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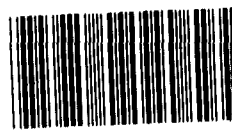
Testimony

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
JOINT OFFICER PERSONNEL POLICIES

STATEMENT OF
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BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

We are pleased to be here today to discuss the joint officer personnel policies enacted by Title IV of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. The Reorganization Act covers a wide range of activities and affects nearly every facet of DOD's operations. Joint officer management is one of the most far-reaching aspects of the Reorganization Act. It affects a large segment of the officer corps, shaping how the services develop and select their senior leadership.

Title IV of the Reorganization Act had several objectives. It sought to increase the joint perspective and thinking among officers, improve the quality of officers assigned to joint duty, and increase their educational preparation and experience level. To achieve these objectives, the Reorganization Act established a category of officers known as joint specialty officers, defined their qualifying education and experience requirements, and set target promotion rates for joint specialists and other officers assigned to joint duty. It established minimum tour lengths for joint duty assignments and required a joint duty assignment for promotion to general/flag officer. (See Appendix I.)

In April 1987, DOD submitted legislative proposals for modifying these policies. DOD proposed

- changing tour lengths for joint assignments,
- redefining promotion objectives,

- permitting waivers of the education and experience requirements applying to joint specialists,
- delegating authority for selecting joint specialists, and
- designating in-service billets as joint assignments.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Years 1988 and 1989 addressed several of these proposals. Specifically, the Authorization Act modified the joint officer policies to allow waivers of certain education and experience requirements for joint specialists, permit authority for designating joint specialists to be delegated to the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and allow officers to accumulate credit towards joint tour length requirements when tours have been terminated for specified reasons. Other changes, not directly related to the proposals, were also made. For example, the Authorization Act restricted the designation of critical occupational specialties involving combat operations (officers from these specialties are exempted from certain requirements).

In considering these changes, the Subcommittee was confronted with the difficult task of balancing the desire for greater flexibility with the need to assure accomplishment of the Reorganization Act's basic objectives. We believe the changes approved achieve this balance.

Several of DOD's proposals were not adopted. These included proposals to include in-service positions on the joint duty assignment list, to modify the promotions objectives, and to reduce the minimum tour lengths for joint duty assignments. Our report, which will be issued shortly, discusses all the DOD proposals. We will concentrate today on the proposal to reduce the tour length applying to officers in the grades of colonel and below, since it has been the subject of considerable debate in hearings held by the Subcommittee. We will be happy of course to discuss any of the other legislative proposals which might be of interest to the Subcommittee.

TOUR LENGTH PROPOSALS

Under current law, tour length is set at 3 1/2 years for officers in the grades of colonel and below. A primary purpose of these tour length requirements is to provide greater stability in joint organizations and thus, to increase the experience level on joint staffs.

Waivers of the established tour length are permitted but only so long as an average of 3 1/2 years is maintained. In addition, exceptions to these tour length requirements are allowed for overseas tours, tours terminated for unusual personal reasons, and in limited other cases; these excepted tours may be excluded when computing the average tour length.

DOD proposed reducing the minimum and average tour length to 3 years. While DOD has repeatedly stated that this was a critical proposal, we believe it becomes even more important as a result of changes made by the Authorization Act which restricted exceptions applying to combat operations officers.

Title IV of the Reorganization Act allowed an exception for officers with critical occupational specialties involving combat operations. These officers were permitted tours of less than 3 1/2 years but not less than 2 years. This exception has been restricted by the Authorization Act to officers at the grade of colonel and below and to officers from the combat arms branches of the Army and comparable specialties in the other services. More importantly, the Authorization Act limits the extent to which these short tours can be excluded from the computation of the average tour lengths to 10 percent of joint assignments. Before, all tours to which the combat operations exception applied could be excluded from the average.

Further, DOD had interpreted the provisions of the Reorganization Act to allow for all officers with critical occupation specialties to be eligible for the short tour. Under this interpretation, a large segment of officers assigned to joint duty had the option of a short tour. DOD planned to use this exception primarily when the 3 1/2-year tour limited officers' availability for command or other operational assignments. The Authorization Act clearly limits the

short tour exception to the initial joint tour of officers nominated for the joint specialty.

