top of my list.

MR. HAMRE: Norty, you think the chairman should be. Do you think the chairman should be in the chain of command, or do you think we strengthen the chairman within the current framework? Where are you really on that?

GEN. SCHWARTZ: I do not think that a general staff is appropriate, but I do think that reinforcing the stature of the chairman vis-à-vis his peers, or her peers, is important. It is almost inconceivably in any American business that is successful that you would have a COO, in this case, without executive authority. And it is just troubling to me that the chairman does not have that executive authority inherently assigned to him or her. And I would emphasize once again, as Jamie mentioned, you know, the mandate for civilian control goes without saying. It would be the under the intense security and direction, obviously, of the secretary of defense. But it is my experience that there were occasions when others needed to act at the chairman's behest. And, for complex reasons, as you indicated, Bill, dither. Shouldn't happen in a military organization, in my opinion.

MR. HAMRE: But, you know, we've been speaking about the internal nature of a chairman with the organization, but the chairman is also a political figure, even though he's not – he's not supposed to be a political figure, but he's unavoidably a political figure in Washington. I can just remember the concerns back from the Armed Services Committee at the time. They know how powerful service chiefs are, because they bridge across administrations, they can direct substantial resources, they can give you a fly-over for your pickle parade, you know, kind of thing, if that's what you're looking for. They host in handsome homes. You know, there's a lot of prestige and power that comes with them. And the question was, do you really want to put that in the hands of an uber-general?

Sean, you were a service secretary. Mike, you were a service secretary. How do you feel about the political nature of what that would do to the chairman?

MR. O'KEEFE: I think this is a fundamental tenet of civil-military relations is that the obligation, the responsibility, the absolute imperative for the civilian authority, starting with the president through, is to be unambiguous about the objective. What is it you want the military to do to prosecute foreign policy by another means? That is something they must have the responsibility, the accountability, and the authority to do. And in the public domain, in the course of the politics of this, therefore be accountable to the public for that conclusion.

Now, the answer, in terms of how it's prosecuted, has to derive from the feasibility of the mission as stated, as well as the capabilities at the disposal of the broader range of military capacity. That is a paramount objective for the advice to be rendered, to say here are the range of options you have at your disposal to carry out that objective, as you've articulated it. Whether I agree with that objective or not, this is what you have at your disposal from an operational military standpoint. And that has to be sacrosanct.

Now, that doesn't say that they are not – the chairman should not be empowered to offer the advice about the objective as well, and they do, right? No surprise there. And that's invited. Any occasion I've ever witnessed in which a president was about to make a determination on an objective, it was never done without first obtaining a very clear understanding of the advice of the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. And has suggested, not a one of them who have been in the capacity since Goldwater-Nichols would ever be confused with a wallflower.

These are folks who positively are unambiguous about their view of whether they think this is operationally feasible to do, whether it can be conducted, or to the extent that they may have reservations about it, that they clearly articulate what the consequences, the impact, the range of challenges will be. And therein lies the rub. That's where the politic comes in most, is in the debate over whether or not the statement on what the capabilities are from a military operational standpoint are in excess of what the civilian authority believes in stating the objective is really going to be required to carry out the goal.

And that's where the political debate begins and where the arguments are most strained. There's no doubt about that. But that's a dynamic tension that is part of the civil-military relations tenet that positively preserves an unambiguous distinction between the operational authority that is vested in the military and their responsibility to responsibly lay out what those objectives will require to achieve. But the paramount authority on the part of the civilian authority to be held publicly accountable for whether or not that particular objective is feasible.

I think it would be a major mistake to cloud that clear distinction of where those responsibilities reside by suborning the chairman to a chain of command kind of position in which they then will become part of the compromise that is necessary to achieve a goal. They ought to have the absolute standing to be able to offer a very clear, diametrically opposed position if they view it, as an appropriate objective or not, and then a set of issues that would describe the impact with the credibility necessary to say: This is what it's going to take for you to be able to do this.

MR. HAMRE: Mike?

MR. DONLEY: So I think current law and regulation has it about right. And I think we could – part of the reason I arrived at that conclusion is because there is space that's been closed, if you will, between these options that are concerning describing the chairman as principal military advisor only – he is the senior military officer in the military; there is no doubt about that – and having the chairman in the chain of command. And the way that is – that distance is closed is the law is very clear the chairman functions within the chain of command and assists the secretary and the president in their command functions. And there are all kinds of duties

assigned to the chairman in law and regulation should articulate all the things that he has – that he's responsible for, that he has to do.

