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J.C.S. 1620/257

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8 May 1959

Pages 1884 - 1899. incl.

CLASSIFICATION EXTENDED BEYOND  
10 YEARS BY OSD/JS  
MEMO, 2 Jan 1980  
REVIEW ON May 1981

NOTE BY THE SECRETARIES

to the  
JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
on

CONCEPT OF EMPLOYMENT AND COMMAND STRUCTURE FOR THE  
POLARIS WEAPON SYSTEM (U)

- References: a. J.C.S. 1620/209
- b. J.C.S. 1620/223
- c. J.C.S. 1620/248

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1. At their meeting on 6 May 1959, after considering J.C.S. 1620/248, the Joint Chiefs of Staff agreed to forward the memorandum in the Enclosure hereto, containing divergent views, to the Secretary of Defense.

2. The memorandum was forwarded as JCSM-171-59, dated 8 May 1959.

3. In that the Commandant had expressed direct concern of the Marine Corps in this matter, the provisions of Title 10, U.S. Code 141 (c) applied and were followed.

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H. L. HILLYARD,  
J. O. COBB,  
Joint Secretariat.

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ENCLOSURE

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
Washington 25, D.C.

8 May 1959  
JCSM-171-59

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Concept of Employment and Command Structure  
for the POLARIS Weapon System (U)

1. Reference is made to a memorandum\* by the Acting Secretary of Defense, dated 24 December 1958, subject as above, in which the Joint Chiefs of Staff were requested to submit their concept for the employment of the POLARIS weapon system, including their recommendation as to how this system should fit into the unified and specified command structure.

2. Forwarded herewith are the views of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army (Appendix "A"); the views of the Chief of Naval Operations (Appendix "B"); the views of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force (Appendix "C" with Annexes "A" and "B"); and the views of the Commandant of the Marine Corps (Appendix "D").

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff desire to discuss this matter with you prior to any decision.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

/s/ THOMAS D. WHITE,  
Chief of Staff, United States Air Force.

\* Enclosure to J.C.S. 1620/209

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Enclosure

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APPENDIX "A"

VIEWS OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. ARMY

on the

CONCEPT OF EMPLOYMENT AND COMMAND STRUCTURE FOR THE  
POLARIS WEAPON SYSTEM

1. Reference is made to the memorandum by the Secretary of Defense dated 24 December 1958, in which the Joint Chiefs of Staff were requested to furnish the Secretary of Defense their concept for the employment of the POLARIS weapon system, including recommendations as to how this system should fit into the unified and specified command structure.

2. I am concerned that, should the Joint Chiefs of Staff make a hasty decision on furnishing their concept for the employment and command of the POLARIS weapon system, the action would be taken in isolation rather than after taking into account the concept and command structure for our retaliatory forces as a whole in the 1962 - 1964 time frame.

3. Since POLARIS is a new, untried and unproven weapon, it should be assigned initially to commanders of unified and specified commands exercising operational command of major naval forces. Once it is tried, proven, and has attained a reliable operating status, a careful review should be conducted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to determine that command structure which will make it most effective operationally. I feel that in this ultimate assignment of the POLARIS weapon system the requirement for each unified commander to be given the weapons necessary to accomplish his assigned missions is of paramount importance.

4. Accordingly, I recommend that a decision be made only on the initial concept of command and employment of the POLARIS forces and that, when POLARIS has been tried and proven, the Joint Chiefs of Staff review the unified and specified command structures to determine how POLARIS may be used to its maximum effectiveness.

APPENDIX "B"

VIEWS OF THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS

on the

CONCEPT OF EMPLOYMENT AND COMMAND  
STRUCTURE FOR THE POLARIS WEAPON SYSTEM

1. On 24 December 1958, the Acting Secretary of Defense requested the Joint Chiefs of Staff to forward their concept of employment and command of the POLARIS weapon system.

2. A Navy study with recommended concepts submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 22 January 1959 is attached\* as Appendix "E". The concepts are outlined on the first seven pages of Appendix "E". They include the following essential elements:

a. Target system --- Primarily the Sino-Soviet industrial base and governmental control structure.

b. Support from deployed U.S. submarine tenders.

c. Other support and communication/control arrangements from existent or planned naval facilities.

d. Initial deployment of submarines to Norwegian/North Seas (alternate area --- Mediterranean).

e. Coordination of targeting and of target assignment as now provided for under the immediate direction of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

f. Command by the unified commanders through their naval component commanders.