The result of these changes is to limit the availability of short tours and increase the pressure on what DOD perceives is an already crowded career path.

DOD officials offered several reasons for reducing tour lengths. They expressed concern that 3 1/2-year tours force mid-year moves which are disruptive to families and that longer tours would limit the number of officers completing joint tours, thereby reducing the number of officers qualifying for general/flag officer. (A joint tour is a prerequisite for promotion to general/flag officer.) DOD officials also expressed concern that a 3 1/2-year tour may limit the time spent developing war-fighting skills. These officials argued that 3 1/2-year assignments, especially when coupled with a year of military education, would lead to an erosion of war-fighting skills.

Our work concentrated on looking at the career paths of officers and how much time they spent away from operational duties. We looked at the field grade assignments (from promotion to major to selection for brigadier general) of Air Force officers with operational specialties who were recently selected for promotion to brigadier general. These officers represent precisely the group being targeted for joint assignments. The Navy performed a similar

analysis and we are currently completing work on the Army and Marine Corps. Our analysis identifies how much of officers' field grade years are devoted to operational assignments, how the remaining time is spent, and where time is likely to be drawn from in order to accommodate a joint assignment.

Air Force officials identified the key operational assignments for field grade officers as squadron commander, deputy commander for operations of a wing, vice commander of a wing, and wing commander. In addition, assignments as a squadron operations officer and commander of a combat support group were treated as key assignments since officials viewed these as offering desirable operational experience.

There was significant variance in the assignments completed by Air Force selectees for brigadier general. (See Appendix II.) All selectees served as wing commanders, close to three-quarters served as squadron commanders and vice wing commanders, and smaller proportions served in other key positions. Recent selectees for general officer spent, on average, about 5.2 years in key assignments. This represents 36 percent of the average of 14.3 years spent in field grade assignments (i.e. between promotion to the grade of major and selection for brigadier general). In total, officers spent 7.3 years (a little more than half their field grade years) in squadron and wing level assignments.

To examine the effects of a 3 1/2-year joint tour on erosion of war-fighting skills, we computed the amount of consecutive time officers spent in non-warfighting assignments. Because war-fighting skills for pilots and navigators equate to flying duty and because most positions at the squadron and wing level generally involve flying duty, we equated war-fighting skills with assignments at the squadron and wing levels. For each officer we then identified the maximum period of consecutive nonoperational time. We found that the median period of consecutive nonoperational time was 3.8 years. This suggests that a 3 1/2 year tour (or a 4-year tour to avoid mid-year moves) could be accommodated without adversely affecting the time spent away from war-fighting duties. However, a joint tour coupled with a year of professional military education may require a significant adjustment in career paths.

Long periods of nonoperational assignments are more likely to occur in the earlier part of officers' careers. Sixty-eight percent of the longest nonoperational assignments involved time at the grade of major and 65 percent at the grade of lieutenant colonel, but only 39 percent involved time at the grade of colonel. (Assignments often involved time at more than one grade.) Long tours may thus be more feasible at different points in officers' careers.

How do officers spend the remaining 7 years of their field grade time? Significant amounts of time were spent at Air Force headquarters and major commands--officers spent, on average, 4 years in assignments at Air Force headquarters and certain major commands (SAC, TAC, USAFE, PACAF, ATC, MAC). Time spent at air divisions and numbered air forces averaged only about 3 months. Time spent in assignments which are generally not operationally-related, that is assignments on the faculty of a school, as commander of a nonoperational organization, or with other organizations (i.e. those not specifically identified in appendix II) averaged (for all officers) less than 1 year. Thus, time for joint assignments is most likely to be diverted from time spent in Air Force headquarters and at major commands.

Our analysis of Air Force experience indicates that joint specialists who serve two joint tours during their field grade years would likely be unable to complete these assignments and intermediate and senior military education (about 9 years altogether) without taking time away from squadron and wing level assignments. The provision allowing a short initial tour for combat operations officers is likely to be of limited value for Air Force officers since it would normally apply early in the career path when more time is available for a joint assignment.