He controls the operations planning and execution system. So while the combatant commanders are responsible for their – for plans in their respective areas, it's the chairman that writes the rules on how plans are put together, on what kind of cycle and how they get reviewed, et cetera, with the political guidance or the policy guidance from the secretary of defense and the staff from the White House. So the chairman is all involved in these issues, and is not a passive observer in this process at all. So I think the current practice – currently law and practice has it about right. If there is question about whether the chairman needs more authority, that authority can be delegated from the secretary of defense in a memo in a few weeks. I mean, this is the kind of fine-tuning of existing regulation that can be done over a short period of time. I don't think it necessarily rises to the level of having to put the chairman in the chain of command.

MR. HAMRE: Jamie, do you have – as a lawyer who's been in the national security – would you – do you have a view on whether the chairman should be in the chain of command?

MS. GORELICK: I would prefer not, for some of the reasons that have been stated. Now, I have to say, I haven't seen the sort of dithering that would be the – on the opposite side of the equation, but it doesn't take a lot of observation to see how chairmen who are naturally leaders have a tremendous amount of power at their control, are always asked for their military advice by both the president and Congress, and indeed the public. It's hard to see how a chairman is underpowered relative to the secretary. And we've also seen circumstances, some recently, where I felt, anyway, that there was just too much deference, too much, well, what does the chairman think in the conversations about policy decisions that should have been vested in the secretary and in the president after getting the advice of the chairman.

So I think that that is a solution in search of a problem. I would have to be persuaded that there is some issue with a COO who is not able to execute a plan, to think that this is an issue that we should address because you can see, certainly, many problems that would be caused by putting the chairman in the chain of command. And so I'm not seeing the benefits of it. I'm only seeing the downsides of it.

MR. HAMRE: Well, all of you in some form have raised the question of the inefficiency of the building – too many layers, too many organizations, the size. JCS has become huge. OSD has become huge. Combatant commands' staff, subordinate, sub-unified commands. We got a hell of a lot of structure out there overseeing smaller and smaller and smaller operational units. And so do you have – how would you proceed if you were given the task: Let's get this delayed. Let's get this more efficient. What would you recommend? Norty, start with you.

GEN. SCHWARTZ: If you look at the combatant commands, there's the traditional elements of operations and administration – so-called J1, J2, J3, intel ops and so on, and strategic plans. But over the years there's been a proliferation of others in the combatant commands – the 7s, the 8s, the 9s, the 10s. And the reality is that, I think as others have suggested, that focusing the combatant commands on the first order task, which is kicking ass, I think would help clarify the role and thin out the structure which has proliferated over the last 15 to 20 years.

MR. HAMRE: How about you, Bill?

ADM. FALLON: I'd start with the desired end states and objectives at the strategic level. So my sense of what's happened now is that whatever process going on to arrive at general guidance, you've got the national strategy, the military strategy, it's kind of just dumped out there and then staffs go to work on it. Everybody takes a piece of the pie and then they start chewing and it goes on and on. So I have in mind what legislative dictates might be helpful here. So maybe a clear enunciation of who – of what we want to get, how do we come up with a strategy that's coherent, how do we come up with a force that's really effective in the joint sense to carry the field on the battlefield, how do we deal with these things that are credible. Going to definitely need a whole of government approach. It can't just be done by defense and the intel guys. So kind of restructure the lanes a little bit would be my recommendation, first of all.

And then, frankly, having been on the inside and the outside, trying to reduce the size of the elephant, the elephant is not going to do this to himself or herself. It's going to have to be dictated. And so I would think setting targets of significant reductions – not just to reduce, but, again, you do this after you figure out kind of how you want to do things. Give you an example, Norty brought this up and if I could put a little bit of meat on the bones here. The combatant commanders in my opinion do not need the full range of one to whatever we're up to, 29 now, J-codes all, you know, having a matching counterpart back in the Pentagon and at OSD, and at every other COCOM. This is nonsense. They ought to be structured to the particular task. And they aren't the same all over the world, in my opinion.