3. A review of the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force proposals for a functional command structure clearly indicates that the Navy-Air Force divergencies on the concept of command stem from basic differences of philosophy which extend far beyond the scope of the questions asked in your memorandum. These broader issues go to the very heart of our national strategy. It is appropriate to address them apart from the immediate questions, and with the thorough analysis and consideration which they deserve.

\* Not attached herewith - Same as Enclosure to J.C.S. 1620/223

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4. I have examined these proposals and find them unacceptable for the following reasons:

a. The POLARIS weapon system is designed as a Naval weapon system with a national strategic mission. It cannot, and was never intended to stand alone as a missile/submarine combination awaiting only a directive from any authorized source to fire. Intimate to and inseparable from the system are the many facets of naval operations at sea such as communications, and the close integration and coordination with other naval forces. POLARIS submarines will operate in the same general sea areas with other naval forces. These forces will include air, surface and sub-surface elements, all of which must be closely controlled and coordinated with the patrolling POLARIS submarines. If this is not done, the entire effectiveness of the POLARIS weapon system will be degraded and the submarines themselves subjected to unnecessary operational hazards. Control and coordination of this type must be immediately responsive to changes in operational situations which occur frequently in naval operations. This type of response can only be assured if the forces involved are under the operational control of one over-all naval commander.

b. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have the responsibility for target coordination, as well as the power of decision to prevent gaps or undesirable duplications in target and weapon planning. The unified and specified commanders prepare their target lists in accordance with damage criteria established by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Responsibility for the coordination of these vital atomic offensive plans properly belongs at this level. Although there may be some need for strengthening of procedures, this should not be interpreted as a requirement for basic changes which would tend to spread and weaken authority which properly belongs to and has been assigned to the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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Appendix B

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(1) As missiles replace manned bombers, it will be feasible to simplify the concepts of target assignment and coordination. Time over target will not be as important. Weather, warning time, and ECM will not be significant. There will be less need for saturation attacks to increase the probability of successful penetration. Scheduling will be simpler.

(2) The POLARIS submarine will impose no target coordination problems. POLARIS primarily will be targeted against the industrial base and the governmental control structure of the enemy -- a relatively stable target system which readily lends itself to preplanning.

c. Under the Air Force functional concept the Navy planned POLARIS cruisers and presumably the carrier task forces would be under the command of the proposed functional commander, while concurrently being responsive to the unified commander of the area. It is emphasized that the coordination and integration of naval forces is a requirement fundamental to effective naval operations during the long periods prior to general war. Without it, the capabilities of commanders of unified commands for discharging their cold and limited war responsibilities would be seriously restricted by the loss or partial loss of control of vital forces. Divided control responsibility would result in confusion -- and at best, arbitrary decision.

d. Although the mission of the POLARIS submarine system is the deterrent/retaliatory role, the ships are comparable to other submarines, and are capable of anti-submarine surveillance and attack.

e. The supporting and control facilities for the POLARIS submarine system are integrated within the naval organization.

f. It is axiomatic that the full potential of the POLARIS system can best be achieved under commands that have a proprietary interest in naval weapon systems.

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Appendix "B"

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5. For the same basic reasons, the creation of a single functional commander under the Joint Chiefs of Staff as a "target coordinating authority", is equally unsatisfactory.

6. The Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, has stated that the assignment of weapon systems should be in accord with the mission of the command. I agree in part, but emphasize that there are other considerations. The over-riding one is to employ weapon systems to insure their most efficient and effective use in support of national objectives by all commanders.

7. In conclusion, the present organization is highly qualified to control the POLARIS weapon system, and to integrate it fully and most effectively into the national strategic effort. The proposals for the creation of a functional strategic command are militarily undesirable, fiscally extravagant and are unsupported by facts, analysis and by logic.

8. I strongly recommend that:

a. The proposals for the creation of a new functional command be rejected for the aforementioned reasons.

b. The POLARIS weapon system be assigned to unified commanders having command of major naval forces, with this command exercised through their respective naval component commanders.

c. For planning purposes, the initial assignment of the POLARIS weapons system be to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic.

