



RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE COMMISSION ON ROLES AND MISSIONS OF THE ARMED FORCES: THE ERA OF JOINTNESS

On May 24, 1995 the 140-page report prepared by the bipartisan Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed Forces (CORM) was released. The CORM was established by the National Defense Authorization Act of 1994 to examine the way the armed forces operate. More specifically, the CORM was to "review the current allocations of roles, missions and functions among the Armed Forces; evaluate and report on alternative allocations; and make recommendations for changes in current definition and distribution of those roles, missions, and functions."

The 11-member committee was headed by Dr. John P. White, former director of the Center for Business and Government at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. (Dr. White has since been confirmed by the Senate for the number two position in the Pentagon, Deputy Secretary of Defense.) The committee is comprised of high-ranking retired military and civilian personnel to include General Robert W. RisCassi, USA (Ret.), General Larry D. Welch, USAF (Ret.), Admiral Leon A. Edney, USN (Ret.) and former Assistant Secretary of the Air Force Antonia H. Chayes.

At a cost of over \$17 million and after twelve months, the report was released to the Department of Defense (DoD) for review. The Secretary of Defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff have 90 days to examine the report and make any recommendations.

DoD had envisioned major, radical proposals addressing the ways each of the armed services performed their missions. Many in Congress had wanted the commission's findings to address eliminating redundancy, such as the "four air forces" and the "two land armies." However, the commission focused more on expanding the "joint force integrator" and left intact the major roles and missions of the four services. The report reaffirmed the importance of jointness among services.

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There were more than 150 recommendations. Listed below are some of the most significant.

- Separate staffs for the service secretaries and chiefs of staff should be combined. The restructure in management would allow them to concentrate on policy, direction and analysis. The political appointees would be replaced by career civilians.
- Eliminate or reorganize reserve units with lower priority tasks to fill force shortfalls in higher priority areas.
- Focus on combined warfighting, emphasizing joint doctrine and the role of regional unified commanders in chief (CINCs).
- Give more power and authority to unified CINCs. This allows them to have more influence in

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weapons acquisition, intelligence and coordination of communication.

- Contract private companies to perform warehousing, distribution, depot maintenance, property management, social services, data processing and housing functions.
- Assign Air Force the responsibility for search and rescue and support aircraft used by Department of Defense personnel.
- Establish a functional unified command responsible for joint training and integration of all forces based in the continental United States (CONUS).
- Provide for missions performed by the services in the areas of peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- Assign to the Army responsibility for ground-based area air defense, heavy engineering and supplemental logistics for the Marine Corps.
- Give management of land-based positioning programs to the Army. The management of sea-based programs would be the responsibility of the Marine Corps.
- Streamline the planning, programming and budget system to improve integration and provide clearly defined responsibilities for the various participants.
- Assign Air Force primary (not sole) responsibility for acquiring and operating jointly used space systems.
- Overall, focus on the core competencies of each service.

The Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 paved the way for many of the commission's recommendations. According to White, the commission's

message "means fully implementing the {act}." Though the main emphasis of the commission is "jointness" among the services, the commission concluded that the "four air forces" and the "two land armies" are complementary and not redundant. The commission did not identify any need to restructure the whole armed forces.

To effect many of the changes, some laws may need to be changed or amended. This includes restructuring of the military department staffs to a single staff serving the service secretaries and chiefs of staff, establishment of a panel of former DoD officials to recommend ways of replacing senior DoD political appointees with career civilians, and direct support of new systems by competitive private depots, to name a few.

The commission's perspective was much different than was expected. Instead of focusing solely on the traditional roles and missions of the services, the CORM recognized the importance of the role of unified commands in the conduct of military operations. For the armed services to be successful in future conflicts, joint operations will be the key to operational success. The individual services must sharpen their own "core competencies" and the unified command commanders in chief must focus on planning and training for joint operations. Each of the services has to be ready to work with the others to accomplish an operational mission. The Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard will depend more on one another as time progresses.

The report is now in the hands of Defense Secretary William Perry and Joint Chiefs chairman General John Shalikashvili, with each of the four services reviewing the report and providing comments. The Secretary of Defense and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff will submit final comments to the commission by August 24, 1995. The commission will then reconvene to review the comments and forward the report to Congress. Action by Congress is not expected until next year.

(This Defense Report was prepared by Cadet Kevin M. Trujillo, Virginia Military Institute, while serving as an Institute of Land Warfare intern.)

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