Does the situation for the other services differ? Officers from other services spent somewhat more time between promotion to major

(Navy lieutenant commander) and selection for general/flag officer. For example, Navy officers covered by our analysis spent 17.5 years in these grades. The median amount of consecutive shore time (excluding shore commands) averaged 2.8 years, with Navy officers spending an average of 8.1 years in shore assignments.¹

Our analyses for the Air Force and the Navy suggest that a 3 1/2 year tour, when coupled with military education, would significantly alter the consecutive time officers spend away from war-fighting assignments. In the case of Air Force joint specialists, it would likely reduce the amount of time officers spend in squadron and wing assignments. However, retaining a requirement for an average tour that is greater than 3 years, would encourage the services to extend the tours of officers as frequently as feasible.

This concludes my prepared statement. We would be pleased to respond to any questions on the tour length or other DOD proposals.

¹Consecutive shore time calculation based on each officer's maximum period of consecutive shore time, excluding shore commands. Analysis covers 22 aviation, 18 surface warfare, and 8 submarine warfare officers selected for promotion to flag officer by the fiscal years 1987 and 1988 selection boards.

Joint Officer Personnel Policies Established by Title
IV of the DOD Reorganization Act and Modified by
the FY1988 DOD Authorization Act

REQUIREMENT

Joint Specialists

Creates a category of officers known as joint specialists.

Requires that joint specialists complete in sequence

1. a program at a joint professional military education school (such as the National Defense University) and
2. a full tour of duty in a joint duty assignment.

Tour Length

Establishes minimum and average tour lengths for joint duty assignments.

Sets 3 years as the minimum tour length for general/flag officers.

Sets 3 1/2 years as the minimum tour length for other officers.

Allows the Secretary of Defense to waive the established minimum but only so long as the average length of joint duty assignments is maintained at 3 years for general/flag officers and 3 1/2 years for other officers.

Exceptions for Combat Operations Officers

Exempts officers with critical occupational skills involving combat operations from certain requirements.

Allows combat operations officers to qualify as joint specialists after completing a program of joint professional military education and a joint duty assignment without regard to sequence.

Allows short tours--but not less than 2 years--for combat operations officers who are nominated for the joint specialty.

**Joint Duty
Assignments**

Requires publication of a list of joint duty positions.

Requires that at least 1,000 joint duty positions be designated as critical. Only joint specialists can serve in critical joint duty positions.

Mandates that approximately one-half of joint duty positions in grades above captain (Navy lieutenant) must be filled by officers who have, or have been nominated for, the joint specialty.

Defines joint duty assignments as ones in which the officer gains significant experience in joint matters.

Excludes in-service positions (positions within an officer's military department) from being designated as joint.

**Promotion Policy
Objectives**

Sets target promotion rates for officers assigned to joint duty.

Sets the target rate for joint specialists and officers who are or have served on the Joint Staff as the rate achieved by officers assigned to the headquarters of their armed force.

Sets the target rate for other officers who are or have served in joint assignments as the average rate for officers in the same grade and competitive category.

**Prerequisite for
Promotion to General
or Flag Officer**

Officers may not be appointed to the grade of brigadier general or rear admiral (lower half) unless the officer has served in a joint duty assignment.

KEY OPERATIONAL ASSIGNMENTS OF AIR FORCE OFFICERS^a

	<u>Percent of Officers</u>
Squadron Operations Officer	47
Commander, Squadron	74
Commander, Support Group	12
Deputy for Operations, Wing	40
Vice Commander, Wing	72
Commander, Wing	100

^aOfficers selected for brigadier general by the 1986 and 1987 selection boards from selected operational specialties (pilots, navigators, missile operations). Review covered 68 officers.

FIELD GRADE ASSIGNMENTS OF AIR FORCE OFFICERS^a

	<u>Average Number of Years</u>
Squadron	2.9
Wing	4.4
Air division	0.1
Numbered Air Force	0.2
Major command (Strategic Air Command, Tactical Air Command, U.S. Air Force Europe, Air Training Command, Pacific Air Forces, Military Airlift Command)	1.5
Air Force headquarters	2.5
Unified or combined command	0.2
OSD/JCS	0.4
Professional military education	1.3
Other education and training	0.2
Other assignments	<u>0.7</u>
TOTAL ^b	14.3

^aOfficers selected for brigadier general by the 1986 and 1987 selection boards from selected operational specialties (pilots, navigators, missile operations). Review covered 68 officers.

^bDoes not add due to rounding.