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APPENDIX "C"

VIEWS OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF, U.S. AIR FORCE

on

CONCEPT OF EMPLOYMENT AND COMMAND STRUCTURE  
FOR THE POLARIS WEAPON SYSTEM (U)

1. The nature of general war in this period of unprecedented scientific advance requires more than ever before that this nation and the entire Free World place unique and crucial reliance on the effectiveness of U.S. strategic military strength. As one measure toward assuring greater effectiveness, it is essential that all weapon systems directed toward accomplishment of the strategic mission be planned for and controlled in a manner which will permit our over-all strategic effort to achieve the necessary effect in minimum time. Therefore, irrespective of the Service that develops and mans such systems, they should be assigned to a single unified strategic command responsible to the President, through the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

2. The POLARIS Weapon System is programmed to enter the defense arsenal before long as an element of the nation's strategic military power.

3. After consideration of these facts, as further elaborated upon in Annex "B" hereto, the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force, concludes that:

a. A single unified command for strategic warfare should be created. This command, for which the Chief of Staff, U.S. Air Force, suggests the name "United States Strategic Command," would comprise two subordinate components: one from the U.S. Air Force, to include the Air Force's medium and heavy bombers, IRBM's and ICBM's; and one from the U.S. Navy to include the Navy's Fleet Ballistic Missile System.

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b. The headquarters of this command should be appropriately staffed by personnel of the participating Services.

4. Upon approval by the Secretary of Defense of the conclusions in paragraph 3, implementation would proceed in accordance with Annex "A".

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Appendix "C"

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ANNEX "A" TO APPENDIX "C"

IMPLEMENTING ACTIONS

1. Initial action by the Joint Chiefs of Staff would provide that a United States Strategic Command would be established to assure effective control and integration of strategic weapon systems and that concurrent with the establishment of the United States Strategic Command, SAC would be disestablished as a specified command. Further study of detailed organizational arrangements would be provided for.

2. The availability of POLARIS as a combat-effective system is a necessary prerequisite to full implementation of the recommendations in the basic paper. Accordingly, opportunity exists for detailed study of the problem and development of a sound solution in respect to specific organizational arrangements. There should be two phases to the study of this problem:

a. In the first phase the Joint Staff would, in keeping with the approval of the basic concept, develop parameters and guidelines applicable to the establishment of the unified command. These parameters and guidelines, developed in consultation with the Services concerned and CINCSAC, would define broadly the organizational establishment, mission, and responsibilities of the new unified command. This proposal by the Joint Staff would be submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for approval.

b. In the second phase the Joint Chiefs of Staff approved guidance would be forwarded to CINCSAC who has the responsibility for the mission area as a specified commander under the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He would further develop the definition of internal organizational

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Annex "A" to Appendix "C"

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arrangements, make proposals as to the manning, and suggested time phasing of implementing actions leading to final establishment of the new unified command. CINCSAC's recommendations would then be submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff for approval. Subsequent to Joint Chiefs of Staff approval of these fundamentals, further development of operational concepts and supporting facilities will be necessary.

3. All actions leading to final approval and implementation of these command arrangements must be so timed that the new command will be effectively functioning by the time that the first POLARIS-equipped vessel is available for operational deployment.

4. The following guidelines are of particular importance in developing the organizational structure:

a. Command and control of all strategic forces should be vested in one commander.

b. The development of one integrated strategic strike plan must be provided for. Both targeting and operations contemplated must insure mutual support, non-interference, and adequate flexibility of all strategic forces.

c. The Fleet Ballistic Missile System, while oriented to a functional strategic mission, must of necessity operate in a relatively restricted geographical area. It will be operating in the same ocean area with other friendly naval forces. The mutual safety of these forces must be considered. Operational tactics must be coordinated for self-preservation as well as to compound the enemy's intelligence problem.

d. Each Service has logistic support problems which are peculiar to that service.

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e. Tactics, training, and administration of participating service forces will remain the responsibility of the parent service.

f. Communications with all elements of the strategic forces must be so planned that an integrated and perfectly timed strike order can be issued by the unified commander.

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Annex "A" to Appendix "C"

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ANNEX "B" TO APPENDIX "C"

DISCUSSION

1. It is a matter of general recognition and agreement that the Soviet Union has been primarily deterred from initiating any major military action by the effectiveness of U.S. strategic military strength. This same strategic military strength is, accordingly, the cornerstone of the U.S. military structure. It is, equally, the foundation on which the defense planning of the Free World is based.

2. Deterrent effectiveness is directly related to operational effectiveness or the manifest readiness of this military force to accomplish its mission.