I'm a big advocate of we can do a lot better, I think, with a smaller, better trained, more agile force than you can – but so for a combatant commander, big on two, three, five, and you got to have six. For the unwashed here, the uninitiated, your operational. So how do you, as Norty said, be able to kick butt when you have to? I'm a lot less enamored of a big J8 and a big J7 and so forth. So this could be pretty set, at least to start. It's going to erode. Things are going to happen. But put it in motion and tee it up. Again, back here, does there have to be duplication between OSD and the services and the Joint Staff? It's nonsense. It's out of control. So I think these are things that could be actually set, legislated, without being micromanaged, hopefully. Give general guidance, give the general guidelines, and go from there.

MS. GORELICK: I would like to just pick up on one – on one aspect of what the two of you have said, which is that you do have to look at the whole of government. And I think one of the reasons the combatant commanders have expanded is that other parts of the government have contracted. So if you were responsible for everything in your domain, you're going to replicate the State Department. So we would be better off looking where our combatant commanders should focus, and where others can take on some of that job. But you have to do it without leaving a vacuum.

ADM. FALLON: If I could just take that one step further, any reform efforts or change that's put in motion, in my opinion, needs to be a little bit broader than just DOD. The reality today is that there's so many more actors. Again, because this is more ambiguous it's even more

necessary to have really good – not just a supporting cast, but in some cases actual executors in areas that we didn't think of 30 years ago.

MS. GORELICK: Well, yes, you just take the issue of aid. Often the combatant commander has more actual money to spend in rebuilding a community that has been devastated by war than the other institutions of government who putatively have that job. And that just needs to be right-sized and refocused, in my personal view.

MR. HAMRE: Look, I'd like to turn to this issue – Sean, did you want to jump in and say –

MR. O'KEEFE: Yeah, just real quickly. I think that there's two dimensions of this thing that are really important to flesh out, or they're opportunities. The first one derives from a very simple anecdotal example of how the members of the Joint Chiefs kind of viewed their responsibility in the immediate aftermath of the enactment of Goldwater-Nichols. And they very clearly viewed it as, OK, I've got it. My responsibility is on the operational end of this. I got to offer the view of that. As a chief of service, I've got responsibility for training, equipping, recruiting, et cetera. But from a Joint Staff standpoint that's where I need to go, is looking at this from an operational view.

In which, early on, one of the members of the Joint Chiefs was asked a question at a hearing on Capitol Hill. I was a member of the staff up there, and I found this to be a good example of exactly how this was manifesting. Was asked about the requirement for heavy lift capability, and the fact that now that the administration had decided to shelve the V-22, at that time, you know, not quite 30 years ago at the moment, was this prudent given the fact that the heavy lift requirement would be very difficult to achieve by conventional helicopters, that there was an operational idea that was developed – that was referred to as a dual sling option. You have two helicopters tethering against a piece of equipment that exceeded the heavy lift capacity of either one of them, but collectively they could do it.

And they said, what do you think of the dual sling option, general? And the response was, oh, it's a perfectly fine idea, as long as you can find two Maines stupid enough to fly the two helicopters, you know? (Laughter.) But in one deft move – (laughs) – he described this as being just a nonstarter from an operational standpoint.

So from an internal objective, the idea is to focus on that end of the equation, of where the responsibilities reside for recruiting, training and equipping forces – to say, here's how feasible this is going to be, but that the ambiguity of who ultimately has the responsibility for carrying out those functional duties really still needs to reside within the structure on the, you know, more the civilian side of the equation. Not that military aren't involved in that, but are part of that particular decision-making chain. And so, therefore, constantly, you know, reviewing the feasibility of alternatives to meet particular objectives is part of the goal.

The other side of it is the simple proposition of what could be, I think, thinned out – as you question, you know, leaded – led us to – is to simply look at the name placards on the doors of the Pentagon as you walk through. Any office that is named there to be dedicated to a

process, that's ripe for termination, right? (Laughs.) Because if the idea is that all it does is there to defend, feed, and care for the process, it's missed the mission objective.

So a good example of that one I always found most interesting is having each service and all kinds of activities across the Joint Staff, OSD and everywhere else all maintaining their own Quadrennial Defense Review offices. Every four years, this thing really grinds up through a strategy process that is already orchestrated and moving, and yet here it is populated by one of each service and everybody's got to be involved to husband the ability of that process to serve itself. That was never the objective. The idea was to, really, why don't you think about this and codify it every four years to proclaim what the objectives are to meet the mission required, rather than erecting yet another process that is in business to preserve itself. Got enough of those.

MR. HAMRE: You know, I mean, Washington really is a town of 14 goalies and no puck. (Laughter.) You know? That's what we do.

Let me – one last – one last question. And I apologize, because I've just got – this is too big a question, and we only – really only have about 10 minutes. And that is, in our review over the last couple of months, what comes out again and again and again is the excessive demands of the NSC process and the way in which it's warping, you know, the department. So I'd like just a real quick snapshot observation from you on that.

Mike, start with you.

MR. DONLEY: Well, I would back up quickly to sort of the reason why we're having these discussions on the effectiveness side about the role of the chairman in the chain of command, really, is because the international environment and the challenges we face are starting to raise issues and challenges that cut across combatant commands. And so the issue of how the work of combatant commands gets integrated is a ripe issue for the chairman's attention. And the question is, does the chairman have the authority and responsibilities laid out to do that?

So that's why, I think – that's why we're having the discussion about the role of the chairman in this mix, but it applies just as much to the interagency side. So the Department of Defense is not the answer to – it is certainly a good hammer, but not every problem is a nail. So I think bringing a stronger and more robust planning process from the Department of Defense into the interagency is an important objective, but we need interagency partners that are empowered, have resources, have institutional strength to be at the table with the Department of Defense to work through these kinds of issues.

I hear and understand, I think, the broad criticisms of the NSC. There are very – NSCs are very personality dependent, on the commander in chief and the national security adviser especially. But I really do believe that we need a strong interagency process to hold the departments together. This is the president's big challenge, is to bring all the authorities and the capacities, the capability of the executive branch together on problems of national significance, especially when they're bouncing up against foreign policy and allies and potential adversaries. So we need a strong NSC process to hold all that together for the president. How big it has to be, that's a different – you know, different discussion. But I do believe we need a good, strong

interagency process to help the president hold the departments together and keep the departments and agencies harnessed together so the Department of Defense, in part, does not have to, you know, bear the full burden of meeting objectives of American foreign policy.

MR. HAMRE: Bill?

ADM. FALLON: Two thoughts.

One, as we discussed this over the last couple of months with folks that have phenomenal experience – just look at the colleagues here at this table and others that have participated – one thing that's come out pretty strongly is the desire to get the secretary of defense's input into this – into this interagency process beefed up, because it's eroded, certainly in my opinion, more to the NSC side. So getting the OSD policy, the Joint Staff mutually supporting piece of this so that, when an issue comes up, the Defense Department can actually come forward with its suggestion on how to – how to address it.

The NSC staff has grown by leaps and bounds. Just check out the office space down the street here. And they're gotten into, in my opinion, far too much detail and meddling, frankly, in each and every issue. And why is this? Well, there's a couple of reasons. One, just the kind of natural growth. If you start an organization, then it sees things it would like to do, and then it gets asked to do things, and it just kind of grows. The other thing is the agenda – this is the political side – in Washington, and how can I – "I" being a person or a group or an organization or a viewpoint that wants to make things happen. And the NSC's become a pretty hot spot for putting people in there to advance agendas, and that runs absolutely at cross currents with what I think we're trying to do in execution of strategy and military ops for defense.

MR. HAMRE: Norty?

GEN. SCHWARTZ: The NSC should not be activists. They should have limited, if any, role in execution. But there has been over the years a significant elevation in this part of their play. And maybe a facilitator of this has been our wonderful capability to conduct video teleconferences. (Laughter.) I mean, it – you know, you have to ask a question whether John Campbell should be up all night at NSC meetings when he's running the war in Afghanistan. I just – I think there's – there is fundamental dysfunction here, which is not healthy.

MR. HAMRE: Sean?

MR. O'KEEFE: No, I agree. The reason why – I think the ostensible reason why you end up with a replication of staff, et cetera, at the NSC, starting all the way through, as others here have described too, within the combatant commanders' offices is to ease and coordinate the communications and understanding of position among all the other organizational elements that are required to interface to reach a decision on a matter. That's the ostensible reason.

The real reason? They don't trust the other ones. They're there to check up on the fact that the integrity of my position is preserved.