3. There are many factors which will determine the operational effectiveness of the nation's strategic military power. Primary among these is the organization of that power into one instrument, conceived, planned, directed, and employed to assure instant response to authoritative direction and application of its strength to those specific targets which, under whatever circumstances may prevail, will best guarantee accomplishment of U.S. objectives. As new weapon systems are developed, the U.S. military structure must be sufficiently viable to allow for the incorporation of these systems on that basis which will most surely assure that result. Within the Reorganization Act of 1958 such arrangements are possible and expected.

4. A further aspect to be considered is the urgent necessity to assure that military efforts are programmed toward the most effective means of accomplishment of essential missions. In this area of vital missions, it is clearly unacceptable that we plan toward organizational arrangements which could encourage development of over-lapping or duplication among several commanders, all of whom would assume an active role in respect to

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an indivisible mission. Authoritative control -- that is, operational command of assigned forces -- as specifically provided for within the Reorganization Act of 1958 is a necessity.

5. On several occasions the Joint Chiefs of Staff corporately and individually have expressed concern with the inability of the commanders of the unified and specified commands to develop mutually supporting and maximum effective atomic offensive plans under existing target coordination procedures. The solution clearly lies in the establishment of an authority having the power of decision to prevent gaps or undesirable duplications in the detailed strategic targeting, planning, and weapons employment. Inherent in the organizational structure of the United States Strategic Command will be such an authority in the functional area of strategic warfare.

6. Finally, the spirit and letter of the Reorganization Act of 1958 are accurately and effectively recognized through this proposed organizational change. Operational requirements are provided for; the unified command system is further developed; clean lines of command, leading to more effective discharge of fundamental military responsibilities, are established.

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Annex "B" to  
Appendix "C"

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APPENDIX "D"COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS VIEWS

on

CONCEPT OF EMPLOYMENT AND COMMAND STRUCTURE  
FOR THE POLARIS WEAPON SYSTEM

1. The concept for employment of the POLARIS weapon system and for a command structure to control it contained in the Navy study insures optimum strategic flexibility and adequate strategic control of this most promising new weapon.

2. The Air Force proposal for the creation of a unified "Strategic Command" to select targets, assign and command forces, and supervise the missions of all long-range atomic delivery forces raises the questions of the responsibilities of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the delegation of those responsibilities. Ignoring the question of "which targeting system" to use, the over-all coordination, control, and direction of our long-range atomic delivery effort is one of the major facets of our national defense. As such it becomes increasingly the concern and immediate responsibility of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, rather than of some subordinate commander.

3. The Joint Chiefs of Staff coordination required to insure adequate coverage of selected targets requires first the selection of targets and second the assignment of those targets to forces capable of attacking them. The first of these tasks is so important to our overall national strategy as to be an immediate and continuing responsibility of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The second can be accomplished either by the assignment to a single commander or by assignment to several unified commanders.

4. The assignment of all long-range atomic delivery forces to a single command will result in the creation of a large monolithic structure responsible for controlling manned aircraft, ICBM's, IRBM's, and FBM's. The communications problem, alone, in the control of these varied and widely dispersed weapons systems will be extremely vulnerable and would vitiate any unforeseen advantages accruing from centralized control. The operational coordination problems would be equally difficult.

5. Now that we no longer depend exclusively on the long-range manned bomber as our only atomic delivery capability, we can increase our flexibility and decrease the vulnerability of our atomic delivery forces by centralizing only to the extent of target selection and assignment. The unified commanders should be assigned selected appropriate targets and given the means to destroy them. This reduces our dependence on ultra-hardened centralized control facilities, reduces the support and coordination problem, and gives the commander on the spot, the means to complete his mission.

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21 May 1959

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NOTE BY THE SECRETARIES

to the

HOLDERS OF J.C.S. 1620/257

(Concept of Employment and Command Structure for the POLARIS  
Weapon System (U))

CORRIGENDUM

1. Holders of J.C.S. 1620/257 are requested to insert the attached pages 1888 and 1891, inadvertently omitted in first assembling the copies.

2. This corrigendum may be downgraded to UNCLASSIFIED when the attached pages are removed.

H. L. HILLYARD,

J. O. COBB,

Joint Secretariat.

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29 January 1960

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to the

HOLDERS OF J.C.S. 1620/257 - 4720 (5 Jan 59)

(Concept of Employment and Command Structure for the  
POLARIS Weapon System (U))

Holders of J.C.S. 1620/257 are informed that action by  
the Secretary of Defense with respect to J.C.S. 1620/257 is  
contained in J.C.S. 1620/267.

H. L. HILLYARD,

J. O. COBB,

Joint Secretariat.

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