Now, what we see now, I think, is a – is a huge exaggeration of exactly this challenge with the size of the NSC staff and the ambiguity of the nature of the role, and to the point where there is, you know, again, a combatant commander up all night, you know, participating in NSC meetings that are typically among, you know, the deputies. I mean, all the process elements of what needs to go on within the coordination process, that the NSC performs an extremely important function, gets diminished when this happens – is it's supposed to be an objective in order to raise the relevant departments and responsible cognizant authorities for the purposes of clearly understanding the ramifications of the options to go forward. That gets completely obscured when you've got this multitudinous set of, you know, inputs that go on at every and in any level, and ultimately is attempted to be not just facilitated, but coordinated by a National Security Council staff that has absolutely no responsibility for any operational activity at all, and yet seems to suggest that it exerts some at periods of time when it is least propitious.

MR. HAMRE: Rudy?

MR. DELEON: So good points. I agree with everything that's just been said, and I love the introduction of the videoconference. In our day, we didn't – we didn't have that quite yet because at each stage of the videoconference there's a note taker who's going to Bob Woodward or Tom Ricks or – (laughter) – you know, Michael Gordon, and we get these fabulous books that rake everybody over the coals. (Laughter.) And so that's why they staff up, you know. How do we – (laughter) – you know, because even – what we've subtracted in the process of all the technology is the ability to actually debate these things internal if every conversation is going to go and be on the record. There is no internal no-attribution deliberations that are allowed anymore. You know, that's just the – it's all on television. So, you know, so it used to be that the fastest increment of time was that atomic clock down in the Navy, and then someone said – Johnny Carson said the fastest increment of time was the time in New York City when the cab behind you honks after the light turns green. (Laughter.) And I think now it's the speed with which, you know, notes out of a highly classified policy deliberation is, you know, in The New York Times or the latest chapter in the book. And everybody is going to, you know, not be crisp and precise, but are going to be bureaucratic and blended down.

To General Schwartz's point, you know, one of the biggest issues that needs to be clarified is, should the chairman and vice chairman be on the same page? Because that's not – (laughter) – that is a noticeable one that is in all of those books.

And then, finally, we have put almost all of the burden on our men and women in the armed forces. We need a State Department that can operationally deploy to these hotspots, as well as the whole of government agencies. You know, whether it was smart to go into Iraq or not smart in 2003, what we would say is that the Army never moved faster from Kuwait to Baghdad and the Marines never moved faster from the ships to Baghdad. And then, you know, you've switched to having all of the technology work for you, all of the elements of strategic decision-making, and suddenly you're in Baghdad and you're the police force of New York City with, you know, a quarter the size of the personnel. So being a little slower going in, because getting out in the U.S. process is very hard. So we need to spend more time up front before we decide that it's essentially politically painless to put 100,000 troops in the field right now, and then only deal with the consequences once they're in.

MR. HAMRE: Jamie, you get the benediction.

MS. GORELICK: I would only add to the conversation this point, which is that certainly in every administration I have observed since the one that the three of us served in as civilians, power has accreted to the White House versus the Cabinet secretaries and their departments. It's not just Defense. It's across the board.

And as somebody who served in three different agencies and has a lot of respect for how the work of government gets done, I think that's not a helpful trend. I don't think that either policymaking or execution is benefitted from the significant overweight to the central power. I understand why presidents do it, because they pay the immediate political cost of something that gets screwed up, and the person that they look to is the person who's sitting down the hall as opposed to across the river or down the – down the road. But nevertheless, you can see it, perhaps, most profoundly in the Defense arena, but it has affected our entire government. And until that is reversed or at least discussed or thought about, we're not going to fix the underlying problem of this imbalance with respect to Defense.

MR. HAMRE: I'll just wrap up and say I think that, you know, we've seen this shift, that the NSC was originally an organization that coordinated the activities of the departments, and it preserved that important space the president has to have, which is a private space of deliberation. But when these agencies become – when the NSC becomes increasingly operational, it falls squarely in the obligation of the Congress to oversee their activities and to confirm their people. So it's up to the next president to decide: Are we going to have an operational NSC – and then the Congress has an obligation to observe it and to confirm the people that are in those jobs – or does it revert back to what it was designed initially to be, which was a coordination process for preserving the confidentiality of the president's thinking and his deliberations? That's going to be the choice.

Would you all say thank you with your applause? (Applause.)

